THE DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY

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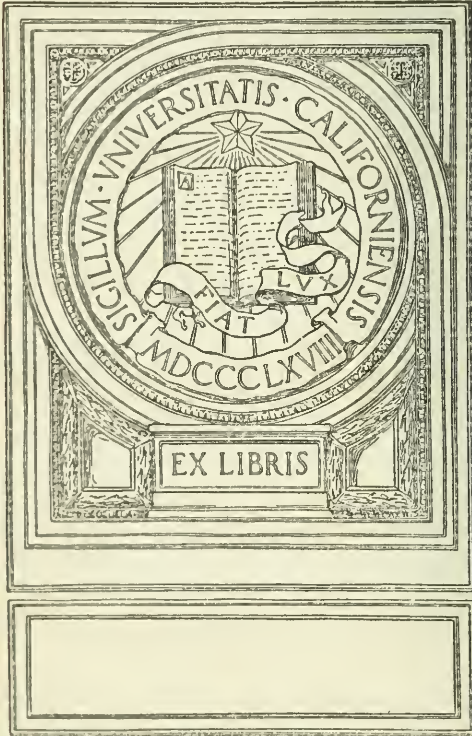

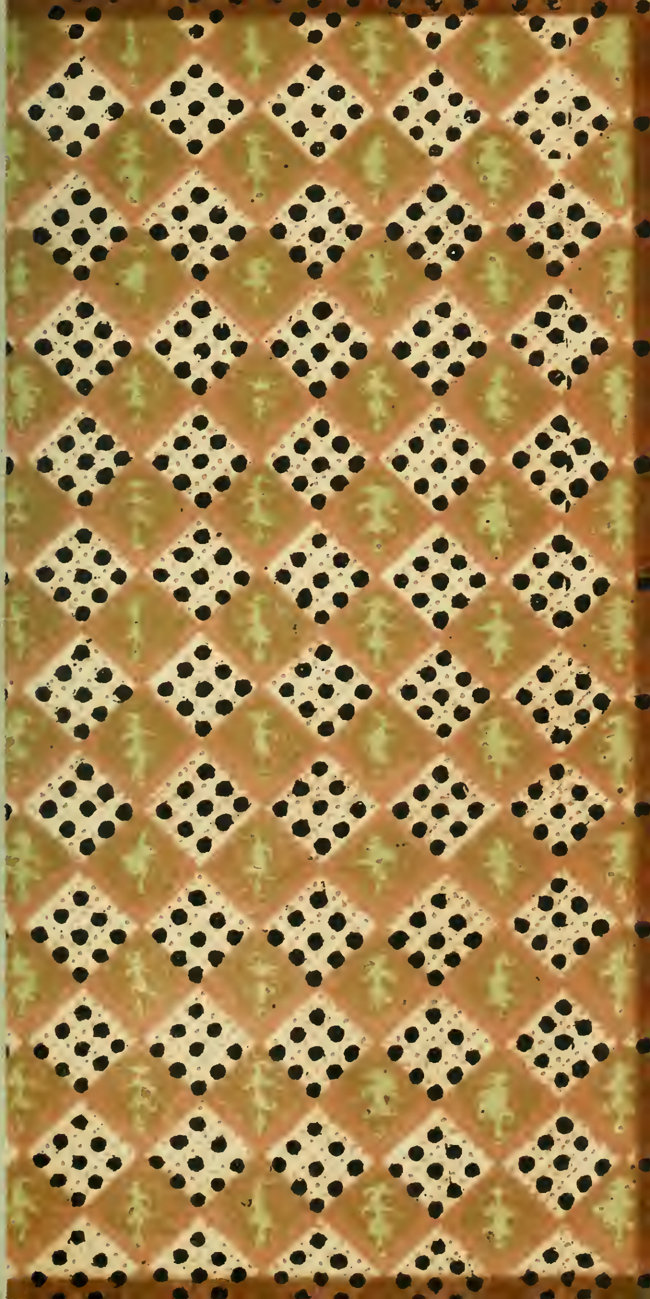

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THE

DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY.

A Story of Social Distinctions.

BY

W. BLANCHARD JERROLD.

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIZ.

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PREFACE.

It has been said publicly that I have levelled at the Aristocracy in this book; and, if this really be so, I must acknowledge that I have fired unconsciously. Whatever my political sentiments may be, (and I have put forth none in the following pages,) they are not borrowed, but founded upon study and thought. I do not shoot with another man's powder, neither do I conceive that a work of fiction is a fit vehicle for political opinions and arguments; hence I have taken care to avoid all disputed theories, confining myself to what I conceived to be an exposition of the emptiness of certain widely condemned and widely practised distinctions, alike petty, and provocative of social discord.

WILLIAM BLANCHARD JERROLD.

November 1st, 1847.

THE

DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER I

> "Whate'er our summer, ice begins and ends—
> The cradle and the coffin of our year."
>
> LAMAN BLANCHARD.

"MR. DE GOSPITCH says he can do nothing for you, sir."

These words were addressed to a well clothed man who was standing in the hall of Mr. De Gospitch's house, in Tavistock Square. It was evident that some consuming care was playing hourly havoc with the man's soul and frame—withering, with electric touches, the manly spirit of his nature. His sad appearance was that of an humbled gentleman—a man stooping to an action little in accordance with the haughty independence imprinted upon his features. He betrayed not the pride of the aristocrat, but he had the rigid dignity of intense self-respect. Such was the individual addressed by the footman of Mr. De Gospitch.

"Mr. De Gospitch says he can do nothing for you, sir."

Henry Gospitch was so absorbed in minute calculations, now and then interrupted by a flashing sense of the littleness of his present position, (for he was asking a favour of a rich brother,) that the advent of the footman was unperceived; and it was not until the servant had repeated his message with added emphasis, that Henry was awakened from his reverie.

"Master can do nothing at all, sir," repeated the menial, twirling his thick whisker, and grinning contemptuously as he opened the street door.

The blood rushed into Henry's face, his lips quivered and

became dry, as in a fever; he was half tempted to rush into his brother's presence, and to taunt the rich sensualist with his black indifference for his own blood; however, a second and better thought came with lightning quickness upon him, and he soon became as collected and as placidly serious as usual. His proud, piercing eye caught that of the servant, and the liveried man quailed beneath its fierce expression.

"Your master—tell him so from me—is a scoundrel!" —and Henry Gospitch was in the street.

Though the haughty master of No. ——, Tavistock Square, refused the request of his brother,—his poor, breaking brother,—he was not naturally an unfeeling or an ungenerous man; but he was often chief actor in scenes that might make humanity blush were printer's ink to give the details to the world. But no; these deeds (and they might find readers) shall not mar the even tenour of this history.

De Gospitch was the unconscious instrument of a weak and worldly woman; the machine that must carry into effect the conceited machinations of an abject slave of fashion—of an ambitious wisher for title, and a reputation for high breeding. If Mrs. De Gospitch had heard that Sir Harry Wholehog had ruined the fair fame of some poor lady's-maid, the report would not have diminished her respect for the baronet one jot; but if she had heard that the Honourable Fitzgammon had been seen to eat peas with his knife, she would have directly set him down as unworthy of her countenance. Henry Gospitch had, in truth, but little reason to hope for aid from his brother while Mrs. De Gospitch was with her husband. Schooled to look upon life as the due fulfilment of certain conventional courtesies, and the rigid recognition of certain distinctions, she regarded a tradesman with absolute horror. A man behind a counter was, to her, a nonentity—an animal of a different species altogether from the gentleman who condescended to grace a merchant's office from ten till four daily, returning thence to the bosom of his family in a chariot and pair.

Though conventionality had set up an impassable barrier between De Gospitch and Henry Gospitch, no such artificial impediment yet swayed the heart of Mary Maturin, Mrs. De Gospitch's maiden sister.

"Was not that Mr. Henry Gospitch?" asked Miss Maturin, eagerly, as she hurried into the hall.

"Yes, miss," answered the footman, quietly arranging the hats upon the pegs.

"Run after him, then—quick; tell him he is wanted for a moment." The footman nimbly obeyed.

Miss Maturin stood, with quivering lips and a spasmodic heart, awaiting the return of Henry Gospitch. Yes, she, with the creature comforts of a princess about her, with cushioned footsteps and jewelled fingers, stood awaiting with intense anxiety the advent of her lowly lover. If, with panoramic fidelity and nicety it were possible to show you, reader, every day of Miss Maturin's life; her temptations, her mortifications, her dependence, and her crushed love, you would, as she trembled in the hall of her sister's mansion, invest her dear being with the dignities and graces of the purest heroine; a homely, quiet heroine, indeed, but nevertheless angelic and adorable.

The rustling of a full skirt of silk, and a quick step, prepared Miss Maturin for the coming of her sister, Mrs. De Gospitch. Miss Maturin blushed at first; but, conscious of the goodness of her own mission, she quickly recovered her self-possession, and she stood unabashed before her richly wedded relation. There was, however, something so haughty, so stern, so commanding and unwomanly in the bearing and speech of Mrs. De Gospitch, that the quiet Mary Maturin ever felt herself the slave of her sister. Alone, the maiden daily resolved to break through this weak bondage, but her sister's reserve and pride as often frustrated the resolution. And so Mrs. De Gospitch had obedience of Miss Maturin.

"Who are you calling for? What 's the matter dear?" inquired the mistress of the mansion. "Surely not for Mr.—I forget his name—the grocer!"

Mary Maturin was silent, though her heart upbraided her for the idleness of her tongue. She would have spoken the language of a woman's unquenchable devotion, but—weak creature that she was!—her lips refused her heart the utterance for which it groaned.

"What 's that purse for?" continued Mrs. De Gospitch. "Ah! I see, I see; I'm ashamed of you, Mary. You're a weak, foolish thing, and will know better some of these days, depend upon it!"

"Let me give him this, Susanna; he wants it badly, indeed he does!" urged the stricken girl.

"*I*'ll give it to him for you. You had better retire before the man returns. I would much rather you should not see him, so go up stairs directly." So spoke Mrs. De Gospitch, as she took the purse from her sister's hand, and beckoned the broken-hearted girl—the pampered, satin-bedecked, miserable, dependent sister—from the hall: and Miss Maturin obeyed.

At this moment Henry Gospitch re-entered the house, ushered by the footman. Mrs. De Gospitch motioned the servant to stand aside, and herself advancing contemptuously towards her brother-in-law, she said,—with that utterance—that ice-fraught coldness women can assume—"I believe, sir, my husband has sent down an answer to your petition: what more do you require? However, Miss Maturin, in pity for your condition, begs to contribute this towards your relief."

Stung to the very soul;—roused to vent all the bitterness of long accumulated wrong, Henry shook with passion. Pity him, reader!—the respectable outcast, the honest sufferer, the younger son—pity him, that his self-command failed him in such a moment.

Ill used and insulted, proud, and conscious of no badness in himself, he launched forth the uttermost of his spleen upon his rich brother and his selfish sister-in-law, and the eloquence of his passion vented itself thus:—"Your husband answered me, madam, as a scoundrel would refuse a beggar! I, madam, destitute, pauper as I am—even I am not so much a beggar as your husband, and (I am ashamed to own it) my brother! He's nothing better than a monied scoundrel!" The man was nearly choked as he continued: "In my deep distress—in my utter wretchedness, I have stooped—yes, meanly stooped; yet I have something of the man in me, and am not so poor of soul as to urge a claim once refused by a brother. You have wrung my living from me, and crushed my love. Miss Maturin said she loved me; and, cherishing such words of sweetness, I was happy. I have, since that time, been stripped of fortune, and deserted by friends. The world esteems me base, though I have never stooped to vice. I am moneyless—you have diamond earrings—and that's the difference. Go to your detestable lord, and tell him that I call him scoundrel—that I shall shout the syllables again and again from my back attic! May they

reach him and you Mrs. *De* Gospitch, and harden, a little, the feather-bed you lie upon at night!"

Mad with excited passion, Henry Gospitch once more rushed into the street; and Mrs. De Gospitch, muttering, "Well, I never! Such independence!" &c.—went to prepare herself for a drive in the park.

CHAPTER II.

> "Wild as the autumnal gust the hand of Time
> Flies o'er his mystic lyre: in shadowy dance
> The alternate groups of Joy and Grief advance,
> Responsive to his varying strains sublime."—COLERIDGE.

THERE was a peculiar mystery associated with the Gospitch family. Some would have it that the family was of very humble origin—the fortunate offspring of some lucky journeyman carpenter; others (well fed at the Gospitch table) asserted vehemently that the name of Gospitch could be traced as far back as the Conqueror. Now the latter origin is common enough; for, reader, did you ever know a genteel person whose ancestors did not come over with the Norman William? However, the matter in itself is small enough, and the settlement of it shall be confidently confided to the select tea-parties still given round about Tavistock Square.

The parents of our hero and of Mr. De Gospitch (the *De* was affixed by this gentleman's wife) were rich people. They were not particularly refined in opinions and pursuits—neither were they very select in the choice of their company. Their vulgarity, however, was hidden by that efficient screen for all human failings—gold. The Gospitchs had evidently belonged to a class inferior to that with which they claimed fellowship when our hero and his elder brothers were youths; so that the youngsters, following their parents' example, considered themselves sprigs—and no mean or insignificant sprigs—of the aristocratic tree. The Gospitch sons had money to back and sustain their waxing pride; their business was to be thorough gentlemen, and so, in a constant round of balls, club nights, excursions, &c., these youths became men. So devoted were they to their club—so fond of billiards, &c.,

that their parents, at length becoming alarmed, tacked their brace of Lotharios to a merchant's desk.

Gospitch's father died; and three months subsequently, his widow lay beside him—respectably and with feathers ushered there—in a suburban cemetery.

Primogeniture!—that law fraught with so many contradictions—so cruel in some cases, apparently so necessary in others; good, say some as the great guardian of capital; bad and wicked, shout others, because it leaves no penny to the younger branches; primogenitive law snatched from Henry Gospitch every sixpence of his father's property, leaving him, by the misfortune of birth, a rich man's beggar-boy; while his elder brother rolled in a wealth that could command the most capricious luxury.

To understand fairly the relative actions of the brothers, the reader must be led back some few years, and see the young men " a courtin—" fair readers certainly cannot object to this backsliding.

Near the paternal roof of Henry Gospitch dwelt a quiet, middle-class family, whose head was one Mr. Jasper Maturin, auctioneer. Thither went Henry (there could be no mistake upon the subject) to see Miss Mary Maturin; though his ostensible purpose was to hear the delightful conversation of her loquacious father. Many, many evenings of sweetness did Henry Gospitch pass with this family. There *is* a sweetness—an Elysian delight—in a quiet smiling evening with one beloved; and ten-thousand-fold is the enchantment ravishing to him who escapes from a money-dingling world to such a haven. Leave a scene of deafening laughter; exchange it for the quiescence of a love-crowned fireside, and prate then, if you can, of the absence of thorough happiness on this ill-used earth.

To the quiet circle, whose dearest star was Mary Maturin, did our hero often betake himself in preference to the boisterous attractions of certain public assemblies; and, by degrees, the domestic harmonies so gained the ascendant over out-of-door jollities, that the club was exchanged for the private circle, and love for woman struck out the love of billiards from the category of Henry's pleasures. This change was significant of much future happiness; but, in sober truth, it only added to many bitternesses, though it blotted out some vice from our hero's heart. Thoroughly (such is the entire faith of Love) did Henry and Mary believe

themselves to be linked together in heart; and they sat, of an evening, with glistening eyes and moist, clenched palms, reviewing and painting in Cupid colours their wedded Paradise. Frail beings of a fleeting enthusiasm! They dreamed not that in a few short years they would be entire strangers to each other.

One evening Henry introduced his elder brother to the Maturins; and Miss Susannah Maturin was at home. Miss Susannah has been already introduced to the reader as Mrs. De Gospitch; and her haughtiness and worldliness have been fairly set forth: little else can be said of the lady as a maiden. She was cold, calculating, intent upon a good match; she angled skilfully, and, to be brief,—she caught Mr. De Gospitch.

Mr. Maturin and wife dead, Mary was compelled to thank her sister for a home in the Tavistock Square mansion; and thither she betook herself with a heavy heart and an humbled spirit.

She was a feminine enigma—a con. that defied solution. Had you seen her in a ball room—a fair, pretty, petite woman—you would have set her down as a spiritless coquette, a girl ready to fall in love with anybody upon the shortest notice. But in the presence of Henry Gospitch a joyousness would beam upon her regular features, betraying the natural and quiet kindliness of her heart; and though she was never very full of animal spirits, though she never had that active buoyancy so delightful in young people (and in old ones too)—she had, in the presence of her lover, the kindled animation of a very quiescent spirit. Under ordinary circumstances she appeared certainly as tame a being as you would come across in a day's journey—she lacked the enthusiastic interpretations of maidenhood, though she was grievously sentimental. She had read many novels of the intensely and mawkishly romantic school (books that play upon and deaden the sensibilities of their readers to no purpose—making the wretchedness of many weak-minded girls); and from such reading she had conjured up and classed a code of sentimental laws in her own little mind that were to her the gospel-references to guide her actions. Her love for Henry Gospitch was sincere; it was not all-absorbing. It did not include in its magic circle every thought and every feeling; it partook not of that burning

devotedness felt by strong and comprehensive passions; and still less did it savour of passion. Her love was scarcely more than a cultivated preference; she could spend days—nay weeks, without seeing her lover, and still the bloom would be upon her cheek—her lips would utter no complaint. Peaceful, spiritless, beautiful in her quietude, she had a due share of human selfishness. She paid marked homage to creature comfort, she would do a person a kindness, but the favour must not cost her much trouble. It was, however, a contradictory characteristic of her nature that, at times, and even when exertion was uncalled for, she would evince a dauntless energy in the pursuit of a trifling object; and to prove that good earnest impulse slumbered within her, the incident detailed in the opening chapter may be referred to.

And this budding woman—pliant as a young willow-tree—might have been moulded into a peaceful, gentle-hearted housewife; she had not the sterner virtues, but she was full to overflowing with the quiet household harmonies. She was a pattern-wife for an ordinary man, but she would have disappointed the enthusiasm of a large-souled husband. Her elder sister could always command her obedience, for Susannah had a spirit almost masculine. It was a pity that the two sisters, reared together, and with temperaments that might have been mutually supporting, had not the intelligence of a quick-sighted mother to guide them to happiness. Mary might have softened her sister's austerity, and Susannah could have given energy to Mary's languor.

The maiden orphan had not been long beneath her sister's roof before she felt the chill of conscious dependence steal upon her. She did not consider her position debasing or lamentable; yet there was detraction from her comforts in the thought that she was an object of charity. However, these self-humiliations did not often thrust themselves upon her attention; and time passed, lightning-winged, in a quiet round of unchanging observances—breakfast, luncheon, a drive in the parks, dinner, supper, and bed.

One morning, shortly after the breakfast equipage had been cleared, and Mr. De Gospitch had gone out, Mrs. De Gospitch, as she combed the ears of her spaniel, turned towards her sister, and said, "Have you ever heard from Henry Gospitch, dear, since you have been with us?"

Mary *had* heard from Henry Gospitch, but she had for-

gotten to answer his letter. She felt thoroughly ashamed of herself. Forgotten to answer the questionings of a man who was wasting man's best emotions upon her! Blushing, she strove—and her pride gave her strength—to hide her confusion. "Why should I not receive Henry's letters now, as before, Susannah?" quoth she. This evasion was worthy of a woman's dexterity in such matters.

"To be sure it isn't my affair, Mary—don't think *I* 'm going to set my face against Mr. Henry Gospitch," answered Mrs. De Gospitch.

"Set me against him! And *Mr.* Henry Gospitch, too! It used to be Henry once!" exclaimed Miss Maturin pettishly.

"Circumstances have altered the relative positions of yourself and Mr. Henry Gospitch since you first became acquainted with each other," said the married sister, evidently preparing Miss Maturin for some unpleasant disclosure.

"I don't indeed see how, sister," returned the maiden—and suddenly guessing at her sister's meaning, she added bitterly—"unless it is that, Mr. De Gospitch having inherited all the family property—his uncared-for brother is not fit to be my husband! Henry introduced Mr. De Gospitch to you, Susannah; you remember he did; and you said at the time that I ought to be proud of the man I was about to marry. How has Henry changed?"

"Well, well, you 'll never understand polite society, child!" sighed the wedded woman—"but I say Mr. Henry Gospitch *has* changed in position materially."

"How?" persisted Miss Maturin.

"*He is a tradesman!*" quoth Susannah De Gospitch; and from her soul she felt proud that she—if other people could not—yes, she could detect the difference between a merchant and a tradesman. "He stands behind a counter with a white apron about his waist, and a pen behind his ear," urged the married lady.

It was quite true, Henry Gospitch, son of the late Josiah Gospitch, of Swampum Hall—having no money and no profession—had descended to the disgrace of retail trading.

"So he does!" muttered Mary Maturin. Heaven! what a history was there in this wondering acquiescence.

Mrs. De Gospitch was clever tactician enough to perceive that she had made a sufficient advance in her plan for the present, Miss Maturin hastily retired to her own apartment.

Presently she heard the hall servant say, in a loud voice—"Master can do nothing for you." The street door was closed with a bang—she looked from her window—saw Henry Gospitch hurrying away; and, snatching up her purse, she hurried into the hall, where the scene described in the introductory chapter took place.

Miss Maturin on the day in question suffered the most conflicting passions that could burn in a woman's nature—and especially in a woman like our heroine. It was romantic, she thought, to cling to her lover through adversity—all heroines in novels did so; but it was fearfully unromantic to settle down to be a tradesman's wife. She should marry happily, have a country house and a town mansion, travel over the continent, and, finally, be the blessing of a select neighbourhood. Could this be done if she became the wife of a grocer? Besides, heroes should be at least five feet nine inches in height, whereas Henry Gospitch was barely five feet six inches—quite a shrimp of a fellow!

And thus did the weak maiden sport with her lover's truth. She judged him by an ideal standard painted in the colours of mawkish sentimentalists; he had not the vulgar brightness—the false glitter peculiar to her ideal heroes, and her love quailed. Yet, as we have heard, his distress recalled her truant affection in an instant—but sympathy is not love.

CHAPTER III.

CONVENTIONAL DISTINCTIONS.

"An overweening affection for money, an idolatrous worship of gain, have absolutely confounded the general intellect, and warped the judgment of many to that excess, that, in estimating men or things, they refer always to 'What is he worth?' or 'What will it fetch?'—Were we to point out a person as he passes, and say, 'There goes a *good* man, one who has not a vice—he would scarce be noticed—but exclaim, 'That man is worth £500,000,' and he will be stared at till out of sight."

Mr. De Gospitch was under the thumb of his spouse. True, he disclaimed the bondage vehemently, and prided himself upon the strong arm with which he ruled; but nobody with

common sense could doubt the fact that he moved quietly beneath the lady-like thumb of his dear wife. His club companions hinted broadly that he was horridly henpecked, while they boasted of their own complete freedom; his servants, too, considered him second in command, and he, refusing obedience, paid it. It is saying something for the heart of De Gospitch, when it is proved that a woman could twist his will round her little finger—command him as a puppet especially made to obey her. For the man is not to be envied who can be deaf to the witching solicitations of a fair petitioner;—in fact the man is a dolt who cannot be done by a woman. He who meets his mistress with a strong determination not to accede to a request she has made need not be ashamed of his weakness, if, with her smooth, soft arms about his neck, she at length compel him to yield implicit obedience to her will. The heart, yielding thus to woman, feels a happy expansion—a weakness that is as delightful as it is refining. The yielding thaws the icebergs of the worldling's soul, and lifts the money-grubbing sensualist to thoughts of happy gentleness—it thrusts out selfishness from the rich man's breast, and wins acknowledgment of love from all.

Mrs. De Gospitch was a clever creature—a piano-playing, ballad-singing, knitting, French speaking machine, that some people declared had a heart attached to it—yes, a round, red pulp, with some thousand daily throbs and some womanly emotions. It is charity to believe this declaration, for the lady's conduct so often gave some friends a contrary opinion, that by many she was esteemed only for her "very fashionable parties."

The next morning after Mrs. De Gospitch's conversation with Miss Maturin, that lady was sitting at the breakfast-table with her husband—who was poring on the long columns of the morning paper—when she again thought angrily of Henry Gospitch—"a disgusting grocer!"

"That uncouth brother of yours was here again yesterday, Gospitch. I sent down word you could do nothing for him," quoth Mrs. De Gospitch, addressing herself to her partner.

"The devil you did!—I beg pardon, Susannah,—I mean you should have waited until I got home," returned the husband, suddenly aroused from that quietude savouring of indifference—that senseless placidity so surely the follower

of the marriage rite when devoted love stands not at the altar.

"How stupidly you talk, Gospitch!" was the complimentary reply. "You know the man would have called again this morning, and most likely at the same time as Sir George, or Mrs. Plumpit; then a pretty *exposé* it would have been for me. If *you* like vulgar people prowling about the house, I don't; and, what's more, I won't have 'em. If he calls again he shall be sent on to you to the office."

"Well, you know best, my dear," said the brother of the outcast.

De Gospitch! this acquiescence was not praiseworthy affection; it was a species of moral cowardice. What! fling from you the blood made up of elements wholly akin to your own flesh—dishonour the memory of father and mother—bow to the dust the wronged manhood of a brother—and all this at the frail shrine of a worldly woman's caprice! Affectionate guidance is a silken leading-string that shows the way to happiness—but the rule of caprice is a thoughtless tyranny with a perspective of indifferent humility.

Honour to you, Gospitch, when you bowed to the affectionate guidance—but contempt for you when you quailed before capricious command.

"What is to be done with Mary?" continued Mrs. De G. "It's all nonsense her thinking about Henry Gospitch *now*—in fact, as a sister I can't allow it."

There is a point where the weakest, the most abject man will warm into a sense of dignity—and that point is attained when contempt is flung point blank at his flesh and blood. Gospitch now felt the insult his wife had committed upon his family, and he could have flung the bitterest epithets upon the stock from which she descended, had not a long training to polite usages taught him the indecency of oaths before a woman. And so he listened dumbly to his wife's arrogance; though displeasure was stamped, as with type, upon his features.

"Did you hear me, Gospitch?" inquired the lady, somewhat vexed at her husband's apparent inattention. "I want to know what is to be done about Mary and your brother."

"Let them do as they like. It's no business of ours. It's no more a matter of condescension Mary's marrying

Henry, than it was your marrying me," urged De Gospitch.

"Now, my dear, you talk foolishly—indeed you do. You must know how much superior you are to Henry Gospitch both in position and in personal appearance and merit. Why will you persist in talking in this stupid way? it grieves me excessively, it does indeed."

This appeal—the worthy concoction of a clever woman—fairly persuaded De Gospitch that his wife knew more about station, &c., than he did; and so he resolved to acquiesce in whatever scheme she might propose. De Gospitch was weak enough to be blinded by the flattery of Mrs. De Gospitch; it was a comfort, an assurance calling for sustained dignity—to hear from a woman not given to praise that he was lifted above those about him—a being of superior fashioning. A gladness, made up of selfish emotion and of supposed superiority, stole over the flattered biped's soul as he awaited the further questioning of his spouse. Ready to grant her any thing, he leaned back in his chair and listened.

"It may seem harsh," continued the wife, anxious to take advantage of the impression she had made upon her husband,—"very harsh, to stop any correspondence between Mary and your brother, but you will soon see that it is absolutely necessary. Here is Mary—poor child!—accustomed to all the refinements of life—excellently educated—a good pianist—a perfect Frenchwoman—in fact, capable of adorning the highest family in the kingdom—here she is in love with a retail grocer—a very worthy person no doubt, but one cannot forget the fact—a tradesman! Is it not ridiculous?"

"There may be something in that—there may be something in that," quoth De Gospitch gravely.

"Now consider, Gospitch," returned the lady aristocrat—"consider the fearful consequences of the union of such opposite tastes. Mary would be singing bravuras, while her husband would be cracking white sugar. In fact, I have determined to break the matter to Mary this very day: I mean to show her how stupid and how childish her romantic notions are, and she shall promise to forget your brother. It will be better for both of them."

A superficial attention would lead us to believe in Mrs. De Gospitch's philosophy; but judging the human heart aright, we must question the orthodoxy of her creed. If the passions

of humanity could be trimmed and taught to act according to the brain's philosophy, then might the lady's rhetoric hold good; but a deep love will not bow to calm reasoning—will not die because it is found to be imprudently bestowed; and so is it not better to give to Love its object instead of raising the life-long blight of crushed affection? Mary joined the breakfasting couple; and Mrs. De Gospitch prepared herself, somewhat nervously, for the disclosure she had determined upon making. That the reader shall fully understand Miss Maturin's conduct, it will be necessary to give a brief analysis of her ponderings over the contingent advantages of her love. Miss Maturin was a heroine playing a tangled part. With her, all worldly matters were not subservient to her love. She could weigh with the utmost nicety the probable career of her lover: she did not love the man so much as the man's position. Yet had she some affection for Henry; but she would not have consented to marry him had there been a certainty of his remaining a tradesman till his death. She could throw future probabilities in the scale of her preference, and she could bear present ill, if there was a prospect of coming advancement. She would have lived in a mud-hut with her husband, if he could have shown her a palace in the distance. It will be easy then to guess the current of the girl's thoughts; her calculations and her resolutions. She thought it possible that Henry Gospitch might become a merchant, and so she determined, for a time at least, to give him encouragement. If men knew the frailty of the tie that has only the strength of a promise to support it, how often would they escape the burden of a calculating woman! Calculation is so sure a proof of a cold disposition, that in a woman it is detestable.

"We want to speak to you seriously, my dear," commenced Mrs. De Gospitch.

Miss Maturin, guessing the subject of the lecture, coloured deeply.

"I have been talking the matter over to Gospitch, and he thinks as I do."

De Gospitch felt that he had been wheedled, and was silent.

"Now, my dear Mary," continued Mrs. De Gospitch, "we really think that we are only consulting your own welfare (and that indeed of Mr. Henry Gospitch) in insisting that

from this day you shall hold no further correspondence with my husband's brother."

"You are older than I am, Susannah, and perhaps know better about such things," remarked Miss Maturin with sickening coolness.

Such, Henry Gospitch, proud man that you were!—such the idol at whose shrine you offered daily, nightly worship! See the woman fling your man's heart in one scale, with cash in the other, and find the cash the better bargain.

"You must not think, Mary, that I wish to depreciate the merits of Mr. Henry Gospitch—far from it; he is a very decent young man, and, if he takes care, may live respectably; but he is not suited to one in your station of life; and you are only doing an act of justice, both to yourself and him, in refusing his addresses." It need not be told who spake these words.

"Don't you recollect the story of the Misses Perikick, Susannah?" inquired Miss Maturin, sarcastically. "You know father used to agree entirely with the moral of the paper."

"He changed his opinion when he grew old, my dear," said Mrs. De Gospitch. However, as the reader has probably never heard the homely fate of the Miss Perikicks, here it is:—

The Misses Perikick.

The recent elopements which have fed the fashionable columns of the *Morning Post*, and lately formed the subject of conversation at balls, routs, &c., are more significant of some social decrepitude than a superficial glance would lead us to imagine. It is fashionable now-a-days to talk of love as of some young weakness—some inexperience savouring of the school room—which it is almost criminal to succumb to, and which it is the especial duty of fathers and mothers to discountenance and abolish.

The foolish simple Miss Perikick had fallen in love with a young man with £200 per annum as his entire income! Stupid, ignorant Miss Perikick! Had you waited a little longer you might have held a two-thousand-pounder to your young bosom—you might have had a chariot and pair, a country-house, liveried servants, and "the best society;" now you must content yourself with a cottage ornée on

Clapham Rise, a cab marked 200 and something when you go to the theatre; a brief visit to Ramsgate or Margate (or, worse fate, Herne Bay!) in the summer, one maid-of-all-work, and the society of shopkeepers. To be sure you say you like the man you have chosen, and you are not so fond of luxury; but you will grow out of this love-nonsense—you will awaken to matter-of-fact likings, and find love—that masquerading jackdaw!—stripped of the peacock feathers.

Thus do stringent fathers reason: and the maiden, schooled to look upon her bright love as upon some misdemeanor, learns to love in secret; plots furtive meetings; wears a daily mask of falsehood; and finally elopes with her lover.

Who has taught them this false part? Who, by commanding the suppression of a passion as unconquerable as it is elevating, has nurtured and strengthened that spirit of secretiveness which has triumphed over the harsh endeavours of parents and guardians? Surely there is more ground for censure in the blindness that taught them to smother the instinctive yearnings of their young nature; to fling affection at the foot of Mammon; to render earnest homage unto god Plutus; and to hold a breast of mail towards the love-god's arrow

Say that Miss Perikick has renounced her poorly gilded lover for a calf of solid metal: her heart is with her humble adorer, and her hand is the church-given property of the Dives bantling. Is the woman contented, happy? She kisses the rich man, and loves the poor man; she holds Dives in her arms, and longs for Lazarus—her whole life, then, is a grand, well-acted lie. Treacherous to her husband, false to her lover—vowing love for the man she loves not, and hatred towards the being she adores. Who will not shudder at this misery, and what parent would not prefer for his child mediocrity, with the household harmonies, to splendour, with indifference or contempt presiding at the board?

Grim and degrading is the picture that portrays the wife-market in faithful colours, where hearts are sold to act falsehood at the parish altar—to pander to the passions of monied sensualists.

Many are the " happy brides " who " leave town for the bridegroom's country seat," with hearts of lead; the purchased slaves of men with acres are they, doomed perhaps to bear a title instead of the plebeian *Mrs.*, and to experience dignified

indifference instead of the witching courtesies of affection. But, as it has already been written, Miss Perikick eloped with mediocrity in the shape of a clerk with £200 *per annum*.

Look upon her as she guides the economies of Poppy Cottage, Clapham; see the quiet happiness that suggests her actions; behold her as, with a full heart, she welcomes a returned husband; and, giving little heed unto the mere tinsel of life, what sweet contentment gladdens her days, though only the plain unceremonious observances of society reign within her home! Her household is quiet, lady-like; but shorn of undue pretension; she is as happy with the clerk and £200 per annum, as the luxuries of a millionaire could have made her.

Is her modest position subject for pity? Shall we, after the example of powdered senility, hold our hands heavenwards and groan—"Alack! poor child—she has thrown herself away!"

I must now beg leave to introduce Miss Priscilla Perikick to the reader—Miss Perikick, the Reader—the Reader, Miss Perikick. And now let me tell you reader, that I have introduced you to a weak, sensitive girl, a flower of hot-house rearing — at the mercy of the first rude wind. To describe her character perfectly, I should require what space denies me—elaborate description. Miss Priscilla once in love, and, like the fly in the treacle saucer, she must live and die in the sweetness. She had no strength of mind however; and she paid abject obedience as promptly when the command contradicted her own settled convictions, as when her acquiescence was with the injunction.

It was Miss Priscilla's fate to fall in love with a man in her own station of life; but her father, conscious of the splendour her beauty might command, looked out for "a suitable match," bidding her meanwhile to forget the fortuneless young man, and prepare herself for a high station in life.

Now, Mr. Perikick, you may, hugging yourself within the importance of that enormous white waistcoat, imagine that your paternal advice—your strict injunction—was worthy of Bacon's utterance: with due respect be it said that you are mistaken. Did you ever love Mrs. Perikick? (pardon the question,) *do* you love her?

You do—but what has that to do with the question?

Just this. Imagine the dear father of your good wife, with green spectacles upon his nose, huge watch seals, a capacious dressing-gown, and a rubicund visage, denouncing you as a presumptuous upstart—a stupid fellow—a nobody. And you know, Perikick, (forgive the familiarity,) I say, you know that he might have said this with some smattering of truth. Shall I say more? Shall I call to your mind the glow of heaven-tasting happiness such syllables would then have crushed (for you *were* an open-hearted, impulsive man—and now—but I have mercy, and will spare you)—shall I draw before your passionless gaze the long accumulated debts you owe for happiness and kindliness supplied by Mrs. Perikick? —and then, as a fair contrast, shall I heap up before you the manifold bitternesses that your good lady and yourself would have endured had her parent scouted you as an ineligible investment for his daughter?

Think of all this, Perikick, and do justice to your child and to her lover.

Meanwhile Miss Priscilla awaited with angelic meekness the result of her father's speculations on her behalf. Foolish man! He believed he was acting the part of a prudent father, and, in truth, he was usurping an authority that no human being has a right to claim over his fellow. When Perikick's daughter was a mere child, he might have taught her to esteem all the virtues, the graces, the riches under heaven; and then, her character moulded in a mould of his own fashioning, she would have given her heart to the qualities she had been taught to value and admire. He did not do this, and could he then wonder that a girl, schooled to relish only the flippant emptiness of life, should choose in her lover the graces and feelings that sympathized with her own riotous heart, and hold the conventional positions of life of little value?

The Gretna-Green ceremony, so far from being a curse, is a blessing; for its suppression will not do away with elopements, and will it be an advantage, an improvement, that runaway lovers shall vainly seek for the sanctity of the marriage-rite?

Miss Priscilla was at length married to a "monied man," —a man who had only his gold to recommend him. With a broken spirit, and her love elsewhere, she married him—swore to love, honour, and obey him. She spoke this perjury with a faint voice, looked upon her father with a sickly smile,

the parish bells gave forth a deafening peal, butchers made discordant sounds with cleanly pared bones, she received the congratulations of her friends, and so began a life of decent, soul-consuming indifference.

She commanded all the luxuries gold could clutch; but, poor weak soul! the grand luxury of love was denied her, and she often thought, with a heavy heart and swollen eyelids, of Poppy Cottage, Clapham Rise, where her sister basked, ensconced in the sunshine of a love-lit home.

Men with babes, think of the sisters Perikick!

Miss Maturin had acquired her taste for reading from her sister Susannah. Susannah was a blue—a peculiar blue—but of this presently.

"But you know, Susannah," urged Miss Maturin, "how unhappily Priscilla was, and how happily her sister lived; then, to be sure, the sister's husband was not a tradesman—*he was* a professional man."

"That is exactly the difference. You must respect the rules of society. And can you hope that as a retail grocer's wife you will be received in good circles? No; you must be content with the company of fishmongers, greengrocers, bakers, butchers, and such people, and will this suit your refined taste, Mary? I know you are a simple girl, and would make an excellent wife for a poor man, but I don't intend that your life shall be a long calendar of wretchedness and disappointment; in fact, if you value my love, Mary, you will not think any more of Mr. Henry Gospitch."

De Gospitch allowed his wife to proceed thus far before he ventured an opinion: he now thought his dignity demanded that he should say something. He was an example of the contagious effects of depreciation. He had been thrown amongst a set of men whose pastime it was to vote all passing events little—badly managed actions perpetrated by very small men. This set would have voted Shakspeare a very dull, prosy fellow, had he lived in their time. They might have shaken hands with a contemporary Milton, but they would not have recognised a contemporary Dryden. They gave the depreciation mania to De Gospitch, and he petted the disease as a mother pets her babe. Having so far introduced Mr. De Gospitch, he shall speak for himself.

"Though I don't quite agree with Susannah in all she says," he began, "I do think she is pretty correct on the whole. You know, Mary, all things here are little—very little trifles. I begin to think life a very small, dreary sort of business—a trifle scarcely worth fighting about. But, as Susannah says, perhaps it's as well to do as others do—to conform to the rules of what people choose to call society. So you'd better give up Henry."

This advice, given by the blood-relation of her lover, awoke an artificial enthusiasm in Miss Maturin. She was hurt, because she felt that it was her duty to be so; besides, she *had* some love for Henry. But then her love was so very lukewarm, that a breath might have cooled it to the frigidity of perfect indifference;—her love would have been steadfast, and of increasing intensity, had it been encouraged; but her pride could not sacrifice at the shrine of Cupid, and so no deceitful lover could have broken her heart. She said—

"You recollect, however, that you countenanced Henry's addresses—when, prosperous, he wooed me. He is a poor man now, and you would have me forget him. Is this kind—right?"

Here Mrs. De Gospitch chimed in—"Nonsense, girl! Were you married to Mr. Henry—no home—no any thing! Besides, what would the world say?"

"What has the world to do with my marriage?" retorted Miss Maturin, pettishly.

"There you are with those school-girl notions again," continued Mrs. De Gospitch; "upon my word it's quite childish. Now do promise us that you will not have any more correspondence with Henry."

Miss Maturin rose from her seat, adjusted her dress, so as to give full effect to every breadth in the skirt, and then, with the composure of a perfect actress, she said:—"I shall not abuse your hospitality, Susannah, depend upon it." Having uttered these words, she walked quickly out of the room.

What a part she had been acting! Ladies on the stage—you are nobodies when compared with Miss Maturin!

CHAPTER IV.

"Money 's like muck, that 's profitable while
'T serves for manuring of some fruitful soil."

FLECKNOE.

HAVING escaped from his brother's house, Henry Gospitch dashed wildly through the streets in the direction of his attorney's office. His last resource had failed, and gaunt beggary might claim another votary. The application to his brother had cost him many a qualm; but its refusal stung him to the very soul. He felt more angry than humbled. The refusal made him a bankrupt, but it did not crush his energies. He resolved with the clenched firmness of a smarting enemy, to nerve every sinew against his brother's purchased position, and to win the fame of gold at any sacrifice. As he paced onward, this idea of revenge hugged itself so closely to his heart—sat so very warmly and comfortably there—that, before he had arrived at his destination, it had become a part of himself—was incorporated with his being, to regulate every impulse and every action.

"Have you the money, Mr. Gospitch?" said a thin, sallow, cunning looking personage, who made his legs of mutton out of briefs and hard working, ill-paid clerks—"Have you the money Mr. Gospitch?" echoed the attorney.

"No; and I've no hope of getting it. What 's to be done, Mr. Blueblack?" answered Henry, in no way inclined either to hear or make long speeches.

"Really I see nothing but a fiat of bankruptcy, Mr. Gospitch. Upon my word I 'm sorry things should come to this," quoth Mr. Blueblack, attorney-at-law, as he dived into the mysteries of a huge, dirty, musty folio that was propped upon his desk. "However," continued the man of law, "let me see, my partner will be here in the course of an hour—I should like to consult with him: perhaps you would favour us with a call some time in the afternoon, if it would not be asking too much of you?" And the Blueblack features (very much the colour of

Dutch cheese) relaxed into a set smile—a lying grin that masked cunning with an angel attribute.

Henry Gospitch assented to this proposition, and walked homewards: to a home that Mary Maturin had insulted and made miserable—to a home that would in a few days be ticketed for sale. There could be little pleasant anticipation in the return to such a wreck. Henry was alone, moneyless, but not in despair; for revenge—that attractive sustenance to a sad man's soul;—had given him a stoic's energy, and no muscle of his face was distorted as he neared his retail magazine. He found no business going on there; not a single customer in the shop; and his shop-boy, seated across an empty sugar-tub, was playing a game of "Beggar-my-neighbour" with an associate, to while away the long, labourless day. However, when the master entered the shop, the boys pocketed the cards, and Henry's servant soon stood easily behind the counter, awaiting any instructions and feigning preparations for expected customers. "What have you been doing, John, while I've been away?" asked Henry Gospitch.

"Taken four shillings, Sir; that's all," answered John.

Without making any further inquiries the master passed on into the little back parlour. He sat himself down, called for his books, and commenced a minute analysis of his affairs. As he proceeded with his calculations, his face wore consecutively many contradictory expressions; now a smile struggled upon his features, and now a flushed cheek and a pouting under-lip showed the burial of a momentary hope. Having occupied an hour in this way, Gospitch threw down his pen, and as he used the blotting-paper, he muttered cheerfully, "Well, they may say what they like, but there can be no charge of personal extravagance!" And it is but justice to assure the reader that no expenditure had been made beyond what sufficed for the bare necessities of man; so that the most expert lawyer could not have trumped up a charge of extravagance against the bankrupt.

Well, there was comfort in this assurance, and Henry felt almost happy as he knocked at the office door of Messrs. Blueblack and Green, at the appointed hour.

"Come in," growled a consumptive clerk, who, at so much per line, was writing himself into the churchyard at a galloping pace—"Come in." After waiting a few minutes, Henry Gospitch was ushered into the presence of the firm.

"I 'm glad to see you 've brought your books. It 's really a pity some arrangement can't be made with your creditors. The debts, Mr. Gospitch, are really so small, that I 'm sure you might raise sufficient cash to cover them." Having said thus much, Blueblack turned to his worthy partner to ask him his opinion.

"What say you, Mr. Gospitch," inquired the gentleman, who swaggered under the name of Green,—"*Must* it be bankruptcy?"

"All I know is, I cannot command the loan of a farthing," said the client. "Here are my books. You will find that extravagance has not driven me to a state of bankruptcy."

"We will do what we can for you," simpered Blueblack.

"Yes, we will do our best for you, Sir," quoth Green.

"I leave the case in your hands entirely," answered Henry Gospitch as he prepared to depart. "When shall I hear from you upon the subject, may I ask?"

"I should say about the day after to-morrow. We have an immensity of business to get through between this and then," said Blueblack. Henry Gospitch felt himself relieved of a responsibility when he left his affairs in the hands of his attorneys.

A few days only had been gathered to the past, when an old stair carpet might have been seen hanging from the first floor window of our hero's house; and two bills upon the door-posts gave notice of a sale of Henry Gospitch's effects. On the day to which we allude the household furniture was to be submitted to an auctioneer's hammer. No home of domestic raptures was being ransacked—no endearing incidents linked sweet memories with the items condemned to the hammer, and so it did not call for much philosophy in the bankrupt to survey the hurried gutting of his house. He would be as comfortable in a garret, for he was alone—had not a soul in the world to be a partaker in his aches and joys. Though at times there is a sense of freedom in this loneliness, how crushing is the thought that death may claim us any day, and nobody will miss us! During the stages of his bankruptcy, Henry Gospitch petted his loneliness. He walked about amongst the crowd—the vulgar, prying crowd—that thrust themselves into his rooms, making critical examinations of every article of furniture, like ravens battening upon a fallen man. He heard his neighbours—people who had called

themselves his friends—wondering "if the four-poster would go cheap," or speculating upon the probable price of the parlour chairs, &c.; there they were, huckstering for the chattels of their former host—ready to turn a penny by a friend. But the bankrupt cared not for this indelicate behaviour; he had the world before him—a determination, sweetened by intense revenge, to make a position, and so he looked upon these passing matters as mere trifles.

He was prepared for the worst with hopes that knew no bound to their soaring; and one—only one—thought disturbed this philosophy—that thought was of Miss Maturin. She was to him, as she was to us, a haunting mystery. He could not break the slavery of love; pride was powerless in the contest; and, ashamed of the bondage, he still felt himself her slave. Weak man that he was; self dignity could not assert itself within him; and he felt that he was paying with his heart the allegiance that his proud soul scorned. It must be borne in mind that Henry Gospitch knew nothing of the scenes described in previous chapters. How, then, could he tell whether the absence of his mistress was voluntary or compulsory? There were such monsters as hard-hearted relations—there were locks to doors, and spies to watch, and for aught he knew to the contrary, Miss Maturin was the victim of these discourtesies. One of the chiefest joys in love is faith in the entire constancy of its object. It was this faith that made the grand hope of Henry's life; he could not believe that Miss Maturin was untrue to him even in thought; and so, blind biped! he wore a certain cheerfulness throughout his embarrassments.

On the second day of sale a well-appointed chariot stopped at the bankrupt's door. Henry Gospitch was in the shop. The porters, who were prowling about the premises ready to shoulder the purchases for customers, stared curiously at this wonderful appearance; children, with dirty pinafores and huge lumps of bread and butter, crowded about the shop-door, and various heads from various windows ogled the lace-bedecked footmen. The menials opened the carriage-door, and Mrs De Gospitch descended, fairy-like, from the vehicle, making directly for the shop. Henry Gospitch crimsoned deeply—not with shame, but with bitterest anger. He could have horsewhipped a man for the insult, but there was no retorting the insult of a woman; he must put up with it quietly,

and nurse the wound in secret. He felt his helplessness, and was half mad with confused ideas. God! thought the man—could Mary Maturin be like her sister!

"To the sale, your ladyship?" asked a man who was stationed in the shop to direct purchasers to the sale-room.

"Yes, which is the way?" answered Mrs. De Gospitch; and the man ushered her with much ceremony to the room on the first floor.

All eyes now turned upon the lady as she entered the apartment; and the auctioneer, with ludicrous dignity, bade one of his servants place a chair for the new comer. It was worth a long journey to see Mrs. De Gospitch seated amid Jews and Gentiles, (and no very clean or aristocratic assortment of either persuasion,) nose in air, surveying the various articles placed before the officiating salesman. There she sat sneering at some hundred mortals, accounting them beings of inferior fashioning—poor, dirty, stupid bipeds, who attempted to imitate their betters and to assert their rights. She really wondered at their impudence. Stupid woman, she forgot that very soon she and that horny fisted Jew beside her—that squalid crippled woman, that ragged labourer, that tobacco-scented porter with the shoulder knot, and the auctioneer too, were going—going—would soon be gone to the same home to make a grand feast for the worms. What if black Misery should usher the ragged and the starving to be first served up at the banquet—Death—that unscrupulous landlord!—would assuredly dish her ladyship for the second course, and the worms would wriggle cheerfully over the dainty. However, had she thought of this, she would have gathered comfort from the belief that, while she would be ushered to the feast by feather bearers, and be ensconced in mahogany and velvet, the vulgar mortals about her would be flung to the banquet in deal and calico.

"Who bids for this superb cheffonier?" shouted the auctioneer.

"Is there a broker in the room?" inquired Mrs. De Gospitch. The lady was instantly surrounded by some dozen of slovenly individuals professing the calling in question.

"H'I 'm a broker, please you, marm," grunted a diminutive personage with a nose like a red turnip-radish, and in a voice that was a cross between a grunt and a whistle—"H'I 'm a broker, marm."

" What can I do for you, madam?" insinuated a lean, long-nosed fellow in the blandest manner.

" Does your *ladyship* wish to make a purchase, cheap?" suggested another.

The "ladyship" won the day; and the lucky individual who had presented Mrs. De Gospitch with the charming title was commissioned to bid for the cheffonier. It was knocked down to Mrs. De Gospitch at five guineas.

" Is there anything else your ladyship would like to purchase," suggested the broker—" any nicknack? There is a handsome four poster as 'll go cheap; and some drawers fit for a duchess, or even your ladyship."

" Really the man is a well spoken personage for his station," thought Mrs. De Gospitch. " Have any pictures been disposed of?"

" Not yet, your ladyship. The bankrupt had no pictures of any value. I 've only seen one work of art, your ladyship, which I 'm sure your ladyship would'nt think of looking at—its the portrait of some old, ugly, vulgar person in costume very like a footman out o' place."

Such was the broker's candid opinion of the personal appearance of Mr. De Gospitch's grandfather. It will be easily believed that the lady did not particularly relish this gratuitous criticism; she therefore thought it high time to " set down " the obsequious official.

" I did not ask your opinion, Sir, I believe. Show me the picture."

The man obeyed, and quickly stumbled into the lady's presence, dragging after him a huge, dirty, besmeared canvas, with the features of a haggard, old-fashioned gentleman daubed upon it in the most dingy colours.

" He an't 'andsome by no means," volunteered the broker, anxious to impress his employer with a full sense of his critical profundity. " Yet," he continued, " the artist seems to have made the best of a bad bargain."

" I should thank you not to venture any further remarks, but to attend to your business. Buy the picture for me, and then let me know to what extent I am indebted to you."

The picture was speedily hoisted above the auctioneer's desk for the edification of the bidding crowd; and, if Mrs. De Gospitch cared for the opinions of some thirty out-

spoken individuals, she had no reason to congratulate herself upon the beauty of the family ancestor.

"There 's a sharp-nosed old villain," shouted one. "Didn't know there'd been plush in the family!" ventured another, mistaking the old costume for liveried pomp; and the merriment was at its height when a stentorian voice bellowed—"What a guffin!"

The picture was knocked down to Mrs. De Gospitch for a mere trifle; and having settled pecuniary matters with the broker, she hurried from the sale room, thoroughly disgusted with the company therein assembled.

* * * * * *

> "The morn was cold; he views with keen desire
> The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;
> With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
> And five cracked tea-cups dress'd the chimney board."

Such the desolation heaped about Henry Gospitch some few days after the sale of his effects: his position in the world was, for the time gone, and he was alone—doubly alone—for he was a beggar. Money can always command social enjoyment, but Lazarus is a hermit.

Henry Gospitch had rich relations, but it was their very riches that banished him from their presence. He had been a retail grocer, and had so disgraced his family that he was a blot on the scutcheon—a man to be scouted—forgotten.

The consciousness of this conventional degradation half maddened him, and he plotted plans night and day. "By Heaven!" he said passionately, "I'll be somebody yet." And the instances are rare when the man with such a determination firmly rooted within him has failed in doing great things.

The trial that led to this exclamation was a most dangerous one—one rash step, and there was infamy staring him in the face with a demon's grin—a few calm thinkings, and a fair prospect shone in the distance—a quiet inobtrusive prospect, perhaps, yet full of peaceful sunshine and sweet tranquillity. The man passed a whole week in a scheming reverie. Hundreds of plans were created and flung aside; black, horrible, easy schemes arose and were abandoned with dismay, and final despair sat gnawing at the heart-strings of our hero.

He cared not one jot that he lodged in a garret (all his furniture being an ill-appointed bed, two chairs, and a dilapidated

wash-hand-stand): these little inconveniences troubled him not, but he quailed before the consciousness that made a savage of him—the conviction that his brother and Mrs. De Gospitch—and perhaps (the momentary belief was agony) Miss Maturin, looked upon him and his misery as upon the merited result of a transgression; that transgression was—the ignominy of retail trading.

But he had resolved to struggle from the mud—how, he knew not.

CHAPTER V.

> "Yes—loving is a painful thrill,
> And not to love more painful still;
> But oh! it is the worst of pain,
> To love, and not be loved again."
>
> Coleridge.

To account for the strange contradictions set forth in the characters he portrays, is the most difficult task the novelist has to contend with; and two of the principal personages figuring in this history are such inexplicable anomalies, that we can scarcely hope to account successfully for all their actions and passions. However, our chief business is a faithful portraiture of human nature; and if at all times we cannot explain the secret mechanism of our models, at least we may show all their capabilities. A man's true character is more easily fathomed than that of a woman. Men seldom act under restraint, and women constantly wear a mask. It is easy to get at a man's real opinion; a woman will not be sounded—she will evade your question skilfully, and obstinately, never flatly refusing an answer, and seldom granting a direct one.

Why did Mrs. De Gospitch go to the sale of Henry Gospitch's effects? Was it to wound the pride of the broken man? was it curiosity? or was it a desire to purchase some articles belonging to family history? If the latter motive alone actuated her, why not have despatched a broker? Such was the train of reasoning that naturally suggested itself to the lady's friends and relations. Some accused her of wilful cruelty; others thought she had only the honour of her hus-

band's family at heart. If the reader asks our opinion, we are inclined to think that a fair sprinkling of curiosity, a little wilfulness, and a strong determination to hang the portrait of her husband's ancestor at the Square, well mixed together, contributed to form the lady's resolution. Perhaps she was actuated by the best motives; and if so, we must compliment her as a consummate actress; for her daily speech led her acquaintance to think so differently, that her uncharitableness was the universal theme of conversation. Even her husband quarrelled with her, when he heard of her visit to the Gospitch sale. He told her pretty plainly that her conduct was highly unbecoming, not to say positively unladylike; and he desired emphatically that it should not be repeated. This reproof gave occasion for a series of pouts, which, however, failed of their intended effect; for Mr. De Gospitch left his lady to sulk alone. She did not sustain this lonely ill-humour long, and matters soon wore their original appearance; that is to say, Mr. and Mrs. De Gospitch were on friendly terms again. There must be some comfort in indifference—the absence of rapture must have some compensating blessing, or what would become of the thousands of married people to whom the thrill of love is unknown, and who, nevertheless, are seemingly happy in their listless friendship? What godly secret is it that sustains the placidity of indifference? Is it the death of all the heart's emotions? If so, what compensating phantom has earth to give? Is it the engrossing of worldly interest—is it ambition?—is it the ignorance of heartlessness—that makes this deadly life endurable? A man, with all his affections snatched from him, will find the churchyard a home, an enticing tenement, say some; but look about, and see the myriads of men who flourish and fatten upon a heart no bigger than a pin's head.

"What a filthy condition this escrutoire is in, " said Mrs. De Gospitch to Mary Maturin the morning after the sale.

"It has been a handsome piece of furniture," suggested the other: where do you mean to put it, Susannah?"

"I thought of having it repaired first, and then it might stand in your room," answered the sister. "Stay," she continued, "let us see what state the drawers are in."

Miss Maturin readily assented, and the key was applied to the topmost keyhole; both ladies evincing some anxiety to gratify their curiosity.

"Here's a mass of rubbish!" exclaimed the elder sister as she opened the first drawer and commenced tumbling a confused mass of papers, &c. "What's in this newspaper?—how carefully it's folded!" and she began to unfold the parcel. "A bunch of dead flowers! ha! ha! ha!" and the lady laughed heartily.

This discovery was no laughing matter to Miss Maturin; she had seen the flowers before—had worn them in her bosom.

"Good gracious!" continued Mrs. De Gospitch, quite excited with curiosity and glee, "here's another parcel—what! —a portrait—*your miniature*, Mary!"

Miss Maturin snatched up the picture and the flowers, and withdrew hastily to her own apartment. What was she to believe?

Had Henry Gospitch sent back these presents intentionally, or was it a mistake? The girl was in agony. She found that though it was easy to deceive, to be deceived was a very different matter. When she half consented to abandon her lover the promise cost her no pang; but her pride was wounded at the thought that he—Henry Gospitch, grocer, gave her up—flung her from him as unworthy to be his wife. She acknowledged that she had wronged him—treated him coldly and uncourteously—left his letters unanswered; and yet she thought there is a love that clings to its object through neglect and wrong—that lingers around a shrine of ice, often remelting the frigid mass to its original state of warmth; and the woman's better nature awakening with this self-questioning, she felt—with anguish felt—that she, too, could have yielded her whole soul to this constancy.

Men cannot forget the world as women do in love, and it is better for all that such is the case. In her enthusiasm Miss Maturin would have sought the arms of Henry Gospitch; but, the enthusiasm gone, she would have paid bitter repentance for the step. And this fact touches nearly upon the moral of this story. Miss Maturin was an instance of conventional perfection, and moral ignorance. She could play the piano, but she could not distinguish between intrinsic and conventional excellence; she could not understand how a grocer could be a hero, and my Lord Bumhunted a mean trickster. It was pitiful to watch her day by day; to see her sacrifice her womanly sweetness at the shrine of Fashion. Simplicity, Joyousness, Sensibility and Truth bled and died at

Fashion's altar; and, phœnix-like, Dignity, Reserve, and "Comportment," arose from the ashes of three Virtues—alas! what an unworthy resurrection. And now must the reader invest our heroine with the sympathies that wait upon a matyr; for her sacrifices (though she knew not their value) were great and many.

Thus, in the leading-strings of fashionable circles, Miss Maturin's love for a positionless individual had been led to a coldness fast verging upon decided indifference; a few months of quiet training, and the lady would have spurned her love with soulfelt disdain. Her pride was quenching her whole heart, and, in a very few months, she would have been a perfect woman of fashion, fit to grace the highest circles, but not good enough to preside over the domesticity of a simple gentleman's home. The discovery of the portrait and flowers was a terrible blow to her pride. Was she to believe that she—the petted puppit of lordly circles—the delight of a refined society—was deserted by a broken-down tradesman! Her dignity persuaded her that Henry Gospitch, seeing the difference of their relative positions, had foregone his claims upon her affections, lacking courage to aspire to her hand; but fact showed that this was not the case, for it was only two weeks since he had written a letter couched in warmest language, and breathing hope of coming connubial happiness; she *must* then believe either that the miniature was left in the drawer by accident, or that she was the discarded mistress of a grocer. And the latter humiliating thought had its good effects upon the pampered woman.

The reader has been told that Mrs. De Gospitch's visit to the sale did not please her husband; it has, moreover, been related how the displeased gentleman intimated his displeasure to his wife. De Gospitch did not content himself with verbal signification of his anger only; he resolved to return the purchased effects to his brother. At this Mrs. De Gospitch was exceedingly wrath. She declared that her husband had no family pride—no dignity; and she considered it very hard that she was not allowed to have her own way in such small matters. She really thought that De Gospitch had better see to the domestic arrangements of the house altogether: she was heartily tired of this officious interference, and she could not consent to put up with it any longer. She was sure there was no great pleasure in looking after a pack of lazy servants,

and, for her part, she should be glad to get rid of the trouble; so De Gospitch had better do it all himself. Though such were the opinions of his wife, it in no way follows that De Gospitch coincided in them; on the contrary, he had a habit of disagreeing with every body, and he did not generally make his wife an exception to his rule. Mrs. De Gospitch's greatest domestic grievance was, that she could not get her husband into a passion. If she called him "a blockhead!" he would smile contemptuously; and when, in the excitement of anger, she ventured to dub her lord and master "a fool!" he would laugh outright, and vow she was quite ridiculous. This jolly way of taking things irritated the aristocratic dame exceedingly; and since she could boast the acquaintance of two baronets and a viscount, she had found De Gospitch's easy and undignified conduct almost beyond endurance. She was determined to lecture him upon the subject—to show him what became a man of his standing in the world. "Do consider, my dear De Gospitch"—she said, as they were returning home one evening from a ball at which De Gospitch had not behaved with sufficient dignity to suit his wife's sense of family importance—"Do consider the dignity of your position! How my poor dear mother would have been shocked, if she could have looked from her grave and seen you, with almost the servility of a waiter, volunteering to carve everything for everybody."

"Nonsense, Susannah! don't preach to me. I know as well as you what to do, and how to behave," retorted the husband, shuddering at the bare idea of the temporary resuscitation of a mother-in-law.

"Uph!—you're a tiresome creature!" said the lady, huddling herself comfortably in the corner of the carriage. A pause ensued, during which Mrs. De Gospitch dozed cozily, now and them humming a favourite air just to tantalize her husband.

"Have you sent that cheffonier back and that picture?" asked De Gospitch in no very bland accents.

"I told one of the servants to take them down stairs till you asked for them; so, if you want them to be sent back, you had better give your own orders to that effect." This was spoken by the wife with delicious coolness; and she continued humming the air from the point at which she had been interrupted.

"I'll have it sent to-morrow before I go out. What do you think people will say if they hear that I have been barter-

ing at the sale of the effects of a poor relation—especially in these democratic days? You ought to have had more prudence,—I'm astonished at you!"

"Well, send the things back, and let me hear no more upon the subject," answered the lady, as the footman opened the carriage door.

On the morrow following this conversation a man was despatched with the cheffonier and picture in quest of Henry Gospitch. The messenger was some hours on his errand, for it was no easy matter to find the obscure garret of the younger brother; he however returned as quickly as possible with the goods he had been instructed to leave. Mrs. De Gospitch wondered at this exceedingly; but a letter in Henry Gospitch's handwriting explained everything. Mr. De Gospitch was out, and so Mrs. De Gospitch availed herself of one of the enjoyments of married life, that is to say, she opened her husband's letter. It ran as follows:—

King's Head Court.

MY BROTHER,

I could not resent the insult offered to my misfortunes by your wife. You could have saved me from the misery that is now hunting me to the churchyard; you did not choose to do so—so much for your conduct as a brother. After my application to you for a loan, and your refusal, you heard no more from me; and God is my witness, I should not have sought a meeting with you, or written one syllable to you again; I should have been wholly dead to you. Why then, Sir, insult me with the petty offer you now make? You fairly bought the articles you send me, and keep them—they would look ridiculous here beside a broken-down bedstead, and—but my situation calls for no pity from you—would accept of none. I look upon you no longer in the light of a brother—the world is wide—let us be clear of each other henceforth: let us be strangers if not sworn enemies.

Yours, in bitterness,

HENRY GOSPITCH.

Our father and mother are looking down upon us; good God! what must they think of you!

"De Gospitch had better not see this letter; it would only make a disturbance," said Mrs. De Gospitch "And as for

the picture and cheffonier, they shall be sold immediately to some upholsterer."

This was the high resolve of the offended sister-in-law. She was determined not to put up with the "presumptuous indignation" of Henry Gospitch; and besides, she knew that her husband would be "chicken-hearted" over the letter; and so, to save her partner some uneasiness, and herself an extra scolding, the epistle was thrown into the fire

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CHAPTER VI.

"Why do we murmur? Are we poor? What's that?
'Tis but to breathe the air of industry;
To use sweet exercise from morn till eve,—
Earn health, content, rude strength, and appetite;
* * * * *
We'll not repine, because we have no longer
A little leisure that we lost in dreams."

BARRY CORNWALL.

MISFORTUNE sometimes improves the character; it softens the heart and quenches undue pride; but with Henry Gospitch poverty acted only as a stimulant, rousing and concentrating his passions almost to a state of frenzy. There he was, ensconced in his garret, nursing and fondling a spirit of revenge that sought eagerly for an outburst. He indulged in the most ambitious dreams—he painted a golden future with a ragged present. The present was never enjoyed by Henry Gospitch. When he basked in a summer of plenty he only enjoyed the sufficiency as suggestive of coming delight—of something that would infinitely surpass all present rapture. He was a man who took a walk in the morning because it would increase his appetite for dinner, who ate his dinner because of the wine to come afterwards, who drank the wine with glee because there was coffee to follow, and who endured the fatigue of drawing-room etiquette because it passed the time away that must elapse before the fulfilment of the morrow's engagement. He never enjoyed the walk itself; he cared not for the dinner when he was eating it; he sipped the wine without zest; did not care much for coffee, and was dull when fulfilling the morrow's engagement. Constant foresight is destructive of much happiness. They are happiest who

can enjoy the present and leave the future to the future. However, at times, this nursing of the future is most beneficial. It is especially so to the man of the world, because it leads him to include in his mundane calculations future probability and contingency, while the plodding, unspeculative man will lose by his short-sighted investments. Henry Gospitch did not hope for immediate success; his mind was essentially speculative, and he was content to grasp the smallest beginning if it held out a large and fair prospect. Years might elapse before he rose; he cared not, so that he could have some assurance of eventually rising. Full of schemes of this promise, he did not dwell at any length upon the "insult" offered to him by his brother: his whole soul was wrapped up in a dream of coming equality with or superiority over him. He was thoroughly honest in all his thoughts and actions. He had strange haughty principles, perhaps, but he had faith in their orthodoxy and strength to adhere to them strictly. It may be thought that he judged his elder brother harshly, but his judgment was the natural interpretation of a proud spirit humbled by adverse circumstances. His sharpest thorn was the thought of having begged the loan; and the secret of his strong revenge was the refusal of that loan. When an action is performed at the expense of dignity, and the humiliation of the performer awakens no sympathy, or is taken as a common occurrence, the humbled individual must experience, perhaps, the keenest sense of shame that it is possible for man to suffer.

Henry could find no comfort in thoughts of Mary Maturin. Was her silence compulsory, or was it voluntary? He could not tell: he had no proofs to guide him—no event that did not admit of opposite versions. His worldly experience was not of that kind that could give him belief in the inconstancy of one so loving and so beloved as he had believed Miss Maturin to be. His hardly-earned knowledge did not include experience in the waywardness and calculation of woman. He was not the repulsed suitor of some dozen flaunting damsels—he never paid homage to a ball-room puppet—he knew nothing of that mercenary marriage market (a ceremonious ball-room) where bedecked beauty entraps the rising generation—he had known Miss Maturin for some years; and he had been so absorbed in an unfailing love for her, that speculating misses had been always passed unnoticed. Besides, he knew Miss Maturin to be so free from all taint of worldly pride—so utterly incapable of deceit, that he generally felt convinced

that to doubt her love was to wrong her deeply. Though he had faith in his mistress, it needed some exercise of philosophy to sustain it upon so old a foundation; and when he remembered that she had not once written to him since his failure, his soul sank within him, and his love partook strongly of a very opposite passion. But his pride surmounted all, and he resolved that he would use every effort to see Miss Maturin, and if a change *had* come over her, that he would fling her from him, and work only more zealously to rise, that he might, at some future time, look down upon her and taunt her with the cowardice of her heart. If this resolve was not chivalrous it was natural—the offspring of plodding, ill-educated humanity.

These teazing reflections were in no way modified by Mrs. Grumblebum, the worthy landlady of whom our hero rented his garret. Mrs. Grumblebum was quite a character. She declared that she was "country reared," and that once, "and not so long since neither," she was "the pride of her village." We will not question the veracity of the "country-reared" lady; she might have been a Venus for aught we know to the contrary. Time *does* alter people wonderfully, though we never before heard that the gentleman celebrated for his forelock could twist an aquiline into a decided pug, and stretch a lady's mouth to enormous dimensions. Could Time throw gamboge into blue eyes and make them a good sap green? Could Time redden auburn tresses and swell taper fingers to the consistency of the very best pork sausages? If Time could work these miracles, then do we admit that Mrs. Grumblebum might once have been the type of Venus. Let us be charitable, and look upon the dear old lady as the ill-used plaything of the gray gentleman—a beautiful flower spoiled by a long, sharp frost. Her temper, too, was not of the sweetest—she could scold, though she said "it went to her heart when she had to find fault" If she was well primed for an angry discussion, she always opened fire by avowing that "nobody hated quarrelling more than herself," and it was a great pity people could not do as they would be done by, and live in peace and quietness. And for a lady in love with peace and quietness, we know nobody who could bear a better part in verbal warfare than the gentle Mrs. Grumblebum. Her vocabulary was inexhaustible; and she seasoned her discourse so judiciously with slang, that her speeches never fell flat or powerless. She either persuaded or enraged. We should not do her justice if

we were to omit mention of her humour and wit. She had caught the funny mania of the day, and she thoroughly believed that one of the first duties of life was to make jokes. Her attempts were awful. We could have borne her abuse, but it wanted a strong man to withstand her jokes. Oh! the puns Mrs. Grumblebum considered it her duty to make! And if there is one thing more nauseous than another, assuredly it is a bad pun. But this dilapidated Venus spared nobody—we verily believe that her last breath gave utterance to something jocular.

She often treated Henry Gospitch to a visit; and his irregular payment of rent was a passport to familiarity. It is ever so; a creditor (especially an uneducated one) always considers familiarity with his debtor condescension. The vulgar mind of our hero's remarkable landlady taught her to consider her indebted lodger as an equal if not an inferior. While he paid his rent regularly her talk had been as small as mince-meat—but her tongue grew long simultaneously with her bill. Three weeks had passed since Henry Gospitch had paid any money, and the embarrassment of the debt was in no way relieved by the increasing prolixity of Mrs. Grumblebum's visits; but want of funds compelled the poor man to submit patiently to the verbosity of his creditor; he could not give her cash, and so he must pawn his ears awhile, awaiting anxiously the coming of the precious metal. He did not see exactly how money was to be got, but he felt certain that there were means which a short time might discover, and so under the infliction of Mrs. Grumblebum's tongue he was patient, lamb-like.

So constant had the lady's visits been lately that she, for perhaps the first time in her life, found her fund of conversation somewhat used up—besides, she began to question the honesty of her customer; and she resolved to intimate her fears as delicately as possible to their source. The reader will see what *she* called delicacy of diction—she is in Henry Gospitch's room :—

"Well, Mr. G—, here I am again, you see," quoth the woman, as she made use of the only unoccupied chair in the room—"you look bilious like." Henry assured her that he was as well as usual. "Am glad to hear it. I'm really, 'pon my word, Mr. Gospitch, very sorry—very sorry indeed to trouble you—but you see—three weeks, and—"

"I understand, Mrs. Grumblebum, you would rather not give me further credit."

"Exactly—that 's it, Mr. Gospitch, and if you can't pay just now, I should take it as a mighty favour if you would bundle out and leave your bundle. Ha! ha! ho!" and the woman's large frame shook like a huge jelly as she gave vent to her self-appreciation in a peal of laughter;—"bundle out and leave his bundle, ha! ha!" Mrs. Grumblebum, in the innocence of her heart, believed she had made a joke that deserved conspicuous type. Poor, deluded soul!

Henry Gospitch did not relish this pleasantry at his expense, and he signified as much to the grinning female.

"You won't stand this sort of thing, won't you, my trump?" asked Mrs. Grumblebum warmly. "Ugh! Pretty behaviour for a bankrupt towards a woman who pays her way honestly—who has taken a beggar under her motherly wing for three mortal weeks without so much as a tanner for her pains. Oh! you wretched men—you're a pack of infidels, every one of you—there's not a pin to choose between ye—ye're all alike—wretches, and women are fools for having anything to do with ye. I've read of the Amazonians, and dash my wig"—(here, spite of his anger, Henry could not repress a smile at the woman's strange asseveration). She perceived the fact, and continued more vehemently, "Oh! I don't wear a wig, and I 'm not to be set down by your grinning—as I said before, dash my wig." Henry now laughed outright, and Mrs. Grumblebum grew scarlet with passion, thundering at the top of her voice, "You may laugh away sir, but I will say dash my wig, whether I wear one or not—if I don't think the Amazonians, who scorned men—wouldn't recognize 'em at all—were just the sort of women I should like to live with; and if men don't reform, I shouldn't wonder if there was a grand meeting of our sex, and we, one and all, agreed to become Amazonians—then what 'd become of you nobler animals?"

Henry Gospitch did not feel inclined to humour his landlady any further, especially after her insinuations, and so he begged, in a very few words, that she would allow him to vacate his lodging that day week. He assured her that he would endeavour to get sufficient money to liquidate her claims against him, but if he failed in the object of his endeavour, she must allow him to leave his bundle with her as

security for eventual payment. He passed no remarks on her desultory declamations, and this added to the good lady's irritation. If there was one thing in this world that she dreaded more than another, it was an inattentive listener—and her lodger, her indebted lodger, had digested none of her gratuitous remarks, though he had been pleased to laugh when she was serious, and to be serious when she made a joke. A saint could not bear such bad treatment. How, then, was she, a poor ailing mortal, to put up with it? She had, however, much confidence in the power of her humorous sayings, and so, with a true woman's pertinacity, she continued,—

"You 're mighty dignified, Mr. Gospitch. Think of the care that has been taken of your creature comforts since you have been in my establishment. I 'm sure you 've been humoured like a child. I thought you a very nice prim young man, but I find, instead, that I 've been nursing a wiper. Ha! ha! ha! And—ha! ha! ha! You turn upon your landlady when she wants to have a snug talk with you, and try to *wipe her* out, do you? Ha! ha! ha! You don't laugh. Well, the joke was severe, I acknowledge. Here—here 's a letter for you—in a female's handwriting too! Oh! you men, you're a sorry set, really you are," and Mrs. Grumblebum looked at a large watch that she carried in her bosom, with a guard attached to it about the thickness of a bell-rope. "Good gracious—past five!" and she hastened out of the room, leaving Henry Gospitch to read his letter alone.

Mr. Gaps, a man with the damages and gifts of some sixty years about him, lived tranquilly with his wife at Clapham. He was what people call an independent man; that is to say, his purse was comfortably and pretty securely lined, and his money-battle with the world was over; the field of the cloth of gold had been contested and won, and he was snug in his conquest, though somewhat scarred by the fighting. When Mr. Gaps had been persuaded by sundry friends that he had amassed sufficient wealth to provide handsomely for the remainder of his life, and he had altogether withdrawn his name from the house of Gaps, Short, and Co., corn-merchants, he found that a sense of loneliness crept over him when he passed an entire day at his Clapham villa, and so he resolved to marry. He thought Miss Jackson, who was the eldest of a numerous and fine family, living

in the neighbourhood, would just suit him — and really Mr. Jackson had a large family to support. He proposed—the girl refused—talked some nonsense about the disparity of years—her heart, &c.—but these objections were hushed by her prudent relations, and she swore at the parish altar to love, honour, and obey Joseph Gaps. Gaps was a sour man—he had been soured by many hard trials, and he must be pitied. He treated his young wife with uniform kindness; he humoured her little whims if he did not absolutely pet her; but she was not happy. How should she be? her husband was just forty years her senior! Life to her was all *couleur de rose;* her partner could only "smell the mould above the rose"—a great, sad difference! She was not positively wretched, let it be understood—she enjoyed that negative happiness—that mere apology for joy that keeps a peaceful even beating at the heart where life is only cheerful monotony. Henry Gospitch had made the acquaintance of Gaps during the progress of some mercantile dealings the two had had together; and though the firm of Gaps, Short, and Co. had lost some money by Henry's failure, the retired and wealthy tradesman did not spurn his friend in his poverty; on the contrary, he volunteered assistance, and the letter given to our hero by Mrs. Grumblebum contained a welcome offer. Gaps was confined to his bed by an attack of the gout, and Mrs. Gaps had written the letter for her husband. It ran as follows:—

Berners Street.

MY DEAR SIR,—Can I be of service to you? Our acquaintance is not of long standing, but I can only hope that as far as we have known each other the pleasure of the acquaintance has been mutual; and I ask you, in the spirit of a friend, can any small influence I may possess further your future views? If so, command me confidently, and I must assure you that it will be a happiness to me to serve you. I am locked up here with gout, but my wife will call upon my quondam partners to-morrow, and afterwards wait upon you with a specific offer, the acceptance of which is of course perfectly optional. Yours sincerely,

JOSEPH GAPS.

To a person unacquainted with the jealousies of trade, this offer will appear an improbable one; a few words will

unravel the mystery. Mr. Gaps and our hero's father were schoolfellows—as youths were cronies, but Mr. Gospitch cut the acquaintance of Gaps when this gentleman resolved to earn a livelihood by the retail sale of corn.

Old Mr. Gospitch did not object to a merchant, but a retail trader could not presume to be the bosom friend of a wholesale dealer; and to this day, in that quarter so peculiarly the property of retired traders, the wholesales do not mix with the retails. This injury had gnawed at the heart of Joseph Gaps for some thirty years; he pitied the condition of Henry Gospitch, and longed to see the young man the equal of the present haughty De Gospitch.

Richard Gaps had many good qualities; he had not the softer amiabilities of human nature, but he had the grand quality from which (nickname them and disguise them as we may) all others spring, a good heart. The goodness of Gaps was, it is true. enshrined in a blunt, gruff, frowning address; nevertheless all who knew the man thoroughly esteemed and respected him. He was not a man likely to inspire a woman with intense love; he lacked the necessary sympathy—the necessary amiability. Mrs. Gaps, young enough to be his youngest daughter, was a faithful and attentive wife to him. He was thankful for her manifold kindness, though he seldom expressed his gratitude to her; and she, resigned and cheerful, still watched over her decaying husband with an angel's watchfulness. And Gaps needed her incessant care: he was fast becoming a confirmed invalid—fast approaching that state when he must lean upon another for the gratification of every wish—for the execution of every needful action.

Gaps had been suddenly taken ill while at his town lodgings, and he had dictated the letter to Henry Gospitch from a sick bed—a fit nursery for Christian charities and kindly constructions.

It was autumn—the balmiest autumn weather, and a setting sun!—a time when even London air—where plodding trade engrosses man's whole life—tastes of the richness of the country, and all things wear a peaceful, hopeful holiday. I have walked through London streets with half the charms of rustic nature full upon me; and, looking upward. (hear this, ignorant, uncharitable Frenchmen,) have gazed into a heaven of unclouded blue—a blue as intense as the colour can be imagined; and within the iron railings of some London

squares the mind may be supplied with so much palpable fact that it needs but the most ordinary exercise of the ima ginative faculty to believe oneself some hundred miles away from the metropolis, and on a spot where Nature's witchery has been exercised with fairy-like success. Borrow the key of Lincoln's Inn Gardens and judge the truth of this.

The sun had dropped below London's horizon, and gorgeous purple and copper-coloured clouds were rising from the luminary's bed, (as though he had set his couch on fire,) deepening into an intense purple as they ascended the heavens. Birds, too—ay, merry, chirping birds, perched upon gables and chimney-pots, chattered and sang enthusiastically; and melancholy pigeons (they strut and fly as though they had some great sadness at heart) cooed mournfully, while they twirled themselves round as if they were commencing a game of blindman's-buff, preparatory to their retirement for the night. London, with its million hearts, seemed a huge nest of happiness. Happiness! Yes, throughout the choicest streets—where pampered luxury needs three footmen behind its carriage, the superficial might paint happiness only; but London holds St. Giles's, Saffron Hill, and countless unions, and knowing this, Justice drops her scales and dons black crape despairingly.

Mrs. Gaps sat at the bed-room window watching the passers-by, and Gaps breathed heavily in bed. Now and then the ailing man gave forth a deep groan—now and then he half uttered an oath as the pain seized him more lustily. The twilight was fast deepening into absolute darkness, and the birds chirped less and less; Mrs. Gaps was sad and silent. There was something melancholy in the beauty of the evening—some effect suggestive of a general fading—something whispering of death. Mrs. Gaps felt this unwelcome influ ence, and peered mechanically through the window panes. She ever listened attentively to the movements of her husband, and now she thought she could hear him whispering faintly—she even imagined that her own name was now and then repeated in those veiled accents: she approached the bed—the suffering man held forth his hand and clasped her arm tightly, drawing her cheek to his colourless lips.

"What's the matter, dear?" asked the frightened woman.

"Nothing! nothing! listen!" and Gaps made a great effort to turn himself in the bed. "I am broken-hearted.

You have nothing to do with the breaking, Marian, nothing whatever. You won't hate me if I tell you all?—promise me."

"Hate you!—never! never! What *is* the matter?" and the wife put her head upon the pillow beside her husband, and looked intently in his wrinkled, withered face. So plump and rosy were her features that their near neighbourhood to the pallid cheek of Gaps seemed a mockery—a cruel comparison.

"I was once in France," commenced the sick man, "at school. I fell in love with a neighbouring school-girl. To say that she was thoroughly English in all her actions and feelings is the best compliment I can pay her; and she was worthy of the praise. Passion gave no cheating varnish to this early love. She was not a paragon of beauty, nor had she any artful fascination about her. That I loved her the misery of my life has sufficiently proved. We parted—but with hearts so closely bound together—with such perfect sympathy—with such a firm trust in each other, (a trust felt but once; believe me, Marian, though Heaven appreciates your goodness,) that we cared little about the leagues of ocean that, for an entire year, were to roll between us. Cara was going to England."

"Cara!" exclaimed Marian Gaps. "Cara! Tell me all. Who was she? Oh Heaven!"

"Foolish girl, Marian—I love *you*—believe me—tenderly. How can I help loving you?—so kind, so good to me. Well: Cara went to England. Some two or three years passed, and again we met; but little—less than little—emotion was felt by me at the meeting; yet Cara was in tears: I saw the big salt drops gush from her half-closed eyes—I heard her sigh—I saw her bosom heave convulsively—she looked upon me; but she was not the Cara of my boyhood. She had become—and the truth was gall to me—a woman—no longer a simple girl. Still the drops that fell from her eyelids—still the waving bosom—still the trembling hand—bore evidence, stamped with fairest truth, of the constant yearnings of her big heart. She did not chide me for my coldness. I could not love her, though I hated myself for my want of feeling. I felt no thrill run through me when I gave her my hand. Her girl's heart had never once swerved from the boy to whom she had, as a school-girl, given her pure passion. I feel

the smallness of the part I played. Cara first convinced me that I had a heart—in her hand mine thrilled for the first time—in her presence I was first happy. I cannot tell whether it was some devil that possessed me, that so made me an enemy to myself. I have since, in forgetful moments, held her name forth to revelry—to contempt—and I have grieved, too, for this long nights. What it was that snatched a holy feeling from me—I know not; that it *was* snatched from me I know full well; and I, in thorough emptiness of heart, laughed at the robbery. I was a fool—a maniac." Here the confessing man paused, exhausted. Marian gave him some water; he sipped it, and with some difficulty continued:—"I had thought of the world as of some horrid place—some preparatory hell—some black inquisition, where all were put upon the rack; some, too weak to bear the torture, giving themselves up to badness—while others would keep stout hearts, and pass triumphantly through the grim ordeal. This, Marian, was my boyish notion of life—this the scene in which I thought I might have a supernumerary's part. It is a mistake—a sad error—to speak of youthful actions harshly and with little consideration. Old men prate much about boyish passion—of sentimental school-girls—of 'general inexperience'—of 'no knowledge of the world'—and, so prating, they condemn the frailties of hot youth. Many think this condemnation good advice, and look upon it as opinion of scripture value because uttered by aged manhood. This is all nonsense. It is *not* good philosophy to snatch from life its best days—it is not wise to show a coffin to a bride. It sounds, I know, very right, very proper, to talk with severity to sentimental girls, and to check boyish passion; but say ye, dipped in that ice-pond—the world—is not this boyish passion—this first love of woman—the whole history of a life?"

"It is it is," answered Marian quickly. "But what of Cara? Who—what was she? Oh Heaven!"

This earnest appeal startled the invalid. He could not understand why his wife should take such interest in a woman she had never seen or heard of before; besides he liked not the questioning, inasmuch as he had nothing complimentary to his own heart to relate: he even felt hurt that his wife should be eager to gather a knowledge of facts redounding to his discredit, and therefore tending to decrease her respect for him, and her faith in his entire affection. He knew well

that the pleading beauty before him had not been loved as she deserved to be; he felt how the richness of her devoted soul had been thrown away upon himself, and he could scarcely muster sufficient courage to explain to her that the love which should have been hers had been given to another years and years ago. Never before had he felt so thoroughly grateful to his wife as he did now—her daily, nightly tenderness; her anxious watchings and her thankless services; her cheerful looks when her heart must have been desolate as an untrodden wilderness; her whispered comfortings when a foreboding frown was upon his own features; her bedside prayers for his convalescence—all, all these charities rushed upon his brain, and showed him, in unmistakeable evidence, how little was the payment he had made for these womanly devotions. He turned towards Marian with an opened heart, resolved to give her a full history of his life; he felt he owed the biography to her as an apology for past coldness. He continued:—"I first met Cara at Boulogne—at her school—at Madame B.'s; and, as I told you, when I met her again after our separation, my love was gone. But gradually and very slowly my affection for her was re-awakened by frequent intercourse with her; and in short, some years afterwards, meeting her by accident in Paris—I married her——"

"Gracious heaven, Joseph—then I am not your wife!—Cara was my sister!" And Marian fell upon the bed in a swoon.

Gaps understood with agony the pressing appeal of the breathless, injured creature who, pale and motionless as alabaster, now lay before him.

It is no easy task to detail the various emotions that struggled for mastery in the bosom of the wounded wife. Gaps concealed no incident connected with his melancholy story. He had sufficient fortitude to narrate his own cruelties to his wife's sister—his final abandonment of her, and her desperate death. When Mrs. Gaps had heard the whole history her first resolve was to leave her husband instantly, and for ever. The memory of her wronged sister—her manifold injuries, and the horror of her final fate, awoke a hatred in the breast of the young wife for the sick and withered man who writhed before her,—the confessed murderer of her sister. She must leave him; she felt that she could not look upon him without loathing, and she would not embitter the

remnant of his days with useless reproaches. The woman's inward struggle was plainly painted upon her face, and Gaps saw the tragic interest in the picture. His life had many extenuating circumstances. His faults were more the result of bad temper than of bad heart. In a fit of passion no word, no action, was too violent for him, no oath too blasphemous; but, take him in a good humour, and no mortal could be more charitable. Lying then on a bed, sick in body and at heart, with coffin hammers ringing in his ears, and every twinge of the disease bespeaking a customer for the undertaker; the whole honey of his soul rose above the gall, clothing every thought in charity and sweetness. His confession had taken a load from his mind, and he bent every energy to one point—the consolation due to his stricken wife. He conjured her with the whole eloquence of his heart to visit his sins with a lenient judgment; he besought her to remember that when he married her he knew not of her relationship to his former wife, and to believe that he had prayed fervently for the eternal happiness of her poor, dear, dead sister. The earnest utterance with which this appeal was spoken touched Mrs. Gaps, and she granted the sick man's request, that she would not divulge his confession during his lifetime. She also promised to stop with him during the remainder of his life—as his nurse—his sister only; for she persisted in her belief that they were not legally man and wife.

Having wrung this promise from Marian, Gaps went on to detail to her the miseries and follies of his life. As he proceeded with the picture he became more and more excited. He had a trying review to make; the desperate strivings of his young life; the disappointments and griefs of years; his misfortunes and his bad actions rushed upon his mind simultaneously, and the old man trembled at the preponderance of his sins. "Marian," he exclaimed passionately, "my father and mother, I fear, have much to answer for. They did not school me prudently; they fettered me as a beast, and called the bondage—kindness. I looked upon my home as a prison-house—there was no freedom there—all was watchfulness and restraint. Had I been a madman my mother could not have watched me more narrowly. But out of doors—the fetters of a too strict home cast off—I revelled in a flood of animal spirits; I was cunning and selfish. Every waking hour of my young life was spent in cogitating some money-getting scheme.

I was a poor enslaved puppet. My heaven was selfish and sensual gratification, and the ladder to my paradise must be made of gold. This, this, Marian, my parents taught me in the outraged name of affection. Fling to oblivion, love, charity, and all grace; count the idols called virtues as usurping demigods, holding the sway that should be held by Plutus only; make love a hoarding of the yellow metal; make charity a care of self; and hope—the giant staff of life—must shrink into a petty faith in a gilded futurity. As a means to a good end, god Gold is worthy of some worship; but make gold the end, and life the means to that end, and the glittering deity is a puny monster. Blame me not then, good Marian, that I have been selfish, harsh, or brutal. I am a pupil worthy of my school."

The words of the sick man went to the soul of Marian and awoke therein many charitable pleadings for all his errors. Gaps spake strict truth, he had been harshly used by his parents. Had he been a weak-minded boy his education would have been conducive to his future good; but it is obvious that the quick witted child needs different treatment to that required by the dullard. The dullard shrinks from knowledge, while the acute boy covets it. The one wants an iron hand to arouse him, the other only seeks the gentlest assistance. The slow boy must be made to think, the quick youth only asks for a guiding-rein to his thoughts. A weak-minded boy, reared in unlimited indulgence, will probably become a morose, foolish man, having the saddest side of life continually before him; but place implicit confidence in an intelligent child—command him with the strong hand of reason only, and you will probably rear an open-hearted, strong minded man.

Gaps continued:—"I entered upon life without a spark of enthusiasm. When I was but fourteen years of age I was, and I am no egotist when I say so, a fine, open-hearted, impulsive young fellow, thankful for present happiness, and confident in my golden dreams of the future. It was at this time that I was first engaged to Cara. I came to England, and in a very few months my soul's enthusiasm was dead. I cannot thank those who robbed me of my boyish romance. The heart, Marian, naturally clings to all associations which are the heaven of its expanding days; it thanks not the man who robs it of its freshness—of its ignorance of the strife of man. And how should it? If the heart were born without an over-

flowing fulness of all the saintlier tendencies of humanity, what chance would it have in its battle with the badness about it? Could it, do you think, good Marian, day by day (as hearts have done)—with a nobility of purpose—with a happy forgetfulness of the mean and sensual pleasure sought by lesser souls—stand aside from temptation, mailed in the best majesty of manhood—conscientiousness? Human nature would not have the ghost of a chance here, if in the baby there were not seated the germ of a deeply-rooted presentiment of something to come beyond this passing battle. Dear Marian, these confessions have robbed death of half his terrors—for death is near, very near me. When I sleep he comes upon me, fashioned awfully. One night I thought he carried a huge torch in his hand, and then I saw him driving a hearse mounted with so many flaming torches for feathers; and on the coffin I could read Joseph Gaps! These are terrible fantasies, are they not, Marian?"

Marian clasped her husband's hand, and wept bitterly. "You have been hardly used, Joseph," she said, "very hardly treated."

"Yes," continued the frightened old man, "and then I thought Cara stood by a grave in which my body was deposited—she was dressed in white, and bore a cherub of exceeding beauty in her arms—that cherub was my son. She wept over my unclosed grave. I could distinctly see the tears fall like red-hot shot upon my coffin: and then I imagined myself inside the coffin, alive and conscious, and still the tears fell upon the lid, and I lay in agony, boxed up beyond the possibility of escape, counting the drops with intensest suffering. I could not speak. Suddenly clods of earth came down like thunderbolts, and from utter agony and darkness I awoke. Was not this terrible, Marian?"

"Beyond endurance, but you must not think of these things, Joseph; you will soon be well, and about again. The doctor says that in a week you may go out for a drive."

"In a hearse—I may, Marian, I may,"—and Gaps fell back upon his bed thoroughly exhausted with this long scene of excitement; a very few moments and his exhaustion gave him a deep quiet sleep.

And Marian Gaps, the sister of Cara, with a forgiving, loving, womanly spirit looks ever and anon upon the sleeping man, and so passes the long, dark, noiseless night.

The marriage party unexpectedly interrupted.

CHAPTER VII.

A PARTY AT DE GOSPITCH'S, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

How much a richly wedded husband owes
To tailors' journeymen, and patent shoes!

It was the custom of the De Gospitches to give six parties every season. Mr. De Gospitch thought that two assemblies per season would be quite enough, but his wife declared that she could not do without six at least, and so the husband had to bandage his neck in a white neckcloth six times a year, and to say agreeable nothings to a host that crowded his mansion and ate his suppers.

About a fortnight after the visit to the sale Mrs. De G. held an assembly, De Gospitch having had a dinner in the afternoon. The square was thronged with carriages from nine o'clock till half past twelve; a gang of idlers sought to win halfpence by clearing the way for approaching vehicles, or by calling a missing brougham; footmen, making motley groups, talked scandal of the company within; in short, the entire square was filled with evidence of the importance of the party going on at No. —.

The whole interior of the house bespoke the greatness of the occasion. Footmen were bolting in at, and out of, mysterious doors with all kinds of odd looking things in their hands; now and then you had a momentary view of a dish of custards, or a Johnny rushing across the hall with some dozen of ices—the butler, with a look of intense responsibility, bellowing to a fellow who had put pepper into the negus instead of spice; in short, everybody was giving directions to everybody, and nobody seemed to heed the plentiful instructions. Such was the scene without the suite of rooms in which the company were assembled.

Let us peep within the ball-room.

The band had just intimated the commencement of a quadrille, when Mr. Blarmigan asked the hand of Miss Maturin

for a dance. Mr. Blarmigan, though a married man, was a most agreeable partner in a quadrille. He had plenty of small-talk. He had something to say about every thing and every body; and if he seldom made a brilliant remark or a decent repartee, at least was he one of that large clique who talk immensely, and convey very little. He would discuss any subject, and never offend by ignorance or presumption; yet he seldom gave a tangible opinion. Anything, from the nature of poetic licence to hopscotch, would be certain to call for some remark from him, and yet nobody detected the distinguished shallowness of the individual. He had a very moderate share of intellect, but he made the most of the little he did possess, and so Mr. Blarmigan passed for a finished and agreeable gentleman. He was more popular amongst women than with men. Women love the polish more than the substance beneath the varnish. Men prefer the substance—the solid, sound groundwork—to the mere surface. A foppish genius will be popular with both sexes, but a foppish numskull can only command the admiration of women. This may not redound to the credit of the fair sex; it is nevertheless a fact. Miss Maturin was very well pleased with the prospect of a quadrille with Mr. Blarmingan, he was such a well-behaved person—dressed so nicely—was a perfect gentleman.

"You must be much annoyed, Miss Maturin, with the sad state Mr. Henry is in," said Blarmigan, to his fair partner, during one of the pauses in the dance. Miss Maturin evaded the question. What! she! the *vis-a-vis* to a baronet, talk of, and pity a bankrupt grocer!

"It is our turn, I think," said the proud girl, glad in the opportunity of dropping so very vulgar a subject; and the pair joined in the dance.

"What is Mr. Henry doing now?" resumed Blarmigan, when they again paused.

"I really do not know, Mr. Blarmigan," answered Miss Maturin, somewhat coldly; "I do not presume to interfere in that gentleman's affairs."

"Certainly not, Miss Maturin; but when I last heard of him he was in such a very sad plight that really I have felt quite anxious about the poor fellow. I beg your pardon a thousand times for having mentioned the subject—I am forgiven, am I not?"

"You say Henry—I mean Mr. Henry Gospitch—is suffering—in want?" inquired the girl eagerly, forgetting the aristocrat in the woman.

"Why, to tell you the truth, when last I heard of him, the poor man was lodged in an obscure garret in King's Head Court, Seven Dials, or some such awful locality. I believe he hadn't a farthing that he could call his own—was an utter beggar. It's very distressing to hear of such things," drawled the fashionable hero carelessly, and he adjusted his gloves to a nicety. "Why, have you a head-ache, Miss Maturin—or you are faint, perhaps?"

"I am well, I thank you, Sir. It is our turn again." And again they joined in the dull, monotonous progress of the quadrille. It was useless to attempt it. Miss Maturin could not forget Henry Gospitch and his misery. As she passed the baronet, (the *one* baronet present,) he said something extremely polite to her; he was unmarried too; but no—it was her fate to think of the man she had wronged. She looked about her and saw happy, joyous faces; but there was a sickliness—a shame at her heart that smote the smiles as she endeavoured to pucker them upon her lip, and so she could not play the hypocrite.

"It was thoughtless in me to mention the misfortunes of Mr. Henry on this festive occasion," simpered the lady's man.

"Not in the least, Mr. Blarmigan, I assure you. I am certainly grieved for Mr. Henry Gospitch, and had not the slightest idea that he was in the distressing condition you describe."

"Your sister and Mrs. Blarmigan are mutually entertaining;" and Mr. Blarmigan directed the attention of his partner to a sofa where his wife and Mrs. De Gospitch were seated in earnest conversation. A curl of the lip, and a certain tossing of the head, indulged in at intervals by the latter lady, and a half-suppressed smile upon the visage of Mrs. Blarmigan, showed that the conversation was more entertaining to the guest than to the hostess.

Mrs. Blarmigan had a reputation for satire; she could say more ill-natured things in a given time than any person of her acquaintance, and her society was courted because people dreaded her ridicule. Satirical young ladies (and, alas! they are increasing in numbers daily) eschew sentiment, and profess

to be matter-of-fact, unprejudiced people. They think they magnify their own superiority by depreciating the good qualities of their acquaintance; their popularity in society is determined by the extent of their ungracious repartees or unfeeling sallies. Satirical girls are often strong-minded, and generally warm-hearted. Their satire arises from constitutional causes, or from conventional education; or it is inordinate pride. Some love to shine, and cannot content themselves with a moderate share of attention; they would engross the adulation of a kingdom; but the kingdom does not choose to hold itself in their fetters, and so they, out of very spite, find venom to fling upon every thing and every body, until some man, having discovered the kindly woman beneath the mask of spite, suppresses the cynic, and calls forth the girl's natural sweetness. Now Mrs. Blarmigan had not enjoyed the purifying influence of love; her marriage with Blarmigan was a mercenary match, contracted for the mutual worldly advantage of the contracting parties. A fine distinguished indifference had possession of the bridal pair when they stood at the hymeneal altar; and so the lady's heart had remained enshrined in its nutshell proportions, leaving her satire untouched and uncontrolled. She daily loved "to take people down:" she hated to see very genteel jackdaws attempt to pass for peacocks, though she always assumed a few of the brilliant feathers herself; she found a malicious delight in stripping her friends of their borrowed plumage and holding them forth as dingy, common-place birds dropped from very modest nestlings. She had heard of Henry Gospitch, the poor relation, and she was delighted with the prospect of "drawing out" her hostess upon the subject.

"Poor Blarmigan's rather low spirited to-night," commenced the cynic.

"I believe he has lost a large sum of money lately."

"Indeed! I 'm sorry to hear that," said Mrs. De Gospitch. "Not at play I hope?"

"Oh, dear no! He stupidly gave large credit to some tradesman, and the man has lately become a bankrupt. Blarmigan won't say how much he has lost by the affair; but I suppose it 's rather a large sum, or he wouldn't have thought of even mentioning it to me. You see, Blarmigan will still dabble in an office—though Heaven knows he don't want any increase of income—but he says it amuses him, and he has nothing else

to occupy him of a morning. I tell him that if he did his duty as a husband he might make my morning calls with me, and then go a drive with me in the park: but no, he prefers a musty, dirty office, choked up there in the very heart of the city, all amongst aldermen and smoke-dried citizens. I 'm sure I pity his taste."

"Really, my dear Mrs. Blarmigan," sympathized Mrs. De Gospitch, "really men are not the attentive, chivalrous creatures they were!"

"You are low spirited?"

"I must confess I am so a little," and Mrs. De Gospitch sighed gently. "I have been quite disappointed. Scarcely half the people I invited are here. There is Viscount Hubbub, Mr. Arthur Percy, Mr. Saville Lennox Smith, and many others: it is so very provoking. As for Lord Hubbub I shall not forgive him."

"It 's a little too bad." Mrs. Blarmigan was now primed for something particularly severe. She sneered at the idea of the De Gospitches being the intimate friends of a viscount, and she chuckled at the grocer relationship. "Blarmigan tells us that the name of this ruined grocer is De Gospitch: how very unfortunate and annoying for you!"

"Oh no! not at all—the individual you mention calls himself Gospitch. He has no *De* to his name."

"You *do* know something about him then!" exclaimed the fair satirist; "I thought he was totally unconnected with the family!"

"Why, Mrs. Blarmigan, you surely don't think the man is any relation of ours!" and Mrs. De Gospitch coloured visibly, for she was not exactly pleased with her guest's questioning.

"A world of apologies, my dear Mrs. De Gospitch. No; I always thought that the similarity of patronymic must be an unfortunate coincidence. But the man knows of his distinguished namesakes, and, I believe, has the audacity to insinuate a near relationship with your husband."

When an insinuation is but an unpleasant truth, how it galls the person to whom it is directed.

"I hope Mrs. Blarmigan does not recognise the man out of compliment to our family."

"Dear, dear, no! We laughed at the idea of his being any relation of yours." Mrs. Blarmigan, however, rose to fulfil a

terpsichorean engagement, and Mr. Sheridan Shakspeare Jackson, sub-editor of a metropolitan weekly paper, ensconced himself beside his fair hostess. Mrs. De Gospitch was allowed on all hands to be a highly intellectual woman. Who could doubt the fact, when they knew that she put her children out to nurse, drew her hair tightly off her forehead, was totally ignorant of the simplest cookery, and could not handle a needle. She had read all the novels for many seasons past, and she dabbled in politics. She always had one or two authors at her parties, very much in the same spirit that a manager engages an extraordinary attraction to bring together a full audience; but the specimens of literary men were not calculated to give her guests a very high notion of that mysterious biped—an author. Mr. Sheridan Jackson was certainly *not* a genius. He was perfect, however, in the slang of literature; he had a prodigious fund of quotation; a little French, and less Latin; he had read Shakspeare, Milton, and Blackstone, and this preparation, gently garnished and seasoned with a constant reading of the light literature of the day, gave Mr. Jackson his position as a literary character. Mrs. De Gospitch forgave him many discourtesies—rudeness in literary men being the eccentricity peculiar to genius. If he ventured to make a remark that infringed upon the received rules of propriety, his genius was a sufficient apology; if he upset a glass of wine into a lady's lap, it was the absence of mind always remarkable in a genius; and if he detained the whole company for a quarter of an hour with an elaboration of his own opinion, opposing contemptuously that of the entire party, his detestable presumption was the natural self-reliance of a great mind. Thus did the intellectual hostess excuse the ignorance and ill-breeding of one of her lions. She would have defended the most glaring rudeness in her literary guests, because it flattered her pride to be consulted by men who were "diffusing knowledge throughout the entire world." She dearly loved a cosey, comfortable chat with a literary friend; it was a feast of reason so charming and so instructive, that she declared she could sit for ever at the banquet. Jackson was an especial favourite, and his conversation with his friend Captain Grasy on their way to the party will best explain the secret of his popularity.

Jackson was about to introduce his Irish friend, Captain Grasy, to the De Gospitches; Jackson was a privileged person,

and could introduce anybody. "By the way, captain," quoth Sheridan Jackson, "you must be on your guard with Mrs. De Gospitch. She will call your 'Tour through Canada, with a Touch at Van Dieman's Land,' a very charming book of travel. Be diffident, captain. Tell her that, judging from her conversational powers, she must write charmingly; you will then stand a chance with Miss Maturin. They say Mrs. Gospitch is about to give a book to the world."

"Give!" exclaimed the captain, incredulously.

"Why, yes," giggled the sub-editor, "she gives it to the world for the very best of reasons—nobody'll buy it. Mind, be positive that it must be a masterpiece. Tell her that the nation can't afford to lose her, and you may safely ask her to use her influence with Miss Maturin."

"The deuce!" chuckled the captain, twirling a moustache that vulgar people would have called carroty. "Ha! ha! that 's your philosophy, Sheridan Jackson, is it? First the butter, then the hook!"

"Exactly, and I never found the process fail in its effect. The grand secret, captain, is—the butter *first*"

"Of course," drawled the captain.

"Look you here. You 're a young man, captain, and, as a young man, should listen to the counsel of an old one Never say 'of course' to a man with grey hair."

"And why not?" said the captain.

"Why not!" echoed the bald sub-editor; "young sir, you should never ask an elderly gentleman his reasons, but be content with his advice. Reverence his grey hair, captain—reverence his grey hair."

The captain grinned contemptuously, and the pair entered the ball-room.

"You have provided charming music for our entertainment," said Jackson, addressing his hostess.

"I am glad that it should have met with the approbation of Mr. Sheridan Jackson," answered Mrs. De Gospitch.—"You are fond of music, I should imagine?"

"Ah! madam, 'Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast.'"

"Your friend has a slight brogue," resumed the lady. "I don't dislike it. He 's of an old family, I presume. He has the dignity about him so peculiar to gentle blood."

"Of capital family—direct descendant of Prince Macgriffin, O'Reilly, O'Blarneykin," replied Jackson.

"Indeed!" returned Mrs. De Gospitch, and she surveyed the tall form of the dancing Irishman with astonishment and admiration.

"Is your son Herbert home from school? Oh! I forgot. He goes to a day-school," ventured the sub-editor.

"He 's at Mr. Thumpum's academy. Ah! Herbert 's a very good boy—a very good boy indeed."

"May I ask what you intend to make of him?" added Jackson

"Why, we 've scarcely considered the question—he 's so very young yet. I 've my own peculiar notions about the culture of the infant mind, Mr. Jackson. Ah! you do not understand the rapture—the poetry of children!"

"Alas! no madam!" sighed Jackson, as though he regretted his ignorance.

At this point Captain Grasy joined his friend, and inquired of Mrs. De Gospitch whether her son was old enough for the army. He thought that, judging from his parents, the boy must make a valiant soldier. He (Captain Grasy) had interest in the army, and the boy might, under his patronage, become a general at least. Then he might—it was possible—for Buonaparte began his career as a needy lieutenant—yes, he might carry the world before him.

While the enthusiastic captain held the above discourse, Mrs. De Gospitch's admiration increased with the utterance of every word.

Now Mr. Jackson differed *in toto* from his good friend Grasy. The French army and the English army were very different. Money was the English commander-in-chief, while merit ruled the French soldiers. What, too, would Mrs. De Gospitch say, if one fine morning her son were to be 'shot for the glory of England?' Now he (Mr. Jackson) thought Herbert was exactly fitted for the legal profession: the business was profitable and gentlemanly beyond all dispute. He would beg of Mrs. De Gospitch to give the matter only one moment's consideration. It was hard—very hard—to pay a mass of solid cash to a lawyer; but then how sweet must the pocketing be to the legal functionary. He knew very well, and nobody deplored the fact more than he did, that bills of costs

looked awfully long affairs; but he could understand the sincere pleasure of receipting them. Herbert had all the cunning—he begged Mrs. Gospitch's pardon—the acute perceptions so necessary to the legal profession: yes, he felt convinced of the fact, the child might in the course of time be Sir Herbert De Gospitch!"

Oh! that it were possible to paint the merry twinkles that laughed in the eye of Mrs. De Gospitch, and the witching smile that played upon her lip at the bare idea of a baronetcy *in futuro* for her boy. If the dear child had worked out only one-tenth part of the miracles his friend prophesied for his accomplishment, what a wonderful creature would he have been! With what a glory a parent's hopes may surround a child. To other eyes the babe may be but a fat, red lump of noisy mortality; to its parents it is a work of Heaven's best fashioning—a creature set apart from ordinary "sucking doves" to be the especial ornament of a nation, or of the wide world. And then what plans of magic are formed to lift the child to honourable renown; and this, with a certainty that only a parent's heart can have faith in. Where is the attorney who has not hugged his first-born boy to his heart, believing that he grasped within his arms the future lord chancellor? The neglected naval lieutenant sees in his sailor-son a second Nelson; and many a drummer's heir has been appointed commander-in-chief by a doting father. The author has at home a baby-Shakspeare, and the artist has an infant Michael Angelo; the retail druggist has born to him a Sir Humphrey Davy, and the engine-stoker nourishes a growing Stevenson.

Captain Grasy now begged an introduction to Miss Maturin; and his prayer was readily granted, for he was "of good family."

Mary Maturin was not in the humour to listen favourably to the captain's excruciating civilities; and though the poor fellow toiled hard to make an impression upon his fair partner's heart, her decisive coldness showed him plainly that he might as soon hope to thaw the Polar Sea as warm the bosom of the maiden.

"I 'm sure you 're not well," said the captain at last.

"Quite well, Sir, I thank you," answered Miss Maturin.

"Then you 're dull to-night, Miss Maturin—some calamity has happened sure."

"Nothing, Sir, of any consequence has happened."

"Then sure you 've a headache—I can see you have," persisted the captain.

"None, in the least, Sir."

"'Och! ye have. Forgive my saying so—but I can see you have. Now do just let me recommend you to put your feet in hot water before you go to bed, and to cover yourself well up, and you 'll be well in the morning. Allow me to show you to a seat," and the captain smoothed the cushion of a settee for his partner. The poor fellow laboured hard to please, but the more he betrayed the earnestness of his attentions the colder was Miss Maturin's address. At last he fairly gave the matter up as hopeless, and retired to a corner of the room to consult with his friend Jackson.

"Sure, Jackson," he began in a loud voice, "sure I've a rival—I, Captain Grasy Blarneykin, a rival! Or is Miss Maturin ill?"

"She was very well an hour since," was Jackson's calm reply.

"D'ye think the fellow who has had the impudence to walk into her affections is in the room?" demanded the Captain, glancing furiously at the company. "Is it that fellow with hair dyed purple; the old sinner, he 's as grey as a badger at the roots." The matter would have ended in an assault upon some of the company had not Jackson prudently persuaded his enraged friend that Miss Maturin might be fatigued and sleepy; for he (Jackson) had seen her at the opera very late on the previous night, and he felt certain that her delicate frame was not strong enough to bear very frequent fatigue; and so he finally persuaded the enthusiastic Irishman to retire to his peaceful and virtuous couch.

Some hours had rolled on when Miss Maturin, fatigued, jaded with the excitement and exercise of the evening, sought her apartment—not to dream sweetly in goose feathers—not to fling herself upon a couch with the calm assurance of a peaceful, happy morrow, but to weary herself with the distressing knowledge of her faithlessness. The pride of the aristocrat struggled with the innate goodness of the woman. She betook herself to bed only to dream of what she was and what she ought to be; and the difference of the pictures was wide—humiliating. The thoughts of a troubled conscience are saddest and best at night—alone, when the quietude

of sleep is upon the household. At this still, dark time, random consideration is a secondary object even in the most worldly, and the strong huge soul holds a parley with itself untrammelled by conventional fetters. Bitter is the agony of a lonely night to the unconscientious—black and horrible to the world-convicted culprit. And sad and tormenting was it to Mary Maturin. At length, however, exhausted nature gave sleep to the sufferer, and sleep brought dreams. In her vision the maiden saw herself the wife of a rich man—a jewelled, flattered woman; the scene shifted, and she was the neatly-bedecked spouse of Henry Gospitch. Indifference presided at the rosewood board; Cupid nestled in the plain neat homestead. If she wanted adoration she must wear gingham; if her heart could be contented with an indifferent, polite lord, she might command satin and diamonds: she had her choice. Could she waver? The dream gradually became more vivid, palpable. She was in the presence of Henry Gospitch and a suitor who had gold to recommend him. Suddenly the rich man grasped her hand, and strove to tear her from Henry's side; she struggled hard, called upon her lover to hold her to him, and in the excitement of this imaginary contest she awoke. Now she no longer wavered—she would be Henry's wife—even if he must remain for ever a beggar—she would be his in beggary. She felt that life had nothing to give unshared by him to whom she had sworn life-long love; she felt herself more than ever his; she would love him, dote upon him; she would be his pillow by night, and his solace throughout the day; if affairs should come to the worst, she felt that she could tutor her taper fingers to ply a quick needle; yes, yes, the maiden soul was awake, full, trusting—she would be with her lover early in the morning—would ask him to forgive her coldness—ask it on her knees—she would again clasp him to her—and oh! she felt that from his embrace her soul could wing its way in rapture to heaven. This rapturous resolve fully determined upon, the girl fell back upon her couch, and was soon in a calm, angel guarded sleep. A deadly weight was lifted from her woman's heart, and she lay in a deep, placid sleep—the sleep that only a free unburdened heart can hope for.

Poor, motionless beauty, she dreamed not of the true future.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISS MATURIN'S VISIT, AND THE CONFUSION OF HENRY GOSPITCH.

"O, woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
* * * *
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WEARY and fevered with the long unrest of a sleepless night, Henry Gospitch rose early that he might be in perfect readiness to receive his expected visitor. He had scarcely completed his meagre toilette when a loud, heavy knocking at his door, made by fingers in no way bony, announced the advent of Mrs. Grumblebum.

"I am very sorry," began the lady, "that I can't afford you the loan of my parlour to-day. A dear friend of mine has just arrived from Norfolk, and we shall want the parlour fire all the morning to fry sausages—the dear creature has brought a whole hamper full—pork and beef."

"Would it not be possible to cook them in the kitchen, Mrs. Grumblebum?" inquired our hero. "The lady I expect would not probably stay ten minutes, but I can't exactly say at what time she will be here."

"Quite impossible, Mr. Gospitch—quite out of the question. The potatoes, greens, gravy, and suet dumplings, will take up all the kitchen range; and I wouldn 't spoil the sausages for all the lodgers in the world. You've given me warning, and I *ant* going to put myself out of the way for you—I can tell you. There 's an empty room on the second floor, and you shall have a couple of chairs there if you please." Mrs. Grumblebum was getting restive.

"Have you no decent room?" commenced Henry.

"Decent room, Sir!" shouted the landlady, rising from her

chair and panting like a steam-engine, "Decent room, Sir! Have I one that is n't decent, I should like to know? The second floor 's as good as the lady you expect is used to. And let me tell you, young man, though I love sausages, I hate puppies." With this the woman stalked out of the room, slamming the door after her.

The silkworm is a wonderful creation, a tiny masterpiece. It shoots from veriest obscurity—its first breath inhales air filtered through an old stocking or flannel waistcoat—and it sniffs the heated atmosphere and grows. It waxes quickly, and gradually the thing that was a puny egg is looked upon with sordid eyes, and handled with a palm greedy for gold—but still the silkworm grows. It crawls upon a tree, at first about the lowliest and poorest branches, and there is it left, either to spin its richness for another, or to fall and die unheeded. With a hope that may be almost nicknamed Desperation, it climbs; amidst many troubles it mounts upwards and upwards, gnawing every thing within its reach. Having at length attained a somewhat elevated position, it dies, and leaves to man, as a legacy, the treasure of its life—its silk. It is so throughout creation—one tribe preys upon or sustains another; and this being so, and pursuing a popular theory, that animal life partakes of the nature of its food—that a man living upon beef would eventually have a nature much in common with an ox—it is wonderful that the systematic preying that is observed throughout the animal kingdom should not have instituted a certain similarity amongst all animal nature. Or perhaps this theory may account for the palpable degeneracy of all animal life. Lions now-a-days are not the huge fierce monsters whereof we read in ancient records; and men are not the leviathans they were some dozen centuries back; in short, take any animal class, and we shall find that a systematic declension of individuality has been going forward; where or how it will end remains for the solution of future ages. That man with that blest legacy of God—reason—should so far follow in the track of unintellectual animal life as to hold with his own species a protracted warfare, argues an anomaly that is as evident as it is saddening; that a mass of human blood and human thought spread throughout the earth for a short sojourn, and with a glorious grave-emancipated prospect in the future, should use this passing dwelling as one vast bat-

tle-field—a prize ring where one is to flourish at the expense of his fellow—is also a sad and certain anomaly; and these anomalies should create a deep sense of humility in the heart of the aristocrat, the middleman, and the poor man. All human strife is mockery of Divine power.

In our hero we shall not paint a faultless man: and for the best of reasons, we have no model to paint from. Everybody has a peculiar standard of perfection; we have ours, and from motives some may think personal, we shall abstain from making them public. No—we presume to ask some sympathy for Henry Gospitch, though we confess that he had failings like the common herd of miserable sinners who daily crawl about us—readers shall sympathize with him as the weaker party in a hard battle—the jaded, crushed victim of an unfair strife. And they shall put down this book, it is hoped, with a spirit of sad inquiry—a vivid, thoughtful sense of man's manifold wrongs to man—and having thought awhile, is it too much to expect that this homely history may make some converts to a more charitable creed in the division of fortune? Nursed in plenty to be flung to a wretched poverty—stripped of all by a set of words upon parchment—outcast by the chance of birth—loved in prosperity by a woman, and abandoned by her in poverty—were these fortunes kindly nurses to a proud man's soul? Could the man who had been courted by some hundred persons calmly bow to them as their inferior—as an humbled, lowlier biped flung beneath their feet by a paternal scribble upon sheepskin? And yet must Henry Gospitch hug poverty contentedly and meekly. What if he cursed the law of primogeniture with damnable sentences—the passion could bring him no penny, and no friends would pity him, for they flourished, and were fat upon the law by which he suffered. He could trump up no peculiar hardship, since his case was as common in the country as daylight—the only charge he could substantiate was that of selfishness in his rich brother, and then his brother only imitated the example of some thousand persons in a similar position. When he thought of the matter fully, he often imagined he could trace a father's bitterness in the peculiar raising of the property—the whole of the paternal income having been invested in freehold. There was no will—at least none was forthcoming at his father's death; and thus a dying man had prayed for grace as he committed a palpable and black injustice upon his own flesh and blood. Henry

Gospitch had been guilty of no offence that merited death-bed anger; he had perhaps contracted a few insignificant debts—in short his trespasses against his father's injunctions were so trifling, that the young man was satisfied that family ambition, and not personal anger, had dictated his father's cruel policy. Henry remembered, too, how incessantly his parent was wont to talk of establishing his family somewhat prominently—how often the old gentleman had declared that the name of Gospitch should be a time honoured prominent patronymic—and Henry was convinced that his father had this object in view when he allowed his entire property to descend to the eldest son.

When we are not the immediate authors of our own misfortunes we can bear them with some fortitude; we are either sustained by a prospect of revenge, or by the consoling consciousness of having made a sacrifice for another. De Gospitch's conduct towards our hero during the latter's bankruptcy was guided more by Mrs. De Gospitch, than by her husband's own free will. There is perhaps no female character so profoundly uncharitable as that of a proud, literary woman. The fashionable woman, the female aristocrat, the sour woman, and the female satirist, have all a kindliness that the haughty woman of mind disdains to nourish in her soul. She looks upon the natural sympathy of her sex as a weakness which it is her province to discountenance, and, if possible, to abolish; and thus was it with Mrs. De Gospitch with regard to her poor brother-in-law. She ruled in great things, and her husband had his way only in trivial matters; and women well know how to wheedle men into this unconscious obedience. Mrs De Gospitch impressed her husband with the fact that he only held his property in trust for his children—that he would do them an injustice if he parted with one furlong of his land, and that as for giving up any part of his yearly income, it was ridiculous to think about it, for the reputation of his family demanded that a certain style should be invariably kept up at the De Gospitch's mansion. Mrs. De Gospitch had a larger share of brain than her lord—add to this that she had a very voluble tongue, and who will wonder that her lectures never failed to convince her partner. Thus, if our lord's brother did not succour his poor relation, Mrs. De Gospitch might take to herself the consequences of the neglect.

In anticipation of an interview with his friend's wife, Henry

took some extra time to adjust his threadbare costume. He had only kept one suit back from the sale, and some month or so's constant wear had given to his coat rather a napless appearance—yet did he look gentlemanly. He did not care much about the landlady's parlour—his pride lay not in externals; it exacted a rigid courtesy from man to man—it looked not with a sneer upon a tattered coat, but it discountenanced the rudeness of the haughtiest aristocrat.

He had been pacing his narrow room anxiously for about an hour after the completion of his toilette, when the fat fists of his landlady, applied vehemently to the door, relieved him of his lonely anticipations.

"I 've put a couple of chairs in the second floor back," said Mrs. Grumblebum.—"Well, I do admire your taste, Mr. De Gospitch—though I must tell you I can't allow young women to be a visiting ye every day—mind that."

"Is the lady below?" asked Henry impatiently.

"Yes, you 'll find her, as I told you, in the second floor back. Stop a minute—bless the man!" But Henry waited not for the termination of the landlady's speech, at which discourtesy the sausage-loving satirist felt no small degree of annoyance. "Pooh! indeed! Rushed into her arms I dare say if the truth was known—I 'll not have such goings on in my house if I know it, and so I 'm determined;" this was said as Mrs. Grumblebum descended from the attic to the parlour, her voice being pitched pretty loudly as she passed the door that hid her from Mrs. Gaps and our hero.

Mrs. Gaps would not listen to any apologies offered to her by Henry for the trouble he had given her; she vowed that the trouble was a pleasure—and besides she had had the delight of being useful to Mr. Gaps. "I am happy, Mr. Gospitch," she continued in a voice as sweet as honeydew, "to tell you that Mr. Gaps has succeeded in his application, and that he is enabled to offer you an appointment in the firm in which he was a partner. Allow me to give you the necessary address; Mr. Gaps has arranged a meeting for you with the proprietors for two o'clock to-morrow. Will it be convenient for you to attend at that hour?"

Henry looked full in the face of the fair young speaker to see if he could read the woman's secret meaning—to see if this consulting the convenience of a beggar were satire or simplicity. And the sweet, open face, that with dimpled cheek and flashing

eyes shone upon him, assured him that only a warm, gushing heart could be mirrored so divinely.

" I thank you, Mrs. Gaps, two o'clock will suit me admirably. You must indeed allow me to make you the bearer of my warm thanks to your husband. Any employment just now will be a godsend to me."

" I trust we shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Carnation Cottage, as soon as my husband's health shall have improved——"

" Here 's another young woman wants to see you," growled Mrs. Grumblebum, who at this moment entered the room. " Good morning, Mr. Gospitch," said Mrs. Gaps ; " your servant will see me to my carriage," and the lady passed quickly from the apartment, as Miss Maturin entered it.

A few moments of silent and intense embarrassment ensued. The galling condemnatory event of one entire year crowded themselves upon Henry's brain, and for a minute he looked upon the agitated form of Miss Maturin as upon a ghastly machine that had tormented him most hellishly and most pertinaciously. Miss Maturin soon recovered herself—she knew none of the circumstances connected with the visit of Mrs. Gaps, and so she naturally thought that Henry looked upon another with the love that he had once given to her. She felt intensely jealous, and painfully humbled. The thought, the agonizing knowledge that, even if these suspicions were true, she deserved all, nearly dumbfounded her; but her jealousy gave her all necessary coldness ; and in a few moments she stood like an icicle before her pauper lover. She had come —full to overflowing with the re-awakened spirit of a loving woman—to offer comfort to the wretchedness with which her lover was surrounded ; she would have rushed into his arms ; she would have used all the passionate persuasion of a renewed love ; she would have lain upon his heart until he had forgiven her ; and she would have given him her hand joyfully and instantly. She would have deserted a splendid home for the lowliest abiding-place, so that Henry Gospitch shared the humble lot with her—with such high resolves did the maiden wait upon her lover. A jealousy, as unfounded as it was passionate, sent these sweet projects to oblivion; and Miss Maturin stood collectedly in the presence of a man who had borne the anguish of a martyr in his love for her.

" You will excuse this intrusion, Sir,"

"Did you come here to taunt me with my misfortunes, Miss Maturin?" said Henry, in a voice half choked with battling emotion. "If so, I cannot excuse the intrusion—must hate and despise the intruder."

"Henry—Mr. Gospitch, I came to ——"

"To what?" Henry saw the history of a whole life in the answer; and he stood with clenched hands and open mouth in intense expectation.

"To claim—to claim your—love."

Henry would have clasped her to his heart, but she repulsed him coldly and proudly. "I am sorry, Sir, that I should have disturbed yourself and the lady who has just left you."

Man, haughty and stern man, cannot bear the unmerited rebuke of a woman whom he has loved faithfully; and Henry Gospitch, the unflinching, aristocratic pauper, took Mary Maturin by the hand—she burst into a flood of tears—he was again about to kiss her, and again she refused his embrace.

"Miss Maturin—Mary—I see your thoughts—can dive into the hidden meaning of your words. God! if you could know all the wretchedness, the agony I have endured for you." The girl pressed his hand tightly as he continued, "You have not used me well, Mary—you have not been the constant, loving, devoted woman who, while I prospered, promised to be with me through every happiness and every misery. While *rich* happiness was mine, you, Miss Maturin, vowed yourself mine to eternity—allowed me to look to you as the refining angel of my life. Your sister's husband was my senior—my father died, and I was a beggar—and when I became a beggar, Miss Maturin, where was you?"

"Henry—hear—"

"One moment. I date your coldness from my father's death. Miss Maturin, I thank *you* for the wretchedness that, since then, has been my daily lot. I speak bitterly, harshly perhaps; heaven knows how much I have had to sour me. You could have made me all that you wished; you might have refined the coarser part of my nature till it attained to the sweetness I thought was yours; you raised my expectations to a maddening height only to fling me from you—to trample upon the hopes you had raised. What I am, Miss Maturin, you have made me: thank then yourself if I have spoken harshly."

"I have been led away by others, Henry; indeed, indeed I have."

"Then you never loved me, Miss Maturin?"

"For heaven's sake do not say that; I have thought of you, Henry, day and night. What can I do to prove this: tell me, do, and do not hurt me with these baseless accusations."

"Have you been under restraint, that you have not seen me before this?" asked Henry.

"No———"

"Then, Miss Maturin—I say it with calmness and kindliness—we are strangers—must not meet again."

At this moment Mrs. Grumblebum half opened the door, and thrust her fat, grinning physiognomy into the apartment.

"Sorry if I 've disturbed you, but, as you say you 're strangers, I s'pose it 's not much matter."

Miss Maturin was so mortified to think that any one should have heard that she was spurned by a man she had come to comfort, that she almost lost all consciousness: she, however, quickly recollected herself, and without once glancing at Gospitch, she walked from the room followed by the landlady.

It will be easily imagined that this meeting was a most cheerless one to Henry Gospitch. However, he felt relieved from that state of suspense which had been for many months past preying upon his mind. Though the worst that he had feared had happened, he was less worried by the reality than by the dread of its occurrence. Now, at least, all was clear to him. He had perhaps a rugged, companionless road to travel, but there was comfort in the assurance that no heart-fetters tied him to one spot—one anxious, sand-built hope. He might circumnavigate the whole world with nothing behind him and all before him. No previous connections would thwart future actions and enjoyments; he could enjoy the present, because the past and future would bind him to no regular course. These dreams of entire freedom are more fascinating in theory than in reality. It may be pleasant to contemplate a life free from responsibilities—free from home affections and their duties—but what a cheating phantom is any substitute, what a deadly weariness is the life that is spent without the heart-raptures that wait upon a wedded existence.

Gospitch had not much time for reflection: it was nearly the

hour for him to wait upon his future employers, and he was a steadfast lover of punctuality. He therefore donned his hat, and set out at a good pace for the offices of Messrs. Short and Co., determined to accept whatever proposal they might make to him, provided it offered a prospect of moderate fortune. The firm of Messrs. Short and Co. consisted of two elderly gentlemen and one dashing, mustachio-loving individual; the latter person was the principal—the Short of the company. He was an officious and an ignorant man; a fop and a fool. He had inherited his position from a very shrewd and prudent father; and it was, as Gaps had it, "a very discouraging sight to moneyed parents to anticipate the possibility of their sons becoming so many Shorts. It was a melancholy sight to see the sweat of a clever man's brow flung to the dogs by a puppy. Oh!" Gaps would continue in confidential enthusiasm, "if Short senior could rise from his grave some morning about half-past twelve, and see his booby of a descendant lounge into the office in lemon-coloured kid gloves, and with a horse-hoof mounted stick, the old gentleman would shudder and rush back into his best oak coffin shouting for a double amount of solder!"

Mr. Dewdycomb, the second partner, was a corpulent, white-haired, red-faced, venerable-looking gentleman, who was principally celebrated for the enormous amount of snuff he could contrive to stow away, and for his life long attachment to a blue coat and plain gilt buttons. He was not remarkable for profundity, but his venerable appearance covered a multitude of sillinesses with the mask of wisdom. We, in common with many people, confess to an instinctive reverence for grey hair; but, at the same time, we must own that our acquaintance with Mr. Dewdycomb lessened materially our blind faith in the universal sageness of senility. When we were introduced to Mr. Dewdycomb, we were impressed with that gentleman's tufts of grey hair and his shiny expansive forehead, and we sat silently twirling our fingers as we listened to his deliberate discourse. At first we felt diffident in his presence, but we speedily shook off all constraint, and (though we could not boast the least sprinkling of whiskers at the time) we began to combat his opinions with our growing confidence. And we must not be accused of egotism if we give it as our impartial judgment that we generally had the best of the arguments: well, we date Mr. Dewdycomb's cold-

ness from the day we floored him in a long, intricate discussion upon the advantages of a republic and the wisdom of a limited monarchy: it matters to nobody which side of the question benefited by our triumph.

The junior partner, Mr. Duffin, was a spare, short, thin-faced man, with twinkling, searching grey eyes, that bespoke acuteness and severity. He had worked his way from a clerkship to his present position, and now he managed, in fact, the entire business of the firm. He was the drudging partner—a man who had pawned his head for his partnership, lacking gold; and consequently Mr. Short looked upon him as the vulgar part of the establishment—the ill-looking, plodding machine that must keep the business in order while he (Mr. Short) lounged at Verey's or read novels in bed.

When Henry Gospitch entered the office he was at once ushered into the presence of Mr. Duffin. Duffin and Henry Gospitch had met previously, but on a very different footing—then Gospitch was the customer of the firm, now he was a pleading beggar. Duffin's disposition and address very much resembled those of Gaps; the same kindliness at heart, the same blunt, sour address. Anybody little acquainted with Mr Duffin would have looked upon the gentleman as a small—very small vinegar-cruet—a little body full of undisguised acidity; but they would have judged him wrongly.

"Hope you 're well, Mr. Gospitch," commenced Mr. Duffin. "Pray be seated."

Henry was about to take advantage of this request; but upon looking around he saw that all the seats in the room were built a few inches higher than an ordinary table; and surveying the elevated position of the diminutive Duffin, he felt curious to know how that gentleman had managed to prop himself at that height from the ground; however, he espied a rail attached to one of the stools, with the aid of which he contrived to hoist himself on to the seat.

"You are anxious to secure some employment, I hear?" continued the merchant.

"It is so, Mr. Duffin; and Mr. Gaps has given me reason to hope that you may do something for me."

"What can you do? What is your line of work, Mr. Gospitch?" inquired the blunt Duffin. "I suppose you 're not

very expert at our style of business, never having been connected with a merchant's office—are you?"

"In offering my services, Mr. Duffin, I do not pretend to claim the merits of a finished man of business. I certainly have been connected with a city firm, though but for a short time, and that many years ago," answered Gospitch.

"I am sorry, sir, that I can only offer you a simple clerkship at present. You know best whether it is worth your while to accept a situation of £80 per annum."

"It would be ridiculous in me to refuse the pettiest office, friendless, moneyless as I am. I accept your offer, Sir, gladly, thankfully; but you will permit me to ask you whether hard work and punctual attendance may raise me to a higher position in your employ. You will pardon this question—a *young* beggar may have ambition; is it not so, Mr. Duffin?"

"I dare say you will find us as ready to recognise your merits as you will find us quick in detecting any slovenly execution in your accounts. Here is Mr. Short; he may like to speak a word with you."

Mr. Short entered the room, and with him came an overpowering dose of patchouli, proclaiming at once the perfect vulgarity of the individual. Musk moderately used is endurable; but who, in the name of good taste, who invented patchouli?—a concoction offensive to fifty persons where it tickles the nasal organs of one, and therefore emphatically vulgar.

"Good day, Duffin," simpered Mr. Short, as he drew a white glove from his bony, ring-bedecked hand, preparatory to a careful adjustment of every hair of his mustachios. "Dewdycomb here?"

"Not seen him yet," answered Duffin. "Would you like to say anything to this gentleman—Mr. Gospitch—whom we propose to engage as clerk?"

"Anything to say to him?" responded Short, just glancing at Henry. "No, not that I know of. What do we propose to give the gentleman per annum, and what does he propose to do for it?" And the dandy—the gilded calf—adjusted the folds of his rainbow-tinted cravat with an indifference which, in his ignorance, he mistook for gentlemanly ease.

"Mr. Gospitch will keep some of Brown's books—he is to receive £80 a year," said Duffin.

"Rather stiff terms, are they not?" drawled Short, still arranging his neckcloth.

"Why, we could certainly get the work done at a cheaper rate; but the gentleman is an intimate friend of Mr. Gaps, and—"

"Pardon the interruption," interposed Henry, with a curl upon his lip. "Not capable of asking charity, gentlemen. Pay me the fair value of my labour, and I shall be contented. I ask no alms—would accept of none."

"I appreciate your sentiments, Mr. Gospitch," quoth Duffin earnestly

"Humph! Rather a remarkable speech," said Short.

"I cannot help saying what I feel, Mr. Short," answered Henry.

"A vulgar habit you should try and get rid of as soon as possible, Mr. Gospitch," continued Short.

"I am sorry that I should have been guilty of anything you esteem vulgarity." Gospitch could scarcely conceal his inexpressible contempt for the young fop who was to be his master

"If you can spare time to consider the matter, I think you will find that we shall not overpay Mr. Gospitch if we consent to make his salary £80. He is a man of business habits, and he promises us his undivided energies," said Duffin, addressing his co-partner.

"His undivided energies!" exclaimed Short; "and not cheap either at £80. However, I leave the matter entirely in your hands, Mr. Duffin." And without noticing Henry, Mr. Ferdinand Short sauntered from the apartment.

Henry felt considerably relieved when the misbehaved Short had taken his departure. It was not in Henry Gospitch's nature to brook the least disrespect; and had it not been for the desperate state of his affairs, he would have given very different replies to Mr. Short's observations. In a few moments after the principal partner's disappearance, the pompous, puffing Mr. Dewdycomb waddled into the room. There was an air of dignified joviality and self-sufficiency in this gentleman's appearance; and, contrasted with the ill-mannered personage who had just vacated the apartment, Mr. Dewdycomb was a welcome addition to the list of Henry Gospitch's future masters. At least Mr. Dewdycomb was polite and gentlemanly in his speech and bearing.

"Mr. Henry Gospitch, a candidate recommended by Mr. Gaps for the vacant clerkship, Mr. Dewdycomb," said Duffin.

Mr. Dewdycomb bowed to Henry, and said, addressing him, "I hope, Sir, our arrangements suit your views: is it so?"

"Perfectly so, Sir, I am obliged to you." Henry felt earnestly grateful to Mr. Dewdycomb for that gentleman's considerate and respectful address towards him.

"Will it then be convenient to you, Mr. Gospitch, to commence your duties with us on Monday next?" asked Duffin.

"As early as you please, gentlemen; I am wholly disengaged at present."

"Let it be Monday, then, at ten o'clock, Mr. Gospitch," said Dewdycomb.

Henry Gospitch signified his assent, and withdrew.

Eighty pounds a year was a small sum to one who had been accustomed to squander some £300 per annum as mere pocket money; nevertheless Henry Gospitch was rejoiced at the prospect that now lay open before him; for poverty had taught him, in bitter lessons, the value even of halfpence. Light-hearted and nimble-footed, he trudged on towards the house where Mr. and Mrs. Gaps had lodgings, resolved to tender them his thanks for their timely kindness. As he neared the abode of his benefactors, thoughts of Mrs. Gaps and of Miss Maturin arose alternately in his brain; and, contrasting the two pictures, he could not refuse preference to the married lady. He recalled minutely the modest kindliness with which Mrs. Gaps had conducted herself throughout her interview with him in the morning; how she, almost a stranger to him, had waved all ceremony and sought him in his beggarly abode, tendering help most delicately; and then, in strong contrast to this picture of womanly goodness and delicacy, there arose in his mind a minute recollection of Miss Maturin's long-delayed visit and her systematic coldness, and he trembled at the enthusiasm and contempt these opposing thoughts created within him. He knew that it was a wickedness to conceive any love for Mrs. Gaps—he saw that it was a wrong to her husband; he trembled at the audacity of his heart, and resolved, at any sacrifice, to forget the superior graces of Mrs. Gaps, and to look upon her with the calm feelings of a thankful friend. With this resolution firmly made, he knocked at Gaps's door, in Berners Street.

He did not meet with a very cheerful reception. He

tendered his thanks to Gaps, and apologised for the rude reception he had given to Mrs. Gaps; but these courtesies only elicited a few commonplace observations from the invalid and his wife. Henry was wholly at a loss to account for this strange demeanour; it was so different to that which he had always been accustomed to when addressing either Mrs. or Mr. Gaps. He looked upon the altered features of his sick friend, but he could trace no evidence of mental grief thereon; he only saw the wrinkles wrought by physical disease; and in the depth of the furrows, and the glassy eyes, and the waxen hue of the skin, he thought he could trace the handiwork of death. He turned towards Mrs. Gaps, seeking to read an explanation in her expressive features; he was again disappointed. The dark eyes, the well-defined mouth, and the fair, smooth forehead of the young wife, were, for the first time since he had known her, expressionless. Bewildered by this unfathomable gloom, he withdrew hurriedly from the presence of his mysterious friends.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. GRUMBLEBUM'S SAUSAGE PARTY.

The heading of this chapter will give the reader a presentiment of some vulgar details upon a very vulgar subject—viz., eating. But we, in our own humble way of looking upon matters, believe in our heart that eating may be made a very rational enjoyment. Soyer's system is not a vulgar pandering to capacious stomachs; it is a rational, intellectual classification of agreeable edibles; and our belief was fully recognised and appreciated by the gentle Grumblebum. She believed that all the virtues lay in a pleasantly filled stomach; she would not have trusted the word of a man with a pinched appetite. Her taste was not of the most refined order, it is true; she stickled not for *sauce piquante*, and could dine without champagne; but she was nevertheless a devoted lover of a well-loaded table. It was not her fault that chops,

steaks, porter, (and, between ourselves, gin!) formed the staple of her luxuries; it was not her fault that she was ignorant of the delicious flavour enshrined in *foie gras* or *varioli*. Malicious acquaintance whispered that the widowed Grumblebum had been a cook, and her deceased lord a coachman! but the maligned female, in her own peculiar and forcible language, denied the charge in toto. She a cook, indeed! No, not she! Matthew Grumblebum, deceased, carried on a respectable business as butterman, in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road. She allowed that the vicinity was not very aristocratic; but, to say the least of it, it was highly respectable. Ambition may vent itself in a butter-firkin—butter-pats may be handled with enthusiasm. A sweep may dignify his calling, and one may sniff something savouring of rank about a butterman.

Matthew Grumblebum dead, his widow, weeping as a widow should for the loss of her husband *and his business*, ensconced herself in the lodging-house where she has been introduced to the reader as mistress. She found the employment of lodging-house keeper a very sorry substitute for the butter business. There was some glory in parading "*the best salt* at 8*d*." to an admiring public; but where was the dignity in letting musty garrets to mustier tenants! At first the gentle Grumblebum believed that she should not survive her partner many months—she felt sure that she had one foot and three toes of the other in her grave; but time—gentle old man that he is—and success in her new undertaking, revived worldly ideas in the Grumblebumbian brain, and the dear woman felt that, "somehow or another," she had withdrawn her foot and toes from the churchyard. In short, Grumblebum soon slept in his consecrated bed undisturbed by the wailings of his widow.

Miss Pods was the dear friend of Mrs. Grumblebum. She had supplied the widow with sausages during the palmy days of the late butter business. Miss Pods was a shrimp of a woman; she was very short and very lean. Her friends called her a delicate, elegant looking person—her satirical acquaintance maintained that she was nothing but a bag of bones. Contradictory as these descriptions may seem, they, together, describe exactly the personal appearance of Miss Pods. By the side of her friend she reminded you of a broomstick beside a water-butt. Some friend suggested that

if the two women could be melted together, and then equally re-moulded they would make two very decent sized persons. On one point the two ladies agreed cordially—that pork sausages were superior to beef, though as they could not always eat pork, it was as well to be provided with a few pounds of the latter. It was a custom with Miss Pods, and one that she invariably observed, to visit her friend twice a year, bringing with her each time delectable samples of her skill in the manufacture of sausages.

Mrs. Grumblebum always looked forward to these visits with undisguised impatience, and we verily believe that she divided her love between Pods and Pods's sausages. Be this as it may, we are certain that Pods and Grumblebum were monstrous friends on these occasions. They seldom quarrelled ; but then, as table-lovers know, it is hard to fight and wrangle after a plentiful dinner. Sometimes they did have a few words touching the mode in which their meal should be cooked : Mrs Grumblebum stipulating for treacle-dumplings to follow, and Miss Pods vowing that the sausages would be entirely lost upon them if they (the ladies) did not wind up their repast with yeast puddings. But the friends, when once they had sat down to dinner, seemed to swallow kindliness with every sausage ; and invariably, ere the meal was over, their eyes twinkled with glee, and their comely visages were flushed with cordial affection, and a cordial of a purchaseable description.

On the occasion that introduces them to the reader, they had determined to wind up the sausage-dinner with a very select evening party, and they had accordingly asked Mr. Boler (Miss Pods's head man, and—if report was dipped from Truth's well—rather a favourite of his mistress), Mr. Bunting, a butcher in a small way, and Mr. Grist, a dairyman, to spend a few hours, and to eat the remainder of the dinner. No ladies were asked: and we will not burden the reader with an account of the scandal consequent upon this omission. The hostess had her own original notions upon ceremony, and these she enforced to the utmost on the occasion in question.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Grist," simpered Mrs. Grumblebum, as the first visitor entered the parlour, where the two ladies, in rusty-brown silk, were awaiting the advent of their guests.

"Hope you're well, Ma'am," answered the dairyman, evidently endeavouring to be upon his best behaviour, and turning towards Miss Pods; "and hope you're pretty much the same, Miss."

Mr. Grist seated himself upon a corner of a chair at the further corner of the room; and watching his opportunity when he might be unobserved, he gently dropped his sealskin cap into a corner: he then, after some fruitless endeavours, adjusted his hands in a becoming position, and looked anxiously towards his hostess.

"Now, Miss Pods, I would, if I was you, begin to make the toast: the rest of the gentlemen will most likely be here in a few moments—I cannot think of keeping Mr. Grist waiting for his tea for any one." Thus said Mrs. Grumblebum.

"Don't mind me, Mum, a bit: I can wait very comfortably, thank ye, Mum," stammered Grist with a face the colour of a peony.

"It 's very kind of you, Mr. Grist, but I can't—indeed I can't—think of letting you wait. I would really make the toast, Miss Pods."

The room which Mrs. Grumblebum had selected for her party was the front parlour, an apartment little larger than an ordinary store-closet; and how Mr. Boler, Mr Bunting, Mr. Grist and the two females were to be stowed into it, was a mystery. The worthy hostess had ensconced herself comfortably on one side of the fireplace, and Miss Pods graced the opposite corner: a small round table was drawn close to the former, upon which the very best tea-service was displayed. There was a goodly heap of bread and butter (thick and thin), a monument of muffins, dry toast, and Miss Pods was making the buttered ditto; in short, if the feast lacked quality, nobody could quarrel with the quantity provided.

We should do injustice to the Grumblebumbian hospitality if we omitted to mention the elegant arrangement of the sideboard. The only plate the worthy hostess possessed was of the willow pattern; and, for this occasion, she had put forth the choicest dishes of her service. First, there was the large dish piled up with cold pork sausages, beside which was placed a smaller dish of beef ditto; and then there was a huge pie baked in a vessel remarkably like a footpan, and heaps of rosy apples and huge oranges; to say nothing of a

dozen of stout placed in a row near the wall as a background. Upon this luscious prospect (more significant of joviality and happiness than the choicest epergnes) Pods and Grumblebum ever and anon glanced with pride and satisfaction.

"You must take us in our own humble way, you know, Mr. Grist," said the hostess, and giving a significant nod towards the laden sideboard. "But I think we shall contrive to be pretty comfortable. You like sausages, I presume?"

"Uncommonly, thank ye, Ma'am; 'specially if they are the making of Miss Pods."

The maiden sausage-maker, who at the moment was in the act of melting a huge lump of butter upon a good half acre of toast, bowed graciously to the complimentary Grist, who felt at first much confused, evidently fearing that he had committed some gross outrage upon the parlour etiquette.

"Flatterer," minced Mrs. Grumblebum.

"Mr. Grist is only in joke, I know," sighed Pods.

"I assure you not, Miss. I've walked a good eight miles with a pair of heavy milk-pails this a'ternoon, and, as its exceeding easy to suppose, I 'm not remarkably in the humour for jokin', d' ye see?" Grist was gathering courage.

It is a notorious fact, that when ladies predominate in a company, the conversation is sure to turn upon dress, children, cookery, or marriage. Mrs. Grumblebum had heard that some worthy females intended to form a league for the purpose of giving women the right of becoming members of parliament. Should the mighty privilege of wrangling in St. Stephens be ceded to womankind, we shall have angry discussions about double flounces, disputes upon new culinary recipes, and learned suggestions for improved baby linens reported in our daily papers. Duties on French bonnets and gloves will be instantly repealed—silks and satins will enter our ports untaxed—and free trade for the milliners will be a certainty. The ladies' oratory would probably run thus:—

"I think, Mr. Speaker, that the honourable gentleman who has just sat down ought to be ashamed of himself—that I do. He tells the House that he will oppose my Milliners' Free Trade Bill upon principle: then I say, and I mean it—he is no gentleman." Cries of order from another lady. "I know my business well enough, and I am positive that I am altogether in order; and I should thank my honourable friend opposite not to interfere when I 'm speaking, for I 'm deter-

mined to have my say in spite of her. I really never heard such behaviour. Some of my honourable friends are like a parcel of bears—it 's quite disgusting. I beg to tell them that I have been well brought up, if they have not; and I shall certainly, if it 's only out of revenge for their rudeness—I shall, I 'm determined, insist upon a division."

"You know, Mr. Grist," commenced Mrs. Grumblebum, as she handed her guest a huge cup of tea, and pointed emphatically towards the edibles; "you know there is a talk of puttin' us women in parliament—"

"What, yourself and Miss Pods!" exclaimed the matter-of-fact milkman.

"No, no, not exactly; though there are more unlikely things than that." Miss Pods nodded a very self-sufficient acquiescence, and Mrs. Grumblebum continued—"Well, and who do you think has put himself under the flag of the oppositioners?"

"No gentleman," suggested the indignant Pods; "not Mr. Grist, that I 'm certain of," and the maiden of thirty-five grinned most dangerously for the peace of mind of Grist.

"Not 'xactly, Miss," retorted the milkman.

"No, no; it 's not Mr. Grist I mean," shouted Mrs. Grumblebum—"it 's Mr. Bunting—a married man, too!"

"That accounts"—Grist checked himself in time—he looked upon the witching features of Miss Pods, and the words died in his throat. Miss Pods, however, did not remain silent; she felt that the dignity of her sex demanded a speech, and so she held forth thus:—

"Well, if I were Mrs. Bunting, I know what I 'd do."

"What?" interposed Mrs. Grumblebum.

"Never mind, I know, that 's all. I mean to say that at *least*—at the very least, we should make every bit as good speeches as the stupid fellows who now chatter till the most disgraceful hours in the place they call the Commons. I 'm sure the hole 's no better than it should be, or they wouldn't make such a fuss about admitting respectable females. Now this is the long and short of it—if I ever marry a member of parliament he don't go near the place without I go with him, that 's flat."

This emphatic speech produced a short silence, which was at length broken by a loud knock. Mrs. Grumblebum went to open the door, and in a few moments she returned, intro-

ducing Mr. Bunting—an individual with a complexion very like his " good tender beef-steaks."

" We were talking about having women in parliament," said the hostess addressing Bunting, and proffering him at the same time a huge vessel of tea,

" Oh ! ah ! " responded the butcher with a malicious grin.

" And you oppose the plan," playfully reproached Miss Pods.

" Why you see, Miss Pods," answered Bunting, " women are capital creatures to make dumplins and things of that sort "—pointing to the sideboard— " but, 'pon my soul, you must allow they can't make speeches. Give me, as I tell Mrs. Bunting—yes, give me the woman who 's in her element up to her elbows in dough. Many a man's heart has been caught in a light crust."

" But have you heard of Miss Black ? "

" No," answered Mrs. Grumblebum, Miss Pods, and Grist.

" Well, I 'll tell you the story ; but first I 'll trouble you, Mrs. Grumblebum, for a little more sugar, and just another muffin or two, Miss Pods. Thank you. Well ; a rich young Yankee gentleman hated his own countrywomen."

" No wonder," interposed Miss Pods ; " by all accounts the 'Merican women are ugly stupid things."

" Not ugly," contradicted Mrs. Grumblebum (a branch of her family were Americans).

" The beauty 's artificial then — not the true thing," rejoined Pods, with a laudable determination to carry her assertion.

" Beauty 's beauty all the world over, my dear," simpered Mrs. Grumblebum.

" Well, to be sure," replied Pods ; " to be sure I 'm no judge of paintin'—I allow that."

A loud guffaw perpetrated by Bunting followed Miss Pods's speech. However, he soon regained sufficient gravity to proceed with his story, which ran thus : " Well, this gentleman came all across the sea, to town, and he threw his money about him like a prince ; but for a long time he saw no gal that he liked, or that was exactly to his mind."

" He must have been blind, then," interrupted Pods, and Bunting grinning sarcastically, continued, " It 's plain he never saw Miss Pods, or he wouldn't have hesitated for a moment."

" Really, Mr. Bunting."

"Oh! you know you 're a charming sort of woman," continued the sarcastic Bunting. "Well, he went to Birmingham—why or wherefore there I can't tell; and the paper says nothing about it; but it was a queer place to go to for a wife, you know. You must not say that the young gentleman was rackety, Mrs. Grumblebum, for I know how severe you are, when I tell you that one day he was standing outside the Hen and Chickens public-house, when a nice young creature passed right opposite him. Mrs. Bunting declares that she can forgive his being outside a public so sweetly christened; and she declares that if married men *will* go to publics they ought to give the sign of the Hen and Chickens the preference; and there we disagreed."

"Oh! you men—you men!" sighed Grumblebum.

"You 're an awful set, Mr. Bunting," quoth Pods. "Well, I do declare that the Hen and Chickens *does* sound nice, so very domestic—quite smacks of babies, bless 'em!" And Pods, truth must be told, ogled Grist, who trembled visibly.

"Well," resumed Bunting, having strengthened himself with sundry muffins, "as I was saying, this young woman passed the young man near the Hen and Chickens; he was thunderstruck—no, no, love-struck I mean—with her; and he crossed the road to have a chat with her. Well, he requested permission to see Miss, whoever she was, home, and of course she let him. Well, to make a long story short, in about three weeks afterwards she married the young fellow, and has since gone to 'Merica with him. Now, what d'ye think of that, eh?"

"How exceeding fortunate for her," said Pods.

"It just was," muttered Grist.

"There now, Mr. Bunting, you ought to be proud of your countrywomen. I shouldn't at all wonder if some of these fine days a body of 'Merican gents were to club together and come and carry us Englishwomen to their own country, where we should be appreciated."

"That 's exactly what my wife says; and I 've offered her a houtfit for the occasion," replied Bunting. "I 'm sorry to say it, Mrs. Grumblebum, in such sweet company, but present company is always excepted; yes, I 've come to the conclusion at last, that women taken altogether are failures. They 're all very well to read about in books as hangels and hangelic creatures; but, as I tell my wife, if women are hangels and

have got wings as hangels should have, why all I know is, I wish they 'd use 'em."

"Well, I never," vociferated Pods; "I 'm sure Mr. Grist won't agree with you, Mr. Bunting. Don't you believe we're angels, Mr. Grist?"

"Why, Miss Pods, I—I—know one on 'em that is"—and Grist coloured as though he had a gentle bowstring about his neck.

"Why, I declare you're in love, Mr. Grist, you blush so beautifully," said Mrs. Grumblebum.

"No—oh no!" stammered Grist.

"I should hope not, Grist," quoth Bunting. "Love 's a pack of nonsense. Don't be taken in, Grist; you're a bachelor, you lucky dog, and don't monopolize yourself—don't marry. Catch *me* marrying twice. If I do, I give you leave to call me the biggest blockhead in Newgate Market, beasts included."

"What shocking ideas, Mr. Bunting; really you don't mean what you say," volunteered Pods.

"Every bit of it, Ma'am, every syllable. I 'm no advocate for saying different to what one thinks: I never mince matters, do you, Miss Pods?"

"No—no," chuckled Mrs. Grumblebum. "Miss Pods minces meat, not matters, Mr. Bunting."

"Funny creatures," simpered Pods.

"Many cats in your neighbourhood?" inquired the jocular Bunting, addressing the sausage manufacturer.

"I don't understand you, Sir," answered Pods, tossing her head indignantly.

"There—there—never mind him, my dear," interposed Grumblebum; "let 's lay the supper."

The two females were not long in laying the cloth, upon which they arranged the ample supper; and Mrs. Grumblebum, curtseying lowly, offered the corkscrew to Grist, begging he would just put his hand to the porter. Grist was a willing fellow—a good-natured thick-headed young man, who would do anything for anybody. It was a pity that he was so awkward. It was ludicrous to see his ungainly attempts to drive the corkscrew perpendicularly through the cork; he could not manage it at all. First he held the bottle between his knees and drove the corkscrew with Herculean efforts, and he would certainly have smashed the bottle between his legs, had not Mr. Bunting (who was very thirsty) volunteered his services.

Relieved of one bottle, he begged to be allowed to uncork a second: this request was granted, and he stood the vessel upon the table, untied the string from the cork, and zealously applying his thumb to one side of it, he begged of Miss Pods to hold a glass near him. The maiden did as she was asked, and as Grist continued to edge his thumb round about the cork, Bunting sat back in his chair and grinned most maliciously. Suddenly the cork flew from the bottle with a loud bang, hitting Miss Pods on the nose; the maiden holding her handkerchief to her nasal organ, screamed, and fell into the arms of the frightened Grist, who had dropped the bottle of porter upon Mrs. Grumblebum's apple-pie, and in a moment the whole table was deluged with porter and froth. Agony was painted upon Mrs. Grumblebum's face; her supper was spoilt. Bunting fell back in his chair and gave forth repeated roars of laughter, and Pods in the arms of the frightened Grist sobbed hysterically.

"*Now*, what 's to be done?" gasped the enraged hostess at length. "A pretty mess you've made of it, Mr. Grist."

"Don't blame *him*," begged Pods in a subdued voice, and with her face still tightly pressed against Grist's waistcoat.

"I—I—I couldn't help it, Ma'am," ventured the trembling delinquent.

"People shouldn't meddle with things they don't understand," continued Mrs. Grumblebum.

"Mr. Grist is not to blame; it was my fault," urged Pods, removing her head from her protector's waistcoat with evident reluctance.

"I 'm surprised at you, Miss Pods—really shocked," retorted Grumblebum.

"And pray what at?" inquired Pods.

"You know, Miss Pods," quoth Grumblebum.

"Not I—you don't know what you're talking about, Mrs. Grumblebum—that you don't—and you know you don't," continued Pods.

"Well, well, to be sure it isn't any business of mine, Miss Pods—none in the least; but I know *myself* too well to poke *my* head into a young man's waistcoat and keep it there for ten minutes at least. And as to not knowing what I'm about, that I'm sure I shouldn't if I 'd had half as much as you 've had, Miss Pods—so there."

"Disgusting!" muttered Pods. "Really, Mrs. Grumblebum, your vulgarity 's past all bearing; remember *I'm* not accustomed to such language."

"Oh! *a'nt* you? A pretty pink *you* are to talk of gentility: you, Miss Pods, teach me genteel talk; ha! ha! it 's quite laughable—quite ridiculous—I, who first taught you how to behave yourself at table."

"Ugh! Did you?" replied Pods.

"Mr-r-r-ow—Mr-r-r-ow," mewed Bunting, imitating very creditably a cat's vocabulary.

"Mr. Grist—Mr. Grist."

"Miss Pods," answered Grist.

"Will you sit quietly here and allow me to be insulted by that bear of a fellow—that Mr. Bunting?"

Grist quietly turned over his cuffs, and made answer, "No, not exactly."

"Grist, Grist, do be careful; you know how jollily I should lick you in about a couple of minutes."

"Would you, you blackguard?" bawled Grist, squaring manfully.

"Do behave yourselves, gentlemen, before ladies," shouted Mrs. Grumblebum; and turning towards Pods—"Oh! you contemptible little vixen."

Bunting quietly rose from his seat, and depositing his coat in one corner of the room, then pushing the supper table into another corner, quietly growled "Come on." Miss Pods and Mrs. Grumblebum rushed upon the men and endeavoured to soothe them; Miss Pods directing her attentions to the chivalrous Grist, and Mrs. G. attempting to allay the fury of the butcher. Bunting was firm as a rock; he gently pushed his hostess aside, and made a terrific lunge at Grist. Grist seeing that he must defend himself, thrust his screaming mistress aside and advanced towards his adversary. At this moment there came a loud knock at the street door, and Mrs. Grumblebum rushed out to answer the summons. It was Henry Gospitch. The landlady caught her lodger by the arm, and besought him most earnestly to quell the passion of her guests. "They 're fighting, and they 'll murder each other as sure as they 're born!" she said; and Gospitch, thus pressed, entered the parlour.

"Just come in time, Sir," exclaimed Pods.

"He 'd better stand out of the way, or he may get a pummelling as well as Grist," said the determined Bunting.

"I must beg you will settle this quarrel elsewhere. *I* am an inhabitant of this house, and cannot be disturbed with drunken brawls at this hour," said Henry firmly, eyeing the butcher without betraying the motion of one muscle.

"Can't you? we 'll see that;" and the butcher called upon Grist to make ready, warning Henry Gospitch not to interfere.

Henry's hot blood could not brook this insult. He awaited his opportunity, seized the man Bunting by the collar, gave him two or three turns, and finally lodged him upon the door-step; and a policeman, who was by some wonderful chance passing at the time, promised to escort the enraged butcher to his home, or if he did not behave himself, to the station-house. And in this way one of Mrs. Grumblebum's sausage parties was brought to an abrupt close.

Henry Gospitch retired to his room, and, somewhat calmed by the events of the day, he lay down to rest with a more quiet heart than he had known for some time past: he was soon in a sound sleep. About three o'clock in the morning a loud knock at the door awoke him: he heard the sonorous voice of his landlady inquiring "Who dared to disturb respectable people at that hour of the night?" and a shrill voice from without made answer, "Tell Mr. Gospitch that Mr. Gaps wants him directly. Mr. Gaps is very ill—dying. *Do* tell him to come immediately." "Very well—*I* must tell him, I suppose," answered Mrs. Grumblebum." "All right," shouted Henry from the window; and in a few minutes he was on his way to Berners Street.

CHAPTER X.

"Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave."

LONGFELLOW.

THE rain poured down in torrents from a sky of seeming pitch; heavily, perpendicularly, and in large drops, the rain fell upon Henry. It was a perilous journey to him. Home-returning revellers shouted drunken ditties as, boxed comfortably in hired vehicles, they were borne along to their nests—stray birds perhaps with anxious home-awaiting mates. Their mirth grated wretchedly upon his ear, for his soul was sad and sadly thoughtful. So discordant was their joyousness that he could scarce refrain from cursing them as unfeeling, unchristian rioters—fellows with self only imprinted upon their granite-built hearts. It did not occur to him that they were utter strangers to him—utterly ignorant of the nature of his errand. Still the rain plashed upon the pavement, and the night was black and windless. Painfully thoughtful still our traveller hurried on his way. He had never felt so utterly dejected. He had borne beggary with a stoic's nerve, but there was some influence in the present scene—in the dreary pelting of the heaven-descending waters—in the awful perspective of his journey—that made his spirit sink within him; and his heart was as if it had been wrung bloodless to the core. On his way he passed a London churchyard, and then the liquid that, pure and in crystal drops, had fallen only a few minutes previously from the clouds, rose up from the body-laden earth in nauseous, stifling steam. "God!" thought Henry, "a few days and the husband of Marian Gaps will sleep in a bed steamy and overladen as this." He shuddered at the thought, passed quickly on, and was soon in Berners Street.

Poor stricken Marian Gaps, thought our hero, though he felt how bad and selfish such thoughts were at such a moment, she has had a hard heavy time of it; an old, worn-out, crippled husband—she has been thrown away. Is this death a relief to her? Does she anticipate her husband's dis-

solution, and her consequent freedom? Will she gaze upon his cold shrivelled corse with the placidity of a freed spirit—or does she love the halt, ugly biped? Can she love such a withered apology for a man? Henry mentally answered these self-questionings, not as he believed the young wife would have answered them, but as he felt he should like her to answer. These ponderings were not his sober thoughts, they were (he could not disguise the fact from himself) his dearest wishes—his selfish, soul-felt hopes. As he held the muffled knocker attached to Gaps's door, his selfish emotions crowded themselves upon his brain, and he trembled, a self-convicted culprit. He was going to play the part of hypocrite before a dying man. This was soul-degrading treachery—grim, irreparable wrong; but he could not avoid the wickedness. He knocked, and was admitted.

"How is Mr. Gaps?" he inquired hurriedly of the domestic.

"Terrible bad, Sir," answered the female. "Will you walk in, Sir: the doctor is now with master: I 'll tell Missis you 're here. She 's been anxiously waiting for you, Sir."

Henry was ushered into the parlour. The house was as still as a catacomb at midnight. Presently some faint footsteps sounded upon the carpeted staircase, descending towards the parlour. The servant in a comparatively loud tone of voice informed her mistress that the gentleman was in the parlour.

"Hush!" responded Marian Gaps as she entered the room.

"Forgive this unseasonable disturbance," she said, addressing Henry. "My husband—I am certain of it—is dying. He can't—the doctor says he can't—last till the morning."

A flood of tears followed the indistinct utterance of these words. Mrs. Gaps had altered wonderfully within the last three weeks. The bloom yet struggled upon her cheek, but it was fast fading; her fine eyes—flashing kindly expression—were enclosed in red, swollen sockets, and her lips were hard and almost bloodless. She was only eight-and-twenty, but the care—the long, sleepless night-watchings attending Gaps's sickness had so altered her that she looked almost forty; and it seemed a mercy—a circumstance for rejoicing—that death was about to take charge of the invalid. If Henry now felt any adoration for her it was not certainly her beauty

that fascinated him; she looked careworn, jaded, and pale and sickly as a waxen image. Appearing to him under these disadvantages—weeping the loss that freed her to become his, (and the latter fact was not suggestive of hope to Henry,) our hero saw how immeasurable was the power she already had over him. His sense of delicacy—of strict duty—gave him strength sufficient to conceal effectually his passion; and he maintained enough self-possession to offer her condolence in the measured language of friendship.

"You should not give way to so much grief, Mrs. Gaps, at this melancholy crisis," he commenced. "Death may be a blessing to one who suffers so intensely as your husband."

"Ah! Sir, a friend may think so. A wife and a friend have different philosophy." And Marian Gaps sighed heavily.

"Still, Madam," continued Henry, "is there not charity in the hope that death may end agony and open heaven to a bedridden, aged man; and, having this charity, is it not possible to see the dearest tie earth can bind broken (if the object of your love gain happiness by the rupture) with calmness, if not with serious, God-thanking happiness?"

"You can't tell what I 've suffered—will never know the life-long sorrow I have at my heart."

At this moment a servant entered the room to inform her mistress that the invalid was awake, and had asked for her.

"Will you see my husband, Mr. Gospitch? He is so anxious to talk with you that we could scarcely compose him to sleep; and even now he has not slept an hour. He is so changed since the afternoon—you will scarcely know him."

Mrs. Gaps, followed by Henry, ascended the staircase on tiptoe, and in a few moments they were in the sick man's room. The curtains were drawn closely round the bed, and no light, save that of the fire, shone in the apartment. A long row of phials ranged along the chimney-piece showed how protracted the illness of the dying man had been, and how zealously the skill and science of man had been applied for the sufferer's welfare. The long-drawn breath distinctly audible directly the room-door was opened pronounced the impotency of all human aid in the matter; and the flickering fire and deep stillness seemed to be only preparatory arrangements systematically adopted to harmonize with the grand mystery about to be accomplished.

The gentle wife drew the bed-curtain aside and looked anxiously upon the face of her husband.

"Is it you, Marian," gasped Gaps almost inaudibly.

"Yes. Are you better, dear?" inquired the anxious woman.

"It will all be over very soon now, Marian—very soon. No more doctoring: it 's only a mockery of God's power—His will.—Is Gospitch here yet?"

Gaps had changed wonderfully. The rigidity of his face had relaxed into a soft, kindly, calm expression, significant of a spirit well at ease. His arms lay distended outside the bed-clothes—one hand clenched the counterpane, the other lay open upon the bed. He was upon his back, his head being well propped with softest pillows, arranged as only an affectionate, hovering wife can arrange them. His eyes seemed to be starting from their sockets and gazing at some object high on the bed furniture, his lips were apart, his cheeks hollow, and his skin shrivelled like an old sapless apple; and such was the mortality whose comforts Marian had supplied day and night during three weary weeks.

Gospitch, beckoned by Marian, advanced to the bedside. Gaps did not stir one muscle; his arms remained motionless, his stare was vacantly fixed upon the bed-curtain, and his lips scarcely moved as he attempted to speak.

"Lean your head near to his mouth," said the wife in a whisper. Henry did so, and heard the following syllables uttered faintly and at intervals:—

"Marian is young—will be courted for the money I shall leave her. She has endured enough with me—Heaven will bless her for it. Promise me—we 've not long been friends—but promise me that you will see she does not marry anybody unworthy of her. She is simple as a lamb, and will, if you do not promise this—be entrapped—wronged. Ah! this is my only grievance—my only agony. Promise, do."

Gospitch said, "I promise you, Sir—I pledge you my honour it shall be as you desire."

"Heaven bless you, young man!" and the sufferer grasped Henry by the hand and squeezed it tightly.

Presently he continued—"I don't owe a farthing—not one sixpence. My money I have made myself—I have to thank nobody for it. I have worked hard. I have much to answer for—the black secret of my life Marian knows—has forgiven me the injury—she will tell you. She is not to blame. She

will be scandalized—sneered at—insulted. But don't allow it, Gospitch—she does not deserve it—I am to blame—I alone."

Still Gaps held Henry's hand tightly.

"Marian—*my* Marian," gasped the dying man, "your hand."

The wife reached round the bed and took her husband's hand in hers, and kissed it and bathed it with her tears. Gospitch looked intently at Mrs. Gaps, and then upon the features of the sufferer; and Mrs. Gaps, tears streaming the while from her eyes, gazed fixedly upon her husband.

Still Gaps held the hand of his wife and the hand of his friend tightly. A few moments of intense silence ensued; and then gradually, almost imperceptibly, Gospitch felt that the hand of his benefactor was loosening its hold; Marian felt the same loosening. All was silent, still, motionless. In another moment the invalid's hands fell, useless, upon the bed: a gurgling utterance in the throat, a gentle spasmodic motion in the bed, and Death, the man's only creditor—was paid.

Marian saw the full extent of the grand mystery, threw her arms round the neck of the lifeless clay, and lay there, as senseless as the corse, until she was removed to another room by the female domestics.

Six days after Mr. Gaps's decease two mutes bedecked most sumptuously told the tale of death to the passers-by—told the world that petty, miserable vanity is so dear to human nature that man's senseless, mouldering mortality stickles for silks and satins to rot upon.

CHAPTER XI.

> "Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of queens,
> Power all their end, but beauty all their means:
> * * * *
> A fop their passion, but their prize a sot—
> Alive, ridiculous—and dead, forgot." Pope.

> "Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, and a satisfactory review of our own conduct, are circumstances very requisite to happiness."—Hume.

When Miss Maturin left Henry Gospitch, she was extremely agitated and angry. He had repulsed her—refused her for his wife! Whether Henry's conduct was reprehensible or not is a matter of opinion upon which scarcely any two persons will agree. He argued that had she loved him she would have been with him—have cheered him throughout his difficulties; he knew not that she was fettered by the conventional notions of an aristocratic sister. He was aware that Mrs. De Gospitch hated him, but he did not know that his mistress was her abject slave. He was, perhaps, too hasty in his decision, too harsh in the utterance of it; but it was founded upon the best motives, and therefore he must be pitied rather than condemned. Miss Maturin's love had been crushed—annihilated in an instant; and her pride was wounded. She had offered to forswear the luxuries of a palace for the hardships of a penurious homestead, and the tenant of the humbler dwelling had refused her proffered allegiance and love. A girl nursed and schooled as Miss Maturin had been, could not contemplate such humiliation without anger—without a hope of revenge. Her lover had slighted her, and she would sting him to the soul—crush him with her indifference—agonise him with her contempt. Having seen the wretched, naked rooms which Henry inhabited, the greatness of her proffered sacrifice was increased a hundredfold in her eyes. She had been told that he lived miserably housed, but she had no conception of any place so dark, dingy, confined and bare as the house in Red Lion Court. Contrasted with this picture of poverty, the humblest apartment in her sister's mansion was the most sumptuous

abiding place. And seeing fully these wide differences, she regarded Henry's conduct as brutal, not to say idiotic. She could bring him no money as a marriage portion, but there was some compliment in resigning luxurious ease for pinching care with him. If he could not fairly value this sacrifice, she thought he must be a boorish, passionless person—heartless and without refinement; and if this were so, she believed she had to congratulate herself upon a very fortunate escape from his thraldom. How blindly each judged the other!

When Miss Maturin reached Tavistock Square, on her return from Red Lion Court, she found Mr. Sheridan Jackson and Captain Grasy with her sister. The captain was wonderfully polite to her, hoped that her spirited dancing had not over-fatigued her, and that she had benefited by her walk. He was excessively sorry that she had been making a pedestrian excursion, for he had hoped to have been honoured with her company for a stroll; however, perhaps she had not been far and was able to venture forth just for half an hour; the carriage might meet them at a certain point.

Miss Maturin, having heard that her sister and Mr. Jackson would accompany them, easily assented to the captain's proposition, and the party set out in the direction of the Regent's Park. Miss Maturin took the proffered arm of the Captain.

"Charming day," commenced the soldier; "you are fond of fine weather and the country—the blooming, sweet-scented country, Miss Maturin—sure you must be."

"I am," sighed Miss Maturin, "excessively fond of rustic scenery—are you, Captain?"

"Sure, Miss Maturin, you must be joking to doubt it for a moment. I could live under a hedge and think myself in paradise."

"Think of the nettles, to say nothing of the earwigs, Grasy," interrupted Sheridan Jackson, who had overheard his friend's remark.

"Bah!" returned the Captain, "I could hug the nettles and attend to the creature comforts of the earwigs. But then you know, Sheridan, my boy, what an enthusiast I am." And addressing Miss Maturin, "Do you like enthusiastic people, Miss Maturin?"

"Dear me, yes. I think that a person who is not enthusiastic is a mortal to be pitied."

"I am glad, delighted, that my chief characteristic pleases

you so entirely, Miss Maturin. Really now, that 's downright flattering—upon my credit it is."

They were now in the park—the Regent's Park—a plot of ground that should be called the Eden of London.

"Splendid park this," suggested the rapturous Captain; "a spot, Miss Maturin, where witching nature has lavished her dear charms with tremendous profusion. Sure now, I could live under that poplar tree—I do love poplar trees."

"Why, it 's a chestnut, Grasy," again interrupted the sarcastic Jackson,

"So it is, so it is," responded the unabashed Captain; "sure I 'm as blind as a bat, and I 'm forgetting my botany. Botany 's an elegant science, Miss Maturin. I could give up all other books if I had a copious volume treating of botany. You like botany, I 'm sure?"

"Why, to confess the truth, I never studied it, but if Captain Grasy recommends the science, I 'm sure—"

"Say no more, Miss Maturin, say no more, really I 'm delighted if I have won your good opinion. Oh! sure I 'm a lucky dog," and the Captain bowed profoundly. He sighed heavily once or twice. drew his hat over his eyes, and then continued as if he were talking to himself only—"Men are not worth the dear creatures. We are a set of worthless fellows not worth a whistle. Ah! if we could only value woman's love when we 've got it. Sure I think I could appreciate the jewel." Then suddenly pretending to recollect himself, "I beg ten thousand pardons, Miss Maturin—I was musing—sweetly musing. I was thinking how blest married men must be, and regretting my terrific loneliness. Picture to yourself, Miss Maturin, a gentleman with no home to go to, only a dull lodging, unenlivened by the witching smiles of beauty, unadorned by lady-like loveliness. This cannot be called a home, Miss Maturin, can it?" asked the Captain impressively.

"Yet," answered Mary, "some gentlemen prefer bachelorhood to married life—you know they do."

"Then they 're not men, Miss Maturin. On behalf of my sex I disclaim them altogether," exclaimed Grasy emphatically. "He who cannot love a woman is not a man."

"Oh! I don't say that men do not generally love, but then you know, Captain, they are so very, very changeable," simpered Mary.

"Then I say, Miss Maturin—and sure I mean it—the man who can love a dozen ladies is not a gentleman. It's very well to joke about, as my friend Jackson does. He has written poetry beginning so—

> 'My heart is like an omnibus,
> It carries twelve inside,' &c., &c.

but he doesn't mean it, it's only his fun. Ah! if I could only find a heart that would appreciate the tenderness of my heart I should be happy. I'm a curious sort of a fellow—I can't box up my feelings—I've no patent Chubb lock to my bosom, as my friend Jackson says—no, I'm as open as broad day."

"Not so loud, Captain, I beg," and the couple talked in a lower tone and more confidentially.

Meanwhile Mrs. De Gospitch, leaning on the arm of the genius Jackson, (who with hair almost as long as his legs, though bald at the crown, showed his distinguished countenance daily in Regent Street to a grateful British public,) talked of literature, and that fruitful subject—marriage. Jackson was always ready to acquiesce in the opinions of his hostess; it was the price at which his visits were endured. He had the art of yielding while he contradicted; he never gave up an opinion at once, but he allowed Mrs. De Gospitch to have eventual victory in all their arguments.

"What has become of your friend, Mr. Blandly Reeks, is he well?" inquired Mrs. De Gospitch.

"Quite well, I thank you," answered Jackson. "He has been much engaged lately. He has just published a charming little poem."

"Indeed! I'm glad to hear it: he's a very quiet, gentlemanly young man; I told Mary so. Do you remember any of this new poem; though I should think you could not read *Mr. Reeks'.* poetry and forget it. He writes charmingly."

"He's a rising man, there's no doubt about it, and he'll work his way if he attends to what I say. Let me see, I think his poem commences thus—(by the way it is addressed to a lady who does not return the poet's love)." Jackson then repeated the lines, stopping now and then when his memory failed him, or when the commendatory ejaculations of his listener interrupted him. The poem ran thus:—

"Oh ! maiden dear—it is not pretty
So to laugh at woe—at tears;
Fairest beauty dwells with pity—
Pity is a sense that fears
To add to sadness deeper grieving;
It loves to lull the panting head;
Pity cannot help believing
All by earnest manhood said.
* * *

I *was* presumptuous; and yet truly
Did I echo from my heart,
That—on paper—you called "madness
For a phantasy"—all art
I scorned. I did not flatter.
Calculation lost its hold:
I said I loved you—trembling said so,
For I felt such saying bold.
* * *

You did not chide me—worse than anger
Was the unimpassioned tone
In which you counselled vacillation—
Inconstancy by woman shown !
Gently muse—breathe softly near her;
Blend her name with sweetest verse:
Speaking of her, ever fear her—
Her name melodiously rehearse.
Sing of her as of some goddess
Clothed in attributes divine;
With a cestus for a boddice,
In which lie nestled the glad Nine."

"Touching in the extreme," exclaimed Mrs. De Gospitch. "Do you think you could prevail upon your friend to write them in my album?"

"Certainly—with a great deal of pleasure—certainly," bowed Sheridan Jackson. "The circumstances under which the poem was written are peculiar—most peculiar."

"Do tell me all about it if you can; I take such interest in your friend."

"The story is simple enough—Mr. Reeks met a lady two or three times; she was a charming, intelligent, warm-hearted girl, who sang like a nightingale. You may have observed how impulsive Mr. Reeks is. Well, he had not seen this young lady above half a dozen times before he was devotedly in love with her; and, perhaps rashly, he wrote and told her as much. She answered his letter politely but coldly; with

a pen dipped in ice she begged him to remember that they had not long been acquainted with each other, and that his love could consequently have but the frailest foundation ; and she concluded her letter by expressing her conviction that in a few weeks he would think with wonder how such a mere phantasy could have entered his head. Hurt and made hopeless by this repulsion, he penned the lines which I have had the satisfaction of repeating to you."

"What a pity!" quoth Mrs. De Gospitch ; "but the lady was certainly not to blame : I should have acted in the same manner myself."

"Then you do not value first love and all that sort of thing," ventured Jackson.

"Why, yes I do, I think ; but then it is not seemly for ladies to acknowledge their love at once."

"Then you advocate the temporary suppression of love when it first breaks out with ladies?" inquired Jackson.

"Dear me, no ; but I think ladies should have power sufficient to modify the manifestation of their feelings. We women, Mr. Jackson, feel so much more strongly than men — we are all heart — you will allow that, I 'm confident."

"Of course—who would contradict the opinion of Mrs. De Gospitch?" returned the polite genius.

"Now you 're not sincere, Mr. Jackson—you know you 're not," vowed Mrs. De Gospitch, playfully.

Mr. Sheridan Jackson took some time to impress upon his fair hostess the strength of his sincerity, and he had scarcely succeeded in his object when the carriage met the pedestrian party, and Miss Maturin and Captain Grasy, Mrs. De Gospitch and Mr. Sheridan Jackson, having seated themselves in the vehicle, were conveyed therein to Tavistock Square.

"I must congratulate you upon a brilliant conquest," said Mrs. De Gospitch to Mary Maturin, as soon as they were alone together. "Captain Grasy is of a very old family ; a captain, and a very handsome one too."

"He *is* good-looking," answered the girl.

"And you know you found him agreeable. Why, he talked sentiment all the time you were together."

"He was rather sentimental, certainly," said Mary Maturin, seriously.

"I 've asked him to dine here to-morrow."

"Have you?" was the only reply Miss Maturin made.

She was in a fair way to be revenged. That morning she had been spurned by Henry Gospitch, that afternoon she had been courted by an aristocrat who could boast the descended blood of royalty itself. Yes, she felt confident of the fact. Henry would live to regret bitterly his harsh behaviour towards her. But she knew that she deserved the treatment she had experienced, for she had forgotten her self-respect in visiting a beggar in a dirty dungeon of a house. Had he been a king she could not have done more. But she was thankful she had escaped: had he accepted her, she now dreaded to think where she might be; perhaps lodged in some loathsome garret, netted with cobwebs: as it was, she had a fair prospect of becoming the wife of a handsome, agreeable, well-behaved, soldierly young man, who would give her all the luxuries her heart might crave or her fancy create. This was indeed a difference. She pictured Henry to herself as a hopeless, blighted man—a biped praying for a grave. It did not occur to her that he too might have found solace for her loss in the heart of another: her vanity banished this thought from her brain. No, she thoroughly believed that Henry Gospitch, having lost her dear self, must sneak through life with downcast eyes and a deadened heart—that the loss of her love must doom him to life-long misery. It did not enter into her philosophy that man's heart, when disappointed in one object, is sufficiently comprehensive to grasp another idol.

CHAPTER XII.

> "Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
> And hope without an object cannot live."
>
> COLERIDGE.

HAVING ensconced Mrs. Gaps comfortably with her sister in Carnation Cottage, Clapham, where the widowed lady insisted upon residing, though repeatedly urged to try a change of scene, Henry repaired daily to the offices of Messrs. Short and Co. His business was monotonous and uninteresting; but he made the acquaintance of a fellow-clerk of most original character. Brasely would have been worth hundreds to Wilkie; he was the most humorous looking person we have ever seen: and then he was deliciously ugly. His ugliness was, however, well concealed by the jollity his ill-formed physiognomy mirrored; and in Brasely's company you forgot the exceeding plainness of the individual in the even joyousness of the man's nature. He was somewhat ignorant, it is true, on many points; but he was an adept at his business, and that is the great essential to a man's success in life. The polite arts had received no attention whatever from Bob Brasely, but nobody could say that he was not perfect in "double entry." You might call him an illiterate dog and he would laugh at you; but question the accuracy of his arithmetic, and he would insist upon fighting you—for fighting was his favourite recreation. Bob Brasely could introduce you to any "crib" in London; he was hand and glove with half the boxers upon town, and had floored a man "twice his weight;" and so Bob really considered himself somebody. Some young men covet a reputation for their knowledge of painting; some for their aristocratic acquaintance; some for their downy beards; but Bob's ambition was satisfied when he had made acquaintance with the crack boxers upon town. He had some taste for ballet-dancers, but he did not pride himself upon the cultivation of this endowment: give him his gloves and a good man to play with, and Bob had no greater idea of human felicity. This was coarse taste it is true; but Bob had been taught no better. He was as good-hearted a fellow as you would wish to meet, and it was a pity that his good sense and good heart

were not turned to better account. However, lament as we may the failings of Mr. Robert Brasely, we shall not improve his character one jot; so with this brief preface we shall introduce him to the reader.

When Henry and Bob first met they were mutually disgusted. Henry took offence at Bob's slang, and Bob was indignant that a man, ignorant of the first principles of pugilism, as Henry confessed himself to be, should be put at the same desk with him, an experienced and well-known boxer.

"So you know nothing of fisticuffs?" inquired Bob, as the two sat at a desk together.

"Nothing whatever," was the reply.

"Well, then, I 'll do the thing handsome and teach you. I don't think you 'd make a bad hand at the business—you 're not such a very bad figure for it," volunteered Bob.

"Thank you, Mr. Brasely, I 've generally defended myself pretty successfully when the occasion has called for blows," returned the laconic Henry.

"Ah! yes: very fine as it happened; but you hadn't to deal with a person of my experience. I 'm not proud, Mr. Gospitch, but I flatter my kidneys I can box a bit."

"I 've no reason to doubt your skill."

"Come," said Bob, confidently, "if you 're no hand with the gloves, you know you can handle sculls; we 'll have a day on the river together."

"I can pull a bit, certainly," answered Henry.

"Well, I see you 're a brick after all. I 'll engage a wherry at Searle's; when shall it be?" gleefully responded the enthusiastic Bob. "Perhaps we can get up a mill with one of the watermen. I should like to lick a waterman; I 'm quite tired of cabmen, they 're so easily thrashed. I know nothing I should like better than a comfortable set-to with a good substantial boatman." And Bob's eyes glistened at the prospect of a fight—sparkled as though he had suggested a sure route to Paradise, and were about to avail himself of the discovery.

"Upon my word, Mr. Brasely, it 's quite uncertain when I shall be disengaged," coldly answered Gospitch.

"What, some girl in the wind?" suggested the amateur pugilist, gently inserting his finger in the ribs of his neighbour. "Well, bring her with you—I 'm not particular;" and Bob pulled his shirt collar a little higher, and winked very

knowingly at Henry. The young fellow's face, ugly as it was, bespoke so much good-nature, such a thorough rough and ready English bonhommie, that our hero could not take offence at the inquisitive remarks of his sporting friend. Henry, in mind, was twenty years Bob's senior, at least; this one had been borne down by no calamity—had felt no pinching want—that one had been schooled by bitterest experience to look more seriously upon the affairs of life. Henry had many self-imposed responsibilities, (fetters that elevate manhood and give an earnestness to every action,) Bob's sole care was the due exercise of his darling art. It was no wonder then that there was a wide difference in their respective pursuits and opinions. "I don't object to a row on the river with you any day, but I object decidedly to brawls with watermen."

"Come, come," said Bob, "every man his own taste; you won't have to fight, you know. I 'm not blowing my own trumpet too hard when I tell you I believe I can manage a waterman or two just to wind up the day in style."

Bob was a favourite with Mr. Ferdinand Short—an especial favourite. Bob knew something of horseflesh, at least he knew a bay mare from a roan mare; he had, too, some indistinct idea of a mysterious connection between a horse's teeth and the beast's age; and accordingly, whenever Mr. Short drove to the office with a new horse, Bob might be seen diligently rummaging the animal's mouth, as though he had lost a sixpence therein, and was anxiously searching for it. This scrutiny was always enlivened by Bob's complimentary ejaculations—"A good mare, young—good action—plenty of spirit, by Gumm;" and these flattering encomiums passed lavishly by Bob upon his governor's taste made him his governor's favourite.

"I can get a holiday, you know. Short's safe to give it if *I* ask," said Bob, resuming his conversation with Henry. "Come, when shall it be? name a day."

"Well, say next Tuesday; I think I shall be disengaged then," responded Gospitch, pleased, in truth, at the prospect of a holiday trip—an enjoyment that he had not known for years.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, business is business," interrupted Dubbin, who at the moment entered the room laden with letters and accounts, which he deposited before Henry, giving him directions for their transfer into certain books bound in

red leather. Henry begged of Bob to be silent while he executed his employer's wishes; and the pair sat side by side, wielding their pens most diligently.

When Henry had completed his first day's work, he proceeded on his way to Carnation Cottage, having some pecuniary matter to settle with Mrs. Gaps. He trudged on lustily, (for £80 per annum would not stand the luxury of an omnibus,) and was soon at his destination. He found Mrs. Gaps and Miss Jackson sitting together very moodily; and it was flattering to him to see that his entrance called a smile upon the young widow's features.

"I have done as you wished, Mrs. Gaps," said Henry, "and the monument to your husband's memory will be proceeded with immediately. Have you any further commands for me?"

"Thank you, sir, none. And now, Mr. Gospitch, allow me, I insist that you will permit me, to thank you with all my heart—earnestly and truly—for your kindnesses to me since the death of Mr. Gaps. I am sorry—you will believe it, sir—very sorry that the world does not allow me to give you a general invitation here, if indeed this quiet cottage could attract you at times."

Miss Jackson had retired, and Henry was alone with Mrs. Gaps. He looked upon her with his soul in his eyes, and attempted to read in her pale face the magic manifestations of love. She looked at him, and with her soul in her eyes attempted to read in his face the kindliness of his manly nature; and both were bewildered with the result of their scrutiny. Henry could only read a settled melancholy upon the widow's features, and she, in Henry's face, saw anxiety and sadness. Both were confused, and Mrs. Gaps first gathered the courage necessary to vent her misery in speech. She said,

"I have to fulfil my husband's wish, Mr. Gospitch; and though the fulfilment cost me agony I must obey his last command. It can be told in a few words. Mr. Gaps was married to my sister, sir, many years ago; she died a violent death, in France; and so I was not his wife—I was his wife's sister only. There, sir, you have the secret; you know what the world will esteem my dishonour." And the wretched woman buried her face in her hands, and wept most bitterly. Henry was in a state of utter bewilderment, and

he remained for a few moments speechless. Mrs. Gaps, alarmed at his silence, suddenly raised her head and looked in his face.

"Do you think less of me, sir?" she asked; and Henry, roused by the accusation answered, "I should be a villain, Madam, if I did: I would believe nothing to your discredit, could not entertain the slightest word that spoke of you disparagingly. I hope you will believe this—thoroughly believe it, Mrs. Gaps."

"Most gratefully, Mr. Gospitch."

"I would prove it to you, would dedicate a whole life to the proof."

"You mistake me, sir," and Mrs. Gaps assumed a determined tone of voice; "you mistake me grievously if you imagine, for one moment, that I would consent to shield my misfortunes in another marriage. I have pride, sir, and can bear all I may have to endure alone."

"Mrs. Gaps," answered Henry, "there is surely but little proof that your husband's first wife was your sister. If I recollect rightly, your sister's name, when married, was Browning."

"Mr. Gaps went under that name at the time, sir; in short, Mr. Gospitch, I assure you positively that Mr. Gaps was my sister's husband. Think what you will of me—but such is the truth."

"I *will* believe it was so, Mrs. Gaps—and still may I say it—I look upon you, and can read the happiness of my life in your face; can pity your misfortune and honour you, madam, for the care, the kindly duty, with which you watched the last moments of Mr. Gaps. To me, madam, your conduct is heroism—the devotion of an angel. I, too, have a pride that forbids me to make a present petition for your heart, and I can understand how any words of love may grate upon your ear just now; but is it permitted to me to hope; shall I not have some bright end to fight for; shall the struggles of my whole life end in bitter bachelorhood? Madam, tell me—I ask it sincerely, earnestly,—do you promise me any hope?"

Henry took the hand of Marian Gaps, and clasping it tightly, awaited an answer to his words.

"You puzzle me, Mr. Gospitch, you hurt me. My husband—I mean Mr. Gaps—has only been dead a fortnight. Have I not said enough."

There was something exquisitely touching in this appeal; some indistinct reproach that went to Henry's heart, and told him he had been hasty—cruel. The woman he asked to love him had only been a widow fourteen days—had only been separated two short weeks from the man it was right to believe she had loved; was it not then a wrong, an insult to her and to his departed friend, this attempt to wean a wife's affection from the husband she had lived with for years, before the ashes of the dead man were well cold? At best it was thoughtless. Such rashness was, too, more likely to inspire disgust than love—more likely to deaden the woman's heart, than to reawaken its warmth for a new affection.

Oppressed by this self-condemnation he gently pressed Marian's hand, rose from his seat, and said—"It shall be so, Mrs. Gaps, I ask your pardon—good evening."

Marian's hand fell heavily upon her lap—she attempted to rise from her seat, but faltering she reseated herself. She was pale, as though death-stricken; tears, sparkling as sunlit dewdrops, trickled down her cheeks; her heart was bursting with the world of confliction within it—but her tongue attempted not to interpret the giant strife that was rending her soul. Mute, motionless—staring vacantly as a bat in sunlight—she allowed Henry to retire from her presence. The struggle was as great to the man as to the woman. As he walked towards the door an indistinct presentiment of long, weary, monotonous years to come—of dark days and anguish-dreaming nights—arose in his brain; and looking upon the still figure of Marian, which he saw for the last time, perhaps, his proud soul could not but acknowledge the stupendous power vested in beauty, such as that now pale and dumb before him. That fragile, nervous thing could bring to him more joy—could torture him more hellishly than a whole world of benefactors or tyrants; could humble his proud nature, or lift his ambitious dreams to visions of transcendent greatness.

"Oh, woman!" he thought, "what leviathans are you over men,—and what fools, what execrable dolts, we are to be ensnared often by attractions that last but for a few short years. Women are clever creatures, and men are fools."

Slighted lovers must understand the ravings of Henry Gospitch

CHAPTER XIII.

> "Sacred Silence, thou that art
> *Floodgate of the deepest heart;*
> Offspring of a heavenly kind,
> Frost of the mouth, and thaw of the mind,
> Admiration's readiest tongue."
>
> FLECKNOE.

THERE assuredly *is* a sanctity in silence. Prate as we may about confidence—extol as we may the delight of pouring the burden of the heart into the bosom of a friend—we must nevertheless bear witness (and all who have felt any great passion will) to the sanctity of silence. A thought that has not been communicated—that has lain peacefully or restlessly in the heart for years—becomes so incorporated with the mind—so intimately connected with the idiosyncrasy of the individual—that to make it common to others seems a want of self-respect. When a man has made a great resolve to himself, and if the promulgation of this resolve would argue past silliness or vice, he is more likely to adhere to the resolution while he confines it to his own bosom, than when he has communicated it to his friends. Also any resolution that is to triumph over a weakness is more sacred—more strongly resolved—when unimparted than when told to a friend. This reasoning accounts for the uniform reserve noticeable in men of strong intellect, or of comprehensive genius. A fool has no secrets, no self-sanctified thoughts; a wise man many.

Our hero's mind enshrined many, many resolutions that had never burdened human ear. He was a man living within himself, yet profoundly interested in the world about him. He had large sympathy and large charity; but he was reserved and cold in his address. He never prepossessed, but he generally, though always slowly, won respect and admiration. Had he been a wealthy man he would most probably have been as haughty and exclusive as Mrs. De Gospitch; but he would have exercised more charity than that lady, and he would not have been so easily led as his elder brother.

His last interview with Mrs. Gaps exercised a material influence over his general conduct. Having passed some

days in a profound melancholy, he determined to rouse himself to shake off a disease that was preying seriously upon his mind. He would go out into the world—the world that concealed an infinity of blackest wretchedness beneath a Momus-mask. He felt that he should not be the only hypocrite—the only man who would give a hearty guffaw with agony gnawing at his heart; and so he would see some pleasure—taste somewhat of the bustling mirth about him. This determination did not for a moment lessen the strength of his resolve to give strict attention to business—to rise. The pleasure he resolved to seek he sought only as a stimulant that would enable him to do his daily labour cheerfully; and his labour was stimulated by love and revenge—love for Marian Gaps, revenge for the insult offered to him by his former mistress and her sister. In pursuance of a settled determination announced in the prospectus that heralded this history, we shall not gloss over the faults of our hero, neither shall we give them unfair prominence. His errors shall speak in his actions, and so shall his virtues. But we would not have the reader take from the truth of our picture, by attributing to our hero's actions better motives than he, in truth, possessed. Whether he had ample reason for the bitter feelings he entertained towards his rich relations is a matter in which the reader is left to exercise his own unbiassed judgment. All we shall say is, that no circumstance has been coloured or omitted. Yes—one: it is this. When Mr. Gospitch, senior, died, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his eldest son, the sum bequeathed to Henry was £200, which amount would (so said the old man) purchase our hero a decent clerkship; and then all future advancement must rest with himself. Henry found that the only situation this sum would insure was a clerkship of £80 for the first year, and ten additional pounds each succeeding seven years. This prospect did not please him; and so, recollecting a family legend that said something about an ancestor who had rejoiced in the business of grocer, he resolved to embark his modest capital in a grocery business. This resolve he secretly carried into effect. At first his pride would not allow him to stand behind his counter; but finding, at length, that the business went wrong whenever he was away, he finally ensconced himself in his shop: his relations discovered him—and cut him; and such is the history of his disgrace.

Resolved to see again some of the gaieties of life, he looked forward to the boating excursion with Bob Brasely impatiently—he even asked the pugilistic Bob if the trip could not take place on Monday instead of Tuesday. But Bob vowed that he was positively engaged with Jem Tussle, at Jack's crib, on Monday evening early, and could not possibly put off the engagement. He anticipated an out-and-out set-to. "What d'ye say to coming with us?" asked Bob. "You'll see some jolly dogs, I'll warrant ye. Some such as you don't see every day. Jack's crib is the tightest in London—full of merry blades, I can tell ye."

"But what's to be seen there?" innocently asked Henry, already half inclined to accept Bob's proposal.

"What's to be seen at Jack's crib!" exclaimed the surprised Bob. "Ecod, Gospitch—pardon my saying so—how ignorant you are!" and the sympathetic young pugilist raised his eyes expressing astonishment and pity.

"I must plead guilty to my ignorance. Come, Brasely, you can inform me—what is to be seen at the crib?"

"Seen!" ejaculated Bob. "Why the best rat-hunt in London—the best pugilism—the merriest dogs in the world; and you can get there stout that I'll defy you to get anywhere else, to say nothing of the welsh-rarebits and devilled kidneys. What's to be seen! Ecod! I could live and die at Jack's."

"Well, your picture's glowing—interesting. I don't mind if I *do* go," answered Henry; and when the office time was up the two young men sallied forth in the direction of Jack's crib. It would fill pages were we to describe the innumerable and mysterious turnings which the clerks took ere they reached their destination. They threaded long, dingy, children-choked lanes—ascended and descended various flights of stone steps—crossed yards—went through mysterious gateways—and finally came to a halt before a low, dark, dirty house, at the door of which Bob knocked thrice with his cane. The door was immediately half opened, and a gruff voice from within inquired who was there. "All right, Joe, my boy," answered Bob; and the two friends were admitted. They threaded a long, low, narrow passage, crossed a dingily lighted ante-room, and were at last ushered into the principal room of the crib.

The sight that there presented itself to Henry was so wholly new to him—so utterly dissimilar to all the scenes he

had witnessed elsewhere—that he stood gaping with wonderment, until roused by Bob, who appeared quite at home in the confusion. The crib was about double the size of an ordinary tap-room. All round it were placed, at equal distances, odd-looking, greasy, burnt-umber-coloured tables, at which were seated the most motley assortment of human beings it is possible to conceive. Clay pipes, the commonest tobacco, and huge pots of beer, were the principal burden the tables sustained, if we except, here and there, the large brawny arms of some free and easy individual. Young dandies, exquisitely got up, held intimate discourse with corduroy-clad butchers, tavern-keepers, prize-fighters, and labourers ; and the polished gentleman of lordly circles sparred with his own cheesemonger's apprentice.

They were jolly dogs at Jack's crib ; and Jack himself was a jolly, remarkable person. In height he was about five feet three, in breadth almost three feet. He had arms bound with muscles of stone, and he could "shut up" many men of double his size and weight. He was professor of pugilism at his own establishment, and he flattered himself that his pupils turned out quite as well as Blue Jem's. He was generally attired in a pair of dirty leather breeches, his upper man being in a constant state of nudity, a fashion most convenient for the successful exercise of his art.

"Where's Jem Tussle?" inquired Bob of the host, who, with a pipe in his mouth and a tankard of liquor before him, was mysteriously moving his arm to and fro, so as to effectually display his muscular development to the admiring bystanders.

"Not knowin' can't say—not anyhow," answered Jack.

"Who wants me?" shouted a slim individual from a further corner of the room.

"Oh! there you are, Jem," answered Bob ; and, turning to Henry, "come along my boy—I'll introduce you to a tight blade—he's worth knowing. He's been known to lick five cabmen in one night ; so, you see, one can be excused for paying a little attention to him." Henry nodded assent, and crossed over with Bob to speak to the hero of five cabmen.

"Ready for a mill?" asked Jem.

"I don't mind a turn or two," answered Bob, carelessly. "Allow me to introduce a friend of mine—Mr. James Tussle —Mr. Gospitch."

"Very much your sarvant," growled Jem, as he withdrew his kerchief from his neck and unbuttoned his shirt collar.

"I shall be ready for you in a minute," observed Bob; and he forthwith deposited his coat and waistcoat upon the back of a bench. "Sit near my clothes, will you, Gospitch, while I have this bit of a mill. What will you have to drink—porter and a screw 'd be the touch, wouldn't it?" And without waiting for an answer, Bob bellowed forth the order at the top of his voice, and then advanced into the centre of the crib with his antagonist. A clear space was quickly made for the combatants, and an eager ring of faces formed. "There 's a brace of tight lads for ye," volunteered some of the lookers-on. There 's a couple of bricks, and no mistake."

Bob and Jem Tussle fell to; and in about ten minutes the latter had thrashed the former most completely, amid the plaudits of the assembled visitors; and Bob retired, with a black eye and a bleeding nose, into the corner where he had deposited part of his wardrobe.

Henry pitied the condition of his friend; and though the fight, during its progress, had excited him, its consequences were thoroughly disgusting to him. A fit amusement this for beasts, he thought; but a brutal pastime for rational creatures. However he was not allowed much time for philosophy. In a few moments Bob had laved his wounds, adjusted his dress, and was calling vociferously for Jem, and stout, and devilled kidneys. Jem soon joined Bob and Henry, and the three agreed to sup together.

"I was out of practice to-night. I made a precious mull of it—didn't I?" asked Bob of his victorious friend.

"Why you didn't play so well as you generally do; but I generally double you up, you know," answered Tussle.

The stout, devilled kidneys, &c., were quickly served, and quickly dispatched; sundry "goes" of gin were also served and dispatched, and the company began to get exceedingly jolly. The novelty of the excitement threw Henry into raptures as the spirit mounted to his brain; and, elevated by the porter, gin, and tobacco, he thought he had never spent such a jolly night in his life. As he continued to swallow his liquor he grew bold and boisterous; he offered to bet ten to one with Jem that Joe Buggs would lick Blue Jem any day—he would even give Blue Jem (not Jem Tussle) the choice of ground (Henry had never heard of the men before—had never

seen the latter). He took such care to impress upon Tussle how little was his opinion of his (Tussle's) skill, that the enraged Jem swore he would fight two such as Henry in ten minutes, and give them both the best hiding one man ever gave another.

"Do it," shouted Henry, brandishing a pint pot.

"Just step this way, and I 'll show you who you 're talking to," quietly responded Jem, turning up his cuffs. Henry staggered forth, throwing himself into all kinds of menacing attitudes, and eliciting the loud laughter of the company.

"Give him one poke and put him upon the ground, Jem," suggested one individual. "Don't fight with the fellow—he 's drunk," volunteered another.

"Is he?" responded Jem to the latter speaker. "Then he ought to know how to get drunk like a gentleman. There 's for you, my fine fellow." And with one well-aimed blow Jem knocked Henry down as flat as a pancake. Bob rushed forward, and so did several of the company; and all swore that Jem should not take advantage of a man in liquor. They vowed that it was a disgrace to the profession—that it was inartistic bullying.

"There—I won't touch him any more," growled Jem; and he ensconced himself in his old seat, and resumed his pipe and sipped his grog quite quietly.

Henry was for some time insensible. He had taken more liquor that evening than he had swallowed during a whole year previously; and though what he had then taken would scarcely have disturbed the equanimity of a man addicted to liquor, to him, who was unaccustomed to the least indulgence in this vice, the quantity was maddening. He soon recovered his consciousness, (if, indeed, the indistinct recognition of persons and places can be called so,) and Bob advised his immediate removal in a cab to his lodgings.

Henry had carefully concealed from Bob the locality in which he lodged. With other people he would not have feared to indicate the modesty of his dwelling-place; but somehow he could never muster sufficient courage to make Bob acquainted with the poverty of his abode. This reluctance in Bob's case may be easily understood. The young pugilist's pride lay essentially in externals, and Henry knew that their friendship must be measured by the extent of their equality. This knowledge rather diminished his regard for

his new acquaintance; but Bob was a pleasant fellow to chat with, and there was no occasion for any very intimate confidence between them. The mention of a cab effectually roused our hero, and he stoutly refused to be borne away in any such vehicle. He declared emphatically that his legs were a match for the broken knees of London cab-horses; and he trusted he knew his own value too well to confide himself to the tender mercies of an ignorant, ill-looking, red-nosed cabman. This refusal, and the reasons for it, produced another laugh at Henry's expense; and he was glad to be consigned to the arms of a massive chair that stood in an obscure part of the crib. Bob came and sat himself down beside his fellow-clerk, and inquired whether any more grog would be acceptable.

"No more, or you 'll make me drunk," stammered Henry.

"Just one more go, old fellow, and we 'll be off," suggested Brasely.

"Well—to please *you*, Brasely;" and Henry had another goblet of liquor placed before him.

There might have been some excuse for the harshness of Henry's relations had they seen him in his present predicament—at least many will judge so. It is not, however, an uncharitable, an unwarrantable assumption to assert that Mr. De Gospitch would not have been disgusted with his brother in the crib, though he could not recognise him in the shop. We do not forget that De Gospitch's objections to his brother's conduct were increased and fortified by the aristocratic notions of that gentleman's wife; we allow much to Mr. De Gospitch on the score of weakness; but the most charitable mind cannot hold him wholly irresponsible for the wrong done in his name to his brother. Fighting is an employment used by noblemen to while away some of their leisure hours: they have nothing to do; and so, by way of amusement, they will see who can give the blackest eye—the reddest nose; pastime worthy of Ojibbeways—not of England's aristocracy. And the science being patronised by beardless lords, Henry might have become a first-rate pugilist—the nightly patron of dingy boisterous "cribs;" and he would not have incurred the displeasure of the aristocrat, De Gospitch. Perhaps a half-defined consciousness of this passed through Henry's brain as, besotted by unmeasured potations, he rolled about in the arm-chair, giving utterance to broken sentences—now

laughing hysterically—now grave as a clown at midday. He had commenced his intended round of pleasure well—he had not done the thing by halves. He had made up his mind to enjoy himself, and he had so far carried out his resolution very completely.

The night wore on, and one by one the guests vanished from Jack's crib; and it was four o'clock in the morning before Henry reached the Grumblebumbian establishment. He had refused the proffered assistance of his friend Brasely, and had in some mysterious manner found his way home. He was left to cool his heels during a full half-hour on the door-step, ere the respected widow Grumblebum made her appearance.

"Pretty hours!" exclaimed the landlady, who was habited in an intricate, indescribable dress. "Pretty hours, Mr. Gospitch, for a respectable gentleman to knock at a respectable establishment. 'Pon my word such goings on as these are past all bearing; and if you can't mend your habits, you must go. I should be sorry to lose you—you are a very nice young man, as I've often told you; (he had paid her part of her rent in the morning;) but such hours as these are not fit for Christians. Never marry, Mr. Gospitch—never marry—(at least everybody can't get people to have 'em)—but should *you* find such a simpleton, don't; if you value her happiness—don't marry her. You'd break a woman's heart in a week. There, good *morning*." And Mrs. Grumblebum slammed the door of Henry's room, having helped him to ascend the staircase.

Never marry—never marry—rang in his ears as he fell upon his bed. And his dreams were of Marian Gaps and Jack's crib.

CHAPTER XIV

> "For now no fanciful miseries bespeak
> The panting bosom and the wetted cheek."
>
> Hood.

Directly Henry Gospitch had left Carnation Cottage, Miss Dinah Jackson rejoined her sister in the parlour. She found Marian in tears.

"Again crying! Why, Marian, you are quite a child," said Dinah. Marian did not open her lips.

"Has some new calamity happened?" asked Dinah.

"Calamity! No—no calamity, Dinah," answered Mrs. Gaps.

"What 's the matter, then? What has Mr. Gospitch been talking about all this time?" continued Dinah.

"Oh! nothing. I 'm a stupid, weak creature, and don't know what I 'm weeping about," returned Marian, as she wiped her eyes resolutely, and prepared, with a painful effort, to look cheerful and calm. Dinah seated herself near her sister, and addressing her playfully and withal earnestly, she continued—

"Dear Marian, *you* don't cry without a cause. I know—we all know—how you pride yourself upon your firmness and self-control. You *have* wonderful self-control; you know, when you were married you were as calm as possible—not in the least flurried—while I, only a bridesmaid on the occasion, wept torrents of tears. What there was for me to cry about goodness only knows; but this is very certain—I *did* cry—and do now, as father says, 'on the shortest notice.' Now what *was* the matter with you?"

Marian could not graciously resist the earnestness of this appeal. "Well," she said, "I must, I suppose, tell you the simple truth of the story. This evening, as my husband desired me, I told Mr. Gospitch of Mr. Gaps's marriage with poor dear Cara; and the manly charity—the simple earnestness with which he heard my story—with which he strove to prove its impossibility—has moved me as much as the story itself."

"I see no great—no unusual virtue in Mr. Gospitch's conduct. I confess I don't see what else he could have done."

"Dinah, you do not understand me yet." Marian Gaps paused, put her hand upon her forehead, and continued—"I really don't understand myself."

"More has happened than you care to tell me," avowed Dinah.

"You *shall* hear all," resolved Marian. "I besought Mr. Gospitch (for I valued his opinion) to think kindly of me—to remember that no fault of mine had reference to my disgrace; and he answered my appeal so warmly—pressed me so fervently to believe how well he still thought of me—that I looked upon him as one of the most honourable and noble among men. I wish he had left me to think so of him always; but, with words concerning the tombstone of Mr. Gaps scarce dry upon his lips, he talked to me of love—said he would dedicate his life to prove how well—how tenderly he thought of me. Heaven! what *am* I to think of him?"

"Think of him, Marian!" asked Dinah, surprised at her sister's agitation. "Think of him!—why, isn't he good-looking—isn't he five feet eleven inches high at least—doesn't his hair curl deliciously—hasn't he ducks of whiskers—yes, and—" here Miss Dinah Jackson paused—"and *is he* well to do in the world? I forgot that."

"You know," answered Marian Gaps, sorrowfully but firmly and emphatically; "you know, my dear Dinah, that I have no reputation for romance—that I am not likely to indulge in the rapturous dreams sentimental young ladies picture to themselves—I am *not* sentimental, am I?"

"Quite the contrary," Miss Jackson made answer.

"Gently, Dinah. Though I am no romantic creature—dissatisfied with mediocrity and quiet happiness, and longing for unheard of raptures—I believe I can appreciate the happinesses of life as well as most people. I am not a cynic—though at times, I grant you, I am satirical. I never thoroughly loved Mr. Gaps—I tell you this in confidence—I never thoroughly loved him. I felt that there was a spring—a deep, well-seated spring—in my heart that Mr. Gaps had never reached. I had affection and certainly sympathy for him, but when I became his wife an enthusiasm that had lain dormant in my soul for years was quenched; and though he treated me kindly, I saw no hope in life—I had not one bright event to look forward to—not one joy in anticipation. You know, dear Dinah, that I endured my marriage responsibilities with

some fortitude. I did not give way to grief, for I felt how vain my tears must be. I am afraid I did not show my husband sufficient tenderness, but it was hard to play daily hypocrisy—it *was* hard to feign a love I felt not.

"When Mr. Gaps died, at first his loss almost maddened me. I was surprised at my own grief. It was not my love for him that made me grieve, it was a sense of desolation—a vacancy—a pity for Joseph's long sufferings—a regret that I had not shown him more tenderness; and scarcely had his pale, worn features been removed from before my eyes when another—almost a stranger—talked to me of love. Oh, Dinah!"—and Marian put her arms about her sister's neck—"Dinah, you cannot know the agony I then felt. My death-warrant could not strike more despairing wretchedness to my heart than did the earnest, honied accents of my husband's friend."

"Did you accept him?" inquired Dinah eagerly.

"Certainly not."

"What!—You don't mean to say you refused him?" inquired Dinah incredulously. Dinah was six-and-twenty; she had slighted two applicants for her hand, and now, having been loverless for some three or four years, she began to appreciate with some ill-concealed anxiety the value of a suitor. She had determined to accept the very next offer.

"I gave Mr. Gospitch no groundless hopes, sister, neither did I forget my dignity. I felt hurt that he should have presumed to offer me a love that I could see to be pity only."

Presently Mr. and Mrs. Jackson joined the sisters at Carnation Cottage. The Jacksons were a most unhappy couple. They had lived together six-and-twenty years, and scarcely one day had passed since their marriage that they had not quarrelled. They never battled seriously. Mrs. Jackson had a nagging spirit; she always looked upon the black side of things. She could always find the cracks in the china; she was the first to taste the rankness of the butter, the sourness of the milk, or the adulteration of the spirits—some ill-natured people vowed that she had very often tested the genuineness of the latter article. Who has not, in the course of his misfortunes, come across one of these unhappy creatures? Poor mortals, whose especial care it is to see matter for lamentation in everything—to throw a pall of darkest crape over Nature, and then to wonder at the blackness of the

dame's appearance. You may see such people mix in the gayest circles with a face as blank as a flagstone—join the merriest group with a sneer upon their lip—look upon divinest scenery with the rigid muscles of a mummy.

Mr. Jackson—a spare, tall, narrow, bald individual—was naturally of a very calm and restful disposition, but he could *not* bear with ill-temper. If his wife said one word pettishly to him, he trumped her ill-natured syllables with words doubly sarcastic, and thus their quarrels had birth. Truth must be told—the lady generally commenced the wrangling. Their opinions were totally opposite on every subject. Mrs. Jackson had once or twice called upon her lord for a separate maintenance, and on this point there was many a warm discussion. The wife declared she would have a third of her husband's income, and the husband thought a sixth an ample provision. It was wonderful how, with such opposite tastes, they had ever become man and wife; and a facetious observer of these conjugal squabbles declared, that the only point upon which Mr. and Mrs. Jackson would finally agree would be—to separate.

On the occasion in question the Jacksons had evidently relieved the tedium of their walk with a quiet, respectable quarrel, and they entered their daughter's house with physiognomies expressing no very amiable qualities.

"I have a wonderful story to tell you, girls," said Mr. Jackson, addressing his daughters. "A very wonderful story."

"I see nothing so wonderful in it, I must confess," avowed Mrs. Jackson. "*I* think Mrs. Packett must have been mad—and as for her daughter, I 've no patience with her."

"What about poor blind Mrs. Packett, father?" inquired Dinah eagerly.

"The story 's somewhat long," said the old gentleman. "Look here," and he drew a manuscript from his pocket. "Look, it 's written by our friend Ballin; he thinks it may do for one of the magazines. That 's just the way of the world: a misfortune happens to an individual, and his friends directly set about to see if they can turn the disaster to any profitable account."

"Ugh! The world 's disgusting and everything in it," quoth Mrs. Jackson; and if we may interpret the probable signification of her looks, they said that she did not except her worthy lord and master by any means.

"Here 's the manuscript—read it, Dinah," said Mr. Jackson.

"Is it pathetic?" inquired Miss Jackson, and she untied the red tape and rolled the paper back; "because I can't read pathos, you know."

"You ought then, miss, with such an education as you have had. I only wish *I* 'd had such a schooling," said Mrs. Jackson.

Dinah pouted—adjusted and readjusted herself in her seat, and then read as follows:—

A SCOUNDREL'S GENIUS.

Mrs. Packett was a meek and quiet woman—a creature with almost angel looks, so placid and so kindly withal were the expressions that ever beamed upon her face. The features of a goddess after some seventy years' endurance must be the best ideal that can be given of Mrs Packett. The matron had grown grey beneath the roof that now sheltered her; and so her long usage to the house had taken from blindness many of its miseries. Her vacant, useless eyes marred a little the withered beauty of her face. For there *is* a beauty—a comeliness—in time-tried mortality; and the hollow cheeks, the lips falling upon toothless gums, the leathern texture of the skin, may still bear beauty's most witching helpmate—expression. Mrs. Packett dwelt with her daughter and son-in-law; she was happy—contented. The old lady's heart and soul were warm and firm as in hot youth; but the dilapidated clay that still served as a packing-case for her kindly emotions and her dear hopes was too nearly spent and broken to allow that its contents should run riot. Thus, the gentle creature's heart was all emotion—all warmth—while her body was as still (save now and then a slight clenching and trembling of the hands)—ay, as still as the marble cherubims would be which might soon mark her burial-place.

On the day to which our narration refers a gentleman—a stranger—giving his name as Doctor Drum—demanded an interview with Mrs. Taplin (Mrs. Packett's daughter). Mrs. Taplin gave audience to Doctor Drum.

In appearance Doctor Drum was a most gentlemanly

person—that is to say, he was neatly and appropriately dressed, and had a mincing, quiet, winning address that well accorded with his professed profession. His costume was black, and his forehead high and shiny. He had an entire hive of honey in constant readiness on his tongue; he had fine, bold, masculine features and a bushy pair of whiskers; and having said thus much, it is superfluous to add that he was soon a favourite with the ladies. He was what many ladies would call "a duck of a man;" and, alas! fair enthusiasts, how often are such ducks only masquerading geese.

"Madam," said Dr. Drum, "I have ventured to introduce myself to you in the hope that my humble talents may benefit a blind lady who dwells, I have been led to believe, in this house."

"I am sure you are very kind," vouchsafed Mrs. Taplin. "Pray be seated, doctor. My poor dear mother—that is to say, my mother-*in-law*—has now been blind nearly two years."

"Two years!" echoed Doctor Drum—"Oh! ah!—Well madam, I *have* cured people who have been blind ten years; so, as you will perceive, there is hope for your estimable relation; yes, I may say pretty confidently, there is great hope. What may the malady be, may I ask?"

"I can't tell exactly, doctor; the medical men give it a queer name," answered Mrs. Taplin.

"Yes—exactly—I suppose so," ejaculated Doctor Drum. "I daresay I shall be able to manage it. What age may the patient be?—pardon the question, madam—a knowledge of the lady's age is indispensable."

"Mrs. Packett is seventy-seven, doctor, next March."

"Precisely so," added Drum. "And now, madam, if you have sufficient confidence in me, may I ask to see your worthy mother-in-law. I stake my reputation—founded upon the brilliant success of a ten years' practice—that I will cure her. I have lately restored the blessing of light to a neighbour of yours, madam—opened her eyes completely."

Mrs. Taplin at once consented to introduce Mrs. Packett to Doctor Drum. Having been introduced to his patient, Drum felt the blind lady's pulse, lifted her eyelids, and looked intently at the sightless balls those eyelids enclosed; and having completed this scrutiny to his entire satisfaction, he proceeded to set forth pompously the various stages of the disease with which he said Mrs. Packett was afflicted. "First," said he,

placing the forefinger of his right hand on the forefinger of his left, "first, the levator palpebræ muscle is seriously affected, very seriously—so much so, indeed, that the lachrymal gland is almost destroyed, to say nothing of the great injury the superior oblique has suffered; and taking into consideration the present state of the sclerotica and the cornea, I shall look upon this lady's cure as a wonderful instance of medical skill."

"Dear, dear me, doctor, *my* eyesight 's gone for ever, you may depend upon it;" and the old lady smiled resignedly.

"Bless you, madam, you may not know that the medical science has progressed so far, that people begin to look upon the wonders it has accomplished as the result of magic. I undertake to say that in a fortnight you shall again catch a glimmer of light, and before the year 's out you shall see as well as you ever did."

"Impossible!" sighed Mrs. Packett.

"Nonsense, mother," quoth Mrs. Taplin; "you don't know what 's possible till you try."

"Precisely so, madam," minced Doctor Drum; "without your entire confidence, ladies, I should despair of effecting a cure. I ask no pecuniary recompense—what I shall do will be in a spirit of sympathy for a suffering lady; and I trust that the reputation of the medical profession, to which I have the honour to belong, is a sufficient guarantee for my good faith—is it so, ladies?"

"I cannot doubt your honour, doctor, for an instant," answered Mrs. Taplin.

"I *should* like to see you all again," murmured Mrs. Packett, addressing her daughter-in-law.

"This being so," answered the doctor, bowing profoundly, "I will—if I have your permission—commence my treatment immediately. Would you allow your servant to bring me a towel, some warm water, and then, perhaps, you would leave me with my patient for a quarter of an hour, as the operation (which I shall perform without giving the least pain) not being wholly my own method, I am compelled to operate alone." Mrs. Taplin curtseyed and withdrew, and the servant having supplied Drum with the required articles, left him to effect his cure.

"Are you troubled with pains—shooting pains in the back

of your head?" inquired Drum, as he looked searchingly about the room.

"Sometimes," responded Mrs. Packett.

"And do you feel a heaviness on the top of your skull?" he asked, as he mysteriously made the circuit of the apartment.

"What was that I heard rattle?" asked the old lady, tremulously. "I hope you 're not going to use any sharp instrument, doctor. I 'd rather be blind than submit to the action of a lancet."

"Dear me, no," avowed Doctor Drum, "I 'm merely mixing a plaster." If such was the case Doctor Drum had a very peculiar method of going to work, for he was still attentively scanning the contents of the apartment—the drawing-room. Presently he *did* make up some mixture which he spread upon a towel, and adjusted, as a bandage, upon the eyes of Mrs. Packett; he then closed the shutters carefully, and, wishing his patient a speedy recovery, withdrew to the parlour to talk with Mrs. Taplin.

"I have put your relative in a fair way of recovery," said Drum to Mrs. Taplin; "and if you will condescend to follow my directions to the letter I will venture to prophesy a speedy restoration to sight. You will please to keep the apartment in which I have left the patient in perfect darkness for the next fortnight; if you venture to admit the slightest ray of light into the chamber I cannot answer for the consequences, as the sudden reflection of the sun's rays upon the orbicular nerve may engender a fatal malady. The lady must not be moved out of the room on any account—you must make her up a bed where she is—any movement may irritate the sclerotica, and produce instantaneous inflammation. The lady's diet must be nourishing, and given at regular intervals; and the bandage must only be removed at night. If you will be pleased, madam, to see that these directions are followed, I will do myself the pleasure of calling again in a week. Good day to you, madam, and Doctor Drum withdrew from Mrs. Taplin's house, and walked away at a remarkably quick pace.

No man ever left a better impression behind him after a first visit than did Doctor Drum at Mr. Taplin's. Mrs. T—— declared that he was the greatest—the most polite genius she

had ever seen or heard of. He had the manners of a Chesterfield without Chesterfield's dulness—he was vivacious, and withal extremely well-spoken. There was no nonsense about him—no fuss. And in the mind of Mrs. Taplin such was the character of Drum.

Seven days were soon gone, (at least not sooner than usual, though if we were to measure Time by his seeming length, some days would be years, and some years days,)—the sun had disappeared on the eighth day after Doctor Drum's visit, and still he had not made his appearance. Mrs. Taplin began to get tired of groping about the dark room in which the gentle Mrs. Packett was ensconced—besides, the drawing-room was really wanted—there was no other room to shew visitors into, when Mrs. T. chose to say she was not at home, and they wanted to pen a line to her. On the evening of the ninth day, Mrs. Taplin conceived a plan that would enable her to have her mother-in-law removed to a bed-room without endangering the old lady's life in the least.

"We might you know, Robert," she suggested to her husband, "have mother carried up to her room on her bed just as she is. The staircase might be thoroughly darkened first, and so might her room—and then, don't you see, no harm could possibly come of it."

Mr. Taplin agreed that this method would effectually obviate any violation of Doctor Drum's instructions, and accordingly Mrs. Packett was conveyed, in the manner described, to her sleeping apartment. Having seen the old lady safely deposited in her bed-room, Mr. and Mrs. Taplin descended together into the drawing-room, and the gentleman commenced to open the shutters.

"Thank goodness for this!" exclaimed the lady. "*Now* I shall find my brooch and watch. I left them on the mantel-piece." The light streamed full into the room, and Mrs. Taplin looked upon the mantel-piece, but neither watch nor brooch was there—she looked upon the cheffonier, and still her watch and brooch were missing, and so was the little gold inkstand; she then called for the keys, for she thought she might have deposited her jewellery inside the cheffonier—she applied the key, but found that some gallant individual had saved her the trouble of unlocking the drawer—she drew the drawer open, and found that about £25 had been abstracted. Taplin,

when he saw all this, was not in the least degree complimentary in his address to his wife; he even went so far (and husbands will blush at the idea of a man presuming so to criticise his wife's judgment) as to call her a stupid—a person not fit to be entrusted with the care of a house—in fact, an idiot!

And as we write the mealy-mouthed Doctor Drum down a scoundrel—a felon—considering the extreme cleverness of the means employed to effect his villany—must we not blush for him—ay, blush until black in the face—at this miserable use of the genius vouchsafed to him?

"Poor dear Mrs. Packett—have you heard from them since?" asked Marian.

"Oh! yes, my dear; the old lady is pretty well, considering the flurry the monster has naturally put her into," quoth Mrs. Jackson, in answer.

"Terrible world, terrible!" exclaimed Jackson, gravely. "*I* doubt whether there 's an honest man in the universe—upon my word I do."

"Father, father, for shame," said Dinah.

"I mean it, girl," the man continued; "I mean it. Look at men of all classes, and the higher you go the greater the villany—though the mask that hides it is thicker. Talk about the degradation of the lower classes—pshaw! Look at the men who make the laws. What think ye of such a man as Didthorpe for a representative of some thousand Englishmen? Upon my word I believe half the members of Parliament to be nothing more than fools with acres—or golden calves, if you will; rob 'em of the gilding, and what are they?"

"We know all about that, father," interposed the adventurous Dinah.

"You 're an aristocracy hater. Well, I confess I like the 'Morning Post,' with all the beautiful accounts of the court dresses; but you will take in that dull 'Daily News,' with long rigmaroles in it about a lot of foreigners—Free Trade meetings, &c., and scarcely a word about any of the aristocracy. It 's really provoking."

"You 'll know better one of these days. Just like

women; their minds are essentially vulgar," observed Mr. Jackson.

"I only wish men were half as amiable and refined—that 's all," Mrs. Jackson made answer.

Mr. Jackson did not condescend to pay the slightest attention to his wife's observations, but continued; "A title—an empty, senseless sound—will turn the weak brain of a girl in a moment. In fact, *I* think the aristocracy of the present day—an entire—an expensive failure.

"Should we not, father," asked Marian, seriously and thoughtfully, "should we not respect our aristocracy as the descendants of England's heroes?"

"My dear girl," quoth Mr. Jackson, "I will pay homage to the worth and genius of any man, but I refuse even respect to the silly sons of great sires. There, I wont talk any more upon the subject—I 'm sick and tired of it, and none of us ever agree."

"Agree with *you;* I should like to know who could?" It need not be told who asked this question.

Mr. Jackson had some matters to arrange with Marian. He felt it his duty as her father to inquire into the state of her pecuniary affairs—a duty that is never neglected when those affairs are in a flourishing condition. He was much annoyed that Mr. Gaps did not appoint him one of his executors; and he felt this omission more keenly when he learned that young Henry Gospitch was chosen to officiate under the will of his daughter's deceased husband. He felt it was his duty to caution his daughter as to her interviews with Gospitch, and to impress upon her the necessity of mature deliberation in all the proposals she might make to him concerning the disposition of her property. Marian heard this counsel with great unwillingness. In her heart lay the scarcely-conceived germ of a love that had Henry for its object; and her father's cautions were thrown away; for she had determined to place entire confidence in the good faith and judgment of her husband's friend, and to follow his advice in all pecuniary arrangements. Mr. Jackson was fond of meddling; he could not bear to hear of any arrangement that had been made without his approbation or advice; he loved the importance of a counsellor, not the good that might result from the sage fulfilment of the office; and in this spirit he made up his mind to ask Henry Gospitch to dine with

him, that they might talk matters over together. It was finally agreed that Henry should be invited on the following Sunday: Mrs. Gaps was asked to her parents' house to meet him.

And the ungovernable eagerness with which she anticipated the dinner-party showed how strong and rapid was the development of the germ of love in her heart.

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"A NICE man *you* are for a small tea party," quoth Mrs. Grumblebum, when Henry made his appearance on the morning following the visit to the crib. "If *I* were your mother, *I*'d teach you good manners in a very short time—that I would," declared the landlady. "You 're a very nice young man, Mr. Gospitch—as nice a man as one need look upon; but such hours are ruination, and if you continue these games, your face 'll soon look as if it had had a bunch of red currants squashed upon it—you 'll have what I call a currant-jam complexion."

"Mrs. Grumblebum, your fears are uncalled for," answered Henry, as he attempted to quench a violent headache in a copious draught of tea.

"Oh! I don't know that," persisted Mrs Grumblebum; "I don't know that. Young men will be young men," observed the lady, evidently associating youth and dissipation as inseparable compounds. "I know what young men are well enough, now-a-days; and I don't believe there 's such a thing as a domestic specimen of the rising generation in the whole country. There now, Mr. Gospitch!" And nothing would have persuaded Mrs. Grumblebum that her belief was based upon a very narrow-minded philosophy.

When Henry reached his office, he found his companion of the previous night reclining upon a desk, administering a copious dose of oaths to a violent headache; and evidently labouring under the belief that the more blasphemous the exclamation, the more effectual the remedy. No very painful effort of imagination is demanded of the reader, when he is asked to picture to himself the irresistible dulness that overspread the doings of the day following the boisterous mirth at the crib. Do what they would, neither Bob nor Henry could contrive to raise any decent quantity of spirits, and so they plodded through the day's labour listlessly and silently.

What earnest philosophers men are on the morrow of a debauch! What thousands of golden resolutions are made every Sunday morning, in this metropolis, by those who have been drunk on the Saturday night! And (the calculation is a nice one) how often are those resolutions remade by the same mellow individuals! Bob was too old a stager to feel, for any length of time, the consequences of the riot at the crib: in the morning he had certainly a bad headache, but ere night closed in, he was quite prepared for another jollification.

"What d'ye say to the regatta to-night, instead of the row on Tuesday?" suggested Bob carelessly.

"The regatta—humph! It's just six years since I was there," responded Henry.

"That decides it old fellow. The regatta be it. You'll see some fun there—jolly girls, jolly boats, and jolly fights." Bob's eyes glistened at the latter prospect.

Henry hesitated, eighty pounds per annum would not stand this rollicking.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Bob, energetically, "you're a curious fellow;" and surveying Henry more attentively—"I may say a *very* curious fellow. I suppose you're going to object to the regatta on the score of morality, or some such tomfoolery. You know I've my own peculiar notions about morals, and though these notions are rather free and easy, they're very convenient, old fellow—wonderfully adaptable to every thing I like to do."

"Well, I'll go," determined our hero.

The character of Henry Gospitch had undergone a magic change in a few short weeks. The moody, sour man had become an impulsive, merry companion; but the revengeful brother remained still the revengeful brother—there was no change in this character. His meeting with Bob was a very fortunate incident—a lucky accident for both parties. Henry's stern principles corrected a few of Bob's errors, and Bob's animal spirits aroused the slumbering senses of our hero to an agreeable and beneficial activity. When a man has shaken off a burden that has been weighing him down for a long time, the relief induces an apathy from which many never recover.

When, having watched the agonies of a sick friend throughout a protracted illness, that friend has rendered up his soul

to his God we at first feel a relief—a thankfulness which soon subsides into gloomy apathy, and we find any change preferable to this emptiness of heart: we are glad of any circumstance that makes us forgetful of our loss. And in this state of mind did Henry enter into the pleasures of Bob Brasely; not from a reckless love of animal enjoyment, not from idleness, but in order to forget the grievances that time only could remove.

In the evening the two friends sallied forth in the direction of Putney.

Mr. Brasely flattered himself that he knew exactly what a gentleman should wear at a regatta: snobs would go in their usual costume, but crack gentlemen would don guernseys and straw hats; and as he (Mr. Brasely) wished to appear in his own character, he was determined to suit himself with a striped jacket and a tuscan hat. He wished Henry to follow his example; but a scantily lined pocket whispered to our hero the impossibility of supporting such useless expenditure, and so it was at length determined that Bob should have the credit of being a gentleman, while Henry must content himself with the appellation of a plebeian. This being fully agreed upon, Bob fitted himself with a guernsey and a blue trimmed tuscan, and the pair mounted upon the roof of a Putney omnibus.

"Goin' to pull?" asked the conductor, whose head appeared above the roof.

"No—not this year," answered Bob importantly.

"I believe it a'nt much of a race this year, is it, sir?" continued the said conductor.

"Why, let me see—I 've been so much out of town, that I scarcely know the men." Bob's rustic excursions had included Highgate, Hampstead Heath, and Clapham Common.

"Well," observed the communicative omnibus official, pushing his hat half off his head, "well, you know, *I* don't *presume* to know a mighty deal about the sort of thing—but considerin' the fuss that 's made and the little bettin' there is, 'pon my soul I think it 's always a deuced dull affair. Excuse my saying so; I do indeed."

"You 're not used to the river, I see," Bob made answer, in a very patronizing tone of voice. Bob really and truly pitied the benighted conductor, and as he paid the poor man, he condoled with the fellow upon his lamentable ignorance of aquatic glories. "No fun in boating!" exclaimed Bob.

"Ecod!—I should like to see anything that approaches it—it's the Englishman's most manly sport." And having delivered himself of this opinion, Bob took Henry's arm, and they threaded their way together through the heaps of carriages which blocked up that crazy, cramped, misshapen, boat-endangering heap of wood, called by courtesy Putney bridge. Having vigorously elbowed an unceremonious crowd, and having been duly elbowed in return, our friends reached Searle's boat-house, where Bob made certain learned inquiries about a certain outrigger, and having heard that all the Searle boats were engaged, it was mutually agreed that they should not entrust their precious lives to the mercy of any crazy wherry, and so all idea of appearing on the river was given up. Bob looked upon this as a lamentably slow proceeding, and the only hope that kept up his drooping spirits was the anticipation of some rare jollity at the fair held round about the grand stand.

"Well, we'll go to Finch's!" determined Bob.

"And who's Finch; and what's to be done there?" inquired our hero.

"You're chaffing, old fellow.—No, no. Come, come, though you confess you are green in some things, you don't mean to tell me seriously that you never heard of Finch?"

"It may be lamentable ignorance, Brasely," confessed Henry; "but I must own that Finch's name is quite new to me."

"Then I'll put you up to a thing or two," declared Bob, and he begged our hero to follow him. They edged their way through a dense conglomeration of people that lined the bank of the river, and near the grand stand turned to the left. They then walked along a short narrow lane, and were soon within the domain of Finch.

Describe Finch's! We might as well attempt to do justice with pen and ink to the glorious realities that skirt the Rhine!

How shall we set about painting Finch's bar, ensconced beneath the grand stand! The attempt would argue madness on the part of the author—downright raving madness. For within the select nook, somewhat disparagingly yclept the bar, are crowded fit offerings for an Olympian banquet. What if the bar enshrine no nectar, it contains bottled stout! What if Finch be quite out of ambrosia, he sells captains'

biscuits! And then the round-abouts, that waft fat, screaming, heated women through the evening breeze, the said females paying twopence for the fright! Add to the round-abouts some half-dozen shows, all containing "the greatest wonder in the known world;" a few dozen oddly-fashioned targets, at which little boys shoot for nuts; and in one corner of the field a nook roped off for donkey, to say nothing of shaggy pony riding; some twenty gingerbread stalls, and one melancholy cheap Jack; and if we have not done justice to Putney fair, at least we take credit to ourselves for having faithfully catalogued its chief attractions. Bob no sooner found himself in the fair, than he began to avail himself of its various aids to jollity. He first bought "the whole fun of the fair at the small charge of one penny," the said pennyworth consisting of an instrument fashioned somewhat like a rattle, and which, when drawn briskly down the back of an individual, emits a loud rattle, startling the person upon whom it is scraped. This instrument Bob applied with considerable vigour to the backs of his neighbours, some of whom greeted him in return with a "now then, fast 'un," or "babies *will* amuse themselves," or "I s'pose you think it very witty, but you 're jollily mistaken." Bob left no enjoyment untasted: his principle, when he was out, was, as he had it, "to go the whole hog;" and to carry out this precept he entered the ball-room of the Finchian establishment, having previously visited all the greatest wonders of the world, and shot at all the bulls'-eyes in the fair; and we must not forget to chronicle his elegant deportment on the back of a donkey; for though the animal had a mysterious inclination to "kick up behind," it is with some pride that we bear testimony to the ease with which Mr. Robert Brasely kept his saddle. He was quite at home with a donkey; and he never missed an opportunity of essaying his skill as an ass-rider. On the part of our hero we cannot speak so eulogistically, inasmuch as the animal he had the temerity to mount very soon saved him the trouble of dismounting by depositing him gently upon the grass, amid the laughter and jests of the assembly stationed without the ropes. It was Henry's misfortune to see his white trousers variegated at the knees with a very pretty colour, no doubt, but nevertheless out of place on a gentleman's inexpressibles; and he made a mental memorandum not to go donkey

riding in white—a note we should earnestly advise everybody to profit by when they make similar excursions.

When the pair entered the Finchian ball-room, the company were elbowing their way through a crowded quadrille, and exchanging remarks in such a loud tone of voice that the brass band at the further end of the gallery could scarcely make itself heard. It was quite a battle between the band and the company. The cornets and horns sent forth their loudest notes, and the company bellowed and hurraed vociferously, so that each had the victory in rotation. Now the band was distinctly heard above the shouting, and now the shouting drowned the music.

The ball-room was a long, narrow apartment, skirted by benches, upon which were seated some passable specimens of Nature's masterpiece, appropriately ornamented with mountains of muslin, typical of sweetest innocence. These ladies evidently gave their countenance to that precept which directs you to assume virtue if you have it not; and so they sat, and minced, and fanned themselves, awaiting the offer of an eligible partner for a polka or a quadrille—especially a polka. Now-a-days, when to be popular is to be fast—that is to say, vulgar, coarsely funny, and unmarried—quadrilles are generally considered very dull affairs, because there is no waist-enclosing movement—no giddy whirl, cheek to cheek and bosom to bosom—throughout its measured courtesies. If men were all paragons of refined virtue, and all women in thought as chaste as snow, there would be no polkas; for, setting aside the pleasure of close contiguity, where is the amusement of spinning about a room like so many tetotums? The truth of this remark is sufficiently supported by this fact—that women do not care to waltz with women, and men would hate to polk with men.

The male specimens assembled in the room included patterns of many classes of the community. This medley may be accounted for thus: the entrance money was only one shilling per head. There were Cambridge men, clerks, tradesmen, and journeymen; there were guernseys, dress-coats, taglionis, and flannel jackets—all effectively intermingled, and combining to form a very varied and a very amusing picture of an English holiday ball-room. The only apparent fault to be found with the room was its extreme

narrowness; the appointments were complete if they were not luxurious.

Bob was not long partnerless, and his choice from the female beauty present was very creditable to his taste. The band struck up a polka, and away whirled our jolly friend, Henry looking on enviously the while. The pair threaded their way through the polking crowd most marvellously—now hopping backwards—now to the right—now to the left—and now making a sudden bolt forwards. Bob clasped his partner in the most unceremonious manner, holding one of her arms at a right angle from his body as he guided her dexterously through the maze of dancers. As the dance went on, Henry, roused by the apparent joyousness of the revel, looked about him for a partner to join with him in the jollity. He soon espied an unengaged lady; and, having been accepted, he took her by the waist, and was soon one of the most vigorous among the dancers. They had kept this fun up some time, when a loud oath was perpetrated by some gentleman, together with a demand for an apology. There was an universal rush to the corner of the room whence these exclamations had proceeded; and Henry, together with his partner, was carried by the strength of the people behind him to the spot where the contending parties were squabbling. Blasphemous words, uttered plentifully on both sides, failing to satisfy the angry parties, the argument of fisticuffs was resorted to. A ring was speedily formed, and two gentlemen, having divested themselves of their upper garments, proceeded to satisfy their wounded honour. So dense was the pressure of the crowd round about the combatants, that our hero could see nothing of the fight. He asked in vain for the name or appearance of the pugilists—nobody could satisfy him on either point. Presently there was a general shout, and one of the fighters fell heavily upon the ball-room floor. "Bravo, little 'un!" shouted the lookers-on, as they closed round the victor and the vanquished; and Henry, taking advantage of the general movement in the crowd, succeeded in making his way to the spot where the beaten man was lying.

"Had a bit of a mill, old fellow!" exclaimed the individual who was re-dressing himself. Henry looked in the direction of the speaker, and saw his friend Brasely quietly arranging his disordered cravat.

"That chap on the ground there called me an awkward

fool, and finished by calling me a liar; so I 've just been polishing him off a bit," quoth Bob.

"Why didn 't you call me?" asked Henry.

"Oh! it wasn 't worth while just for such a trifle; however, something must be done with the fellow."

"'Xactly so, master!" exclaimed a policeman, as he took Mr. Robert Brasely's arm. "'Xactly so—something *shall* be done to him, and to you too, for breakin' o' the peace in this here room." Another officer soon appeared, and, helping the vanquished gentleman to rise, supported him out of the apartment; and Brasely and his victim, accompanied by two officers and Henry, made the best of their way to the Wandsworth Station House. The beaten man kept a handkerchief to his face; and some red spots upon the said handkerchief suggested an unpleasant injury to his olfactory nerves. The vanquished stubbornly persisted in his silence, but the vanquor talked as jollily as though he were on his way to the Derby.

"How did this skirmish begin?" asked one policeman, addressing himself to Henry.

"No questions," interrupted Bob. "B 369, you 're a very vigilant officer—you 've a devilish good pair of whiskers of your own—your boots are rather the touch—and I 've seen hair nearer the colour of vermilion than yours; but in spite of these attractions, B 369, attend to your duty, and don 't be inquisitive. I dare say you 'd make a very decent inspector; only wait your time, B 369, and don't forget that at present you 're a nobody." This speech completely silenced the inquisitive officer, who did not venture another remark until the party were in the presence of the inspector.

The merits of the case were discussed very warmly on both sides. The policemen having given their evidence as to the disturbance of the peace, the inspector, a small-headed, small-eyed, round-faced personage, who looked as though his coat collar was much too tight and stiff to be comfortable, desired the injured individual to take his handkerchief from his nose and explain his grievance.

The gentleman did so; and Henry, in mute astonishment, beheld the swollen features of his elder brother.

"In the first place, sir," said Mr. De Gospitch, "I have to complain of the clownish behaviour of the person who has given his name as Mr. Robert Brasely."

"Nothing of the sort," interrupted Bob.

"No interruptions, Mr. Brasely," commanded the inspector.

"I entered the booth out of curiosity, and was looking on at some very riotous dancing, when Mr. Brasely and a lady came against me with such violence that, had it not been for the crowd immediately behind me, I should have been knocked down. I remonstrated with Mr. Brasely; he retorted in most disgusting terms, and finally so enraged me that I believe I called him a liar, upon which he struck me, and I, as a matter of course, returned his blow; and thus the fight took place."

"What part did Mr. Brasely's friend take in the matter, sir?" asked the inspector blandly.

"His friend!" asked De Gospitch, and he turned round and recognised Henry.

Henry returned a look of contempt and indignation, and said not a word.

"I don't recollect to have seen Mr. Brasely's friend during the affray," Mr. De Gospitch made answer.

"And now Mr. Brasely, what have you to say?" asked the apple-headed inspector imperatively.

"What have *I* to say!" echoed Bob, in no way disconcerted by the authoritative tone of his questioner. "Well now, I'll give you a correct version of the whole affair; but first I want to know my opponent's name—especially as he has been favoured with mine."

"This gentleman calls himself Mr. Marshall," answered the inspector.

"That is not—" exclaimed Henry, advancing; but ere he had time to finish his speech, the inspector bawled, "Silence, sir, or I must turn you out of the room. The gentleman gives his name as Mr. Marshall; and that's enough."

"Well, let him call himself Snooks for aught I care," continued Bob, "*I'm* not afraid to give *my* right name, if other folks are. Well, as I said, you shall have the whole truth; and—as the fellows in court say—nothing but the truth."

"No disrespect, Mr. Brasely," said the inspector solemnly.

"This person, who calls himself a gentleman, and whom I've had the pleasure of thrashing, took upon himself to call me a liar and a scoundrel, because I accidentally pushed against him in a polka. If he can't have an accidental shove, he isn't

fit to be at such places. If he *is* a woman he should wear petticoats, that 's all I 've got to say. And look ye here, if he chooses to proceed against me for fairly giving him a licking, why *I* shall go in for damages for defamation of character."

"Do you intend to press the charge, sir?" inquired the inspector of Mr. De Gospitch.

"Why I think I should only perform a duty to the public and to myself—"

"Put yourself first," suggested Bob; "and then throw in the public by way of strengthening yourself."

Without condescending to notice this suggestion, Mr. De Gospitch continued—"by holding this person as an example; but "——

"Yes, *but*—but you daren't," quoth the facetious Bob.

"Mr. Brasely," interposed the inspector "I shall be compelled presently to an act of coercion."

"I feel sir," continued De Gospitch, "that the affair is scarcely of importance enough to drag me from my occupations at an inconvenient hour; and so, consulting only convenience to myself, and not out of any pity for this Mr. Brasely, I think the case had better be dismissed."

"Pity for me!" exclaimed Bob. "Why, I suppose next you 'll say I got the worst of the fight."

"No impertinence, sir: nothing but a consciousness of my having so far forgotten myself, as to bandy words with you, prevents my proceeding to the utmost rigour of the law against you."

"A carriage is at the door for one of you gents," said a policeman in waiting—as the party were leaving the station house. Henry was the first to gain the street. He saw the carriage, and seated in the carriage he beheld Miss Maturin and Mrs. De Gospitch, together with a tall, mustachioed person, who, at the moment, was conversing earnestly with Mary. Miss Maturin recognised Henry, and coloured deeply.

Henry passed quickly by, followed by Brasely, who enlivened his retreat from the station house, by ejaculating in this way—"He had the worst of it—no mistake about that, the fellow was funky—I 'd lick a dozen like him—stupid ass—paltry cowards," &c., &c.

De Gospitch soon joined his relative. Mrs. De Gospitch frowned awfully. "Upon my word, De Gospitch," she said, "I never, in the whole course of my life, heard of such goings

on. How did you manage to embroil yourself with a set of vulgar people in a booth—what business had you there? Everybody 's talking about it. We met Sir Joseph Junks, and he told us that you had just been paraded through Putney, in the custody of a policeman; that you were bleeding and had a handkerchief to your face. I can well understand your being ashamed of yourself."

"Sure, Mrs. De Gospitch," quoth Captain Grasy, who was the mustachioed individual we have alluded to, "gentlemen can't help these things sometimes. I remember myself fighting with a butcher; and though it went to my heart to lower myself so, circumstances, madam, would not allow me to back out of the quarrel."

Mrs. De Gospitch bowed ceremoniously, and then looked a whole storm of thunder at her husband. De Gospitch meanwhile occupied himself by testing the swelling that every minute grew more palpable on his upper lip. He merely observed, in answer to his wife's lecture, that, as his friend Grasy had observed, circumstances might make fighting unavoidable, even with a footman.

Miss Maturin had not spoken one word since Mr. De Gospitch had rejoined them. Captain Grasy was the first to notice this sudden change in his mistress.

"You 're low spirited this afternoon," said the captain.

"I 've a slight headache," answered the maiden.

"What a pity," sympathized the Irishman; "and you were so gay and full of laughter an hour since."

"Oh! she is annoyed, as I am, at Mr. De Gospitch's want of dignity," observed Mrs. De Gospitch.

"Nothing of the kind," retorted the husband. "You don't understand these things, Susanna, and so you 'd better say no more upon the subject. I insist upon this."

The wife pouted, and threw herself into a corner of the carriage, where she remained in silence until the party had reached the family mansion.

Miss Maturin, having made some excuse for withdrawing, sought her apartment to indulge in a sad cogitation. She had not the courage to ask her brother-in-law what part Henry had taken in the disturbance; and then she thought what was it to her—*she* had nothing to do with Henry.

She daily expected to be asked in marriage by Captain Grasy, the descendant of an Irish prince; was it not then

unpardònable weakness in her, to trouble herself thus about a clerk who had refused her love? And yet the memory of past happiness with that poor clerk—a certain thankfulness for the joyous hours he had made for her, awakened an interest in his career that she could not conquer. She strove to persuade herself that he was a nonentity to her; but the very struggle that ended in this resolve sufficiently proved to her that she was only playing the hypocrite to herself.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE station house adventure completely dulled Henry for the remainder of the day ; but Bob grew especially facetious upon the subject.

In the first place Bob was remarkably inquisitive respecting the true name of his antagonist, and Henry was not disposed to satisfy his friend's curiosity. It was against our hero's nature to confess any circumstance that might lower himself in the opinion of another. He knew full well that he had no great fault to put to his own account; nevertheless, feeling certain that Bob's friendship was measured by the position of his acquaintances, Henry (though he hated and scorned the principle) was too nervous, too much alone in the world, to afford to lose Bob Brasely's regard; and so he made some excuse to evade the questioning of his friend.

Bob and Henry returned to the fair. They were directly recognised as the victorious party, and saluted with enthusiastic cheers. These marks of approbation were received by Bob with delicious condescension; and the pair, when they were tired of this public compliment, dived into a refreshment booth and ate heartily.

Bob grew more riotous every minute; and Henry, made thoughtful by the sudden appearance of his brother and Miss Maturin, grew more fatigued with the jollities of his friend. Bob's riot ended in his being quietly led out of the fair by a mild policeman; and Henry, having accompanied the irrepressible Brasely as far as their way home lay together, left him and proceeded in the direction of King's Head Court.

When he reached home it was about half-past nine in the evening.

"Come, come," ventured Mrs. Grumblebum, as she opened the door. "You 're better to-night. Now this is a decent, gentlemanly hour to come home at. There 's a letter for you—directed to the post-office in St. Martin's Lane, as you desired. I gave sixpence to the man who brought it on for you, as he said there was immediate written on it. Here it is."

The letter was from Mr. Jackson, and contained an invitation to dinner for the following day—Sunday.

Henry went to bed, and dreamed of Miss Maturin and Mrs. Gaps.

In the morning he arose early, full of impatience to join the Jackson family; for he felt confident that he would meet Mrs. Gaps there. The letter did not contain any hint upon the subject; but, his hope taking the shape of a reality, he was certain that before night he would see Marian. It was this thought that made him anxious to do as much justice to his person as possible. He parted his hair some dozen times before it was exactly to his taste; he adjusted and re-adjusted his cravat till he gave up all hope of tying it as he would like to have tied it; and having given equal attention to every part of his dress, he set out on his way to Clapham.

As he neared the Jackson villa, he looked anxiously about him, hoping to meet Marian Gaps on her way to her father's or on her return from church; but this hope was not realized.

And as he walked onwards, his thoughts taking colour from the joyous exterior of things about him, Marian's image linked itself more inseparably with every new idea, and his heart gave itself up to a luxurious dream of love. He weighed and re-weighed every syllable that Marian had uttered at their last meeting; and, measure each word as he might, he could not reproach her for coldness, nor blame her for disrespect to her late husband. He wished a thousand times that she were a beggar dependent upon another for her daily bread; and then, he thought, he might woo her manfully and directly. No paltry motives could then be attributed to him—he might hold her to his heart, and be the fountain of her happiness—the spring whence all her mortal comforts must flow. As it was she had full coffers, and his course must be more guarded, more trying and protracted. He, almost a beggar, could not ask a rich woman in marriage; for his pride revolted

at the idea of the dependence consequent upon such a union. Was it manly to be the recipient of a woman's bounty—was it not slavery worse than the iron-shackled fate of a felon? No argument could have persuaded him to encounter such a destiny: he would have preferred to break stones upon the high roads sooner than hold himself the money-dependent husband of any woman.

Let it be plainly understood that we are now defining the principles which actuated our hero, and we are not accountable for the soundness or hollowness of his action-springs. Many will condemn his views as absurd; to this condemnation we answer that Henry Gospitch was *not* an angel, a genius, or a fool. On some points he was at fault—who is not? He had his own pet notions—his own ideas of honour and manly dignity; and the interest of his career lies in the consequences of these peculiar notions. Perhaps he was wrong in his standard of man's dignity—perhaps he was in error when he judged that a poor man marrying a rich woman, and being dependent upon his wife, forfeited his self-respect. His judgment on these points was perhaps unsound, and perhaps perfectly consonant with the feelings of a thorough gentleman; and we are ready to subject his actions to the impartial criticism of our readers.

No selfish motive swayed Henry in his love for Marian Gaps. He dived into the hidden recesses of his heart—he questioned every motive, every thought; and his conscience assured him that he loved the woman as a woman, and not as a gold-chest.

All the magic influences that the placid brightness of Nature has with an imaginative mind kindled an enthusiasm in the soul of our hero, and called a contrast to his mind the hideousness of which told him how ill fitted he was for the debasing riots of yesterday, and how capable of taking delight in the refined enjoyment of happy domesticity. He turned from thoughts of his late dissipation as from a recollection of crime; and his awakened soul revelled in delicious dreams of a love-attended home.

Henry was not effeminate, though "fast" gentlemen will so set him down in their "fast" opinion; and at the risk of offending the aforesaid fast individuals, do we chronicle our belief in the manliness and superiority of our hero's creed, as compared to their professed disregard of "marriage and all

that sort of nonsense." The market for "fast" literature is nearly glutted—it will soon be choke-full—the wares will decrease in value, and be finally consigned to the most effectual oblivion. The markets will be cleansed of the rubbish with the waters of Lethe, conveyed in buckets borrowed from Truth's well. Laugh as we may, there is something serious in life. And we are never more thoroughly alive to the holier influences of human existence than when the heart is opening to receive a cupid-driven wound.

Our hero reached the Jackson establishment exactly at the appointed hour; and, as he fully expected, he found that Marian Gaps was of the assembled party. Mr. Jackson received his guest rather ceremoniously, but the quiet manners of the rest of the family soon put the new comer at his ease.

Mr. Jackson's frigid manner gradually thawed; and, over his wine, the old gentleman became quite communicative. He made Henry a present of many of his political doctrines, and he discussed the doings of parliament with remarkable warmth. Jackson was a benevolent man; and, in a spirit of benevolence, he wished from his heart that the nation had the benefit of his doctrines—he wished, in a thorough spirit of patriotism, that he was in the House of Commons. He reviewed the qualifications of the more prominent members of the House, and then asked his guest candidly whether he (Mr. Jackson) was not, to say the least, immeasurably superior in intellect to any M.P. in the kingdom. He would undertake to head the ministry at an hour's notice: he only wished he had the opportunity—he would show them what government meant. Why, the present ministry were the slowest coaches in the world—didn't know which way to turn; whereas, if he (Mr. Jackson) were First Lord of the Treasury, he would guarantee to the Sovereign that the affairs of the nation should be put straight within three months

"If you were Prime Minister, papa, what should I be?" inquired one of Mr. Jackson's seven daughters—a girl with two tails of hair hanging down her back like bell-ropes.

"What you are now—a nobody," the girl's father answered; and he looked as though he meant what he said.

Henry kept his eyes fixed on the crape-covered form of Marian. She seemed sad at heart—she was silent—and his heart was bursting with the fulness of its love. Now and

then her eyes met his; and then her eyelids, gently drooping, gave evidence of the woman's growing sympathy for Henry Gospitch. It was a difficult task to feign attention to the measured discourse of the political Jackson; and the only thought that reconciled Henry to the old gentleman's prosiness was the recollection that he was Marian's father. "They talk of progress," continued Mr. Jackson, "why I affirm that society is making a retrograde movement. I'll give you an instance that will prove, beyond the possibility of doubt, how raw and unfinished—how savage our laws are. You must know that opposite this house there was a pump."

"Dear, dear me!" interrupted Mrs. Jackson, "that tiresome pump story again. Haven't you any thing else to say? I only wish your shirt-buttons would last as long as your stories."

"I believe I did not address myself to you, Mrs. Jackson," retorted the dignified politician.

"Oh! I see, Mr. Jackson, we are not wanted. Let us retire, girls." And the ladies rose to leave the room. Mr. Jackson vowed that he did not intend to convey any such meaning as that which his wife had thought proper to put upon his words; but the lady would hear of no other construction, and so the women of the house retired to the drawing-room, much to the disappointment of our hero, and against the inclination of Marian. Henry dreaded the ordeal through which he must pass before his host would permit him to join the ladies; and, thinking of Marian only, he looked attentively at Mr. Jackson, and feigned to take interest in that gentleman's discourse.

"Well, sir," Mr. Jackson resumed, "as I was observing, when Mrs. Jackson interrupted me, there was a pump opposite this house; and from this pump I and my next door neighbour took our water—that laid on in the house being unfit to drink. My next door neighbour patronises the water-cure system, and, consequently, good water is as necessary to him as his daily food; and I am very particular with the water I drink. Well, for two entire years I and my next-door neighbour had drawn our water from the pump in question, when one morning, as I was walking in the garden, I saw no less than six water-carts ranged beside the pump, while two men were vigorously engaged filling one of these carts. I called to these men, and told them that they had no right

to make use of the pump; whereupon they gave a broad grin and made some vulgar, disrespectful reply. On the morrow of this incident, when my spring water was brought up to me it was nearly as thick as mud—in fact, totally unfit for any Christian. I immediately waited upon my neighbour to see if he had noticed the same change in the water from the pump. I shall never forget the deplorable condition in which I found him. He was a very thin person—rather haggard in appearance; and when I saw him on the day in question he was wrapped up in an oddly fashioned dressing-gown, and looking the very picture of misery. On the table before him was a gallon pitcher of water, and beside the pitcher was a tumbler half full of the liquid. 'I see,' said I, 'that you have reason to find fault with to-day's draught from the pump as well as myself.' He assured me, in answer, that he had been suffering the intensest agony during the morning, in consequence of not having taken his usual quantity of spring-water. I told him of the water-carts; and we at length agreed to apply to the parish for redress. You know, perhaps, Mr. Gospitch, what it is to be driven to such an extreme as to make an application to the parish vestry necessary. *I* know no more disagreeable alternative; for—and I say this advisedly—I never found justice in a vestryman in the course of my long and active life—never. I went myself to the vestry—stated my case—showed the officers how detrimental to my neighbour's health, and to my health, and to that of my family, any deterioration in the quality of the pump-water might prove; I fairly set forth to the dullards the especial wrong they would do my homœopathic neighbour if they persisted in allowing a procession of water-carts to dry up the spring opposite his house. Now—making due allowance for the universal and well-known audacity and impudence of vestrymen—what answer do you think they made to this appeal?" Mr. Jackson struck the table with a pair of nut-crackers, and, looking intently at Henry, awaited an answer.

"Why," answered Henry, "men of kindly impulse would have directed the water-carts elsewhere."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Jackson, impatiently, "kindly men would have done as you say; but we 're talking of vestrymen and not of kindly men."

"I infer, then, from your outline of a vestryman's character, that the parish board refused your request."

"Exactly so," responded Mr. Jackson. "Well, I made known this harsh—this disgusting decision to my neighbour; and for a long time we were at a loss how to proceed in the matter. The excuse the parish officials gave for their unjustifiable conduct was, that there was no other pump within a mile of that opposite my house, and that they could not think of making the parish generally chargeable for the extra expense any alteration in the pumps would occasion. As you will easily imagine, I was not exactly pleased with this impudent refusal; but, as I have told you, for some time I could not hit upon a plan that would supersede the parish decision. At last, having given the matter mature consideration, I resolved to write to the Secretary for the Home Department upon the subject, feeling convinced that he would do justice to all parties. I received no answer to my first letter—I wrote again, and still I had no answer—I wrote a third time, and then I received a note in the handwriting of some obscure clerk, telling me on the part of the Home Secretary that the parish had acted with perfect propriety in the matter, and that people could not be choked with dust as they passed along the highway in order to gratify a gentleman's love of pure spring water. Now, sir, in a country where such gross injustice is allowed—is it not folly and madness—is it not falsehood to nickname this country the land of justice and freedom? I 've made up my mind to write a pamphlet upon the subject; for I contend, that while I and my family and my neighbour are doomed to drink muddy water, Englishmen must not make a boast of their progress and their impartial laws."

"Certainly they may," said Henry, listlessly.

"What, sir!" shouted Jackson, "do you mean to tell me that Englishmen *may* boast of their impartial laws while I and my family and my neighbour drink muddy water!"

"No, no—I beg your pardon, sir, I was thinking of another subject at the moment; I did not fully understand you." Henry's heart was with Marian in the drawing-room.

"It 's the aristocracy who are at the bottom of it."

"Of the pump?" suggested our hero.

Mr. Jackson *did* manage to screw his face into an apology for a smile; but his gravity quickly returned, and he continued pompously to deliver himself of his pet theories. He confessed that he had not the slightest reverence for old families, and

his remarks on this point savoured—some may think—of sound sense. "I am what I am," he said, "and what matters it who or what my father was. An emperor's son may be a polished scoundrel, and a sweep's heir may be an embodiment of human goodness; and I would rather be the friend of an honest sweep than the companion of a courtly blackguard. In the mind of some people there may be a 'divinity doth hedge a king;' but I confess I can look upon kings, and their diamonds, and rubies, and gold—their tinsel, and sometimes (looking in their faces) their brass—without quickening my pulse one atom. Their honours, for the most part, are as empty as their heads. For instance, the Chinese Emperor marks his majesty by having twenty-two katties of meat; hog's lard, one katty (or lb.); two sheep; two ducks; the milk of sixty cows; one katty of butter; and seventy-six parcels of tea, served for his breakfast. The Chinese Empress being second to the Emperor has only sixteen katties of meat, and so on in proportion, served for her breakfast, while the courtiers of inferior rank receive rations measured by their relative positions as determined by law. Now, sir," asked Jackson, solemnly, "is not this empty show—mere humbug?"

"My opinions of the aristocracy of this country," said Henry, "are totally opposite to that you have just expressed. I would uphold the nobles of this land—not because I reverence them individually, or even as a body, but because they form part of a system that has been most conducive to the welfare of England. I hate them for their pride and exclusiveness. I should like to see a lord shake a peasant by the hand. But though I condemn their haughty bearing—looking upon them as part of the machinery belonging to an harmonious combination of power—I shall always uphold their position, because I believe it to be necessary to the equalization of power in the country."

"I see we shall never agree on the point," observed Mr. Jackson.

Presently the gentlemen were summoned to the drawing-room—a summons which Mr. Jackson seemed in no way inclined to answer. However the old gentleman suppressed his contrary inclination, and ushered Henry into the presence of a coffee-sipping circle of ladies.

"I hope you have been mutually entertaining, gentlemen,"

said Mrs. Jackson, sharply. She was evidently annoyed that her husband had remained so long over his wine.

"I think we 've managed to pass the time pleasantly enough," responded Jackson. "Have we not, Mr. Gospitch?"

"In the company of a man so thoroughly versed in the politics of the day, could it be possible to pass time wearily?" This compliment was paid by Henry.

Mr. Jackson put his hand to his heart, and bowed profoundly, dropping his eyelids as he bent his body.

"If you 're fond of politics, Mr. Gospitch, you 'll soon be a prodigious favourite with Dinah. She dotes upon colonization and the laws of primogeniture."

Dinah muttered a "La! ma," and moved nervously about upon her chair. She slily watched the effect of her mother's speech, and withal made tremendous endeavours to look interesting.

Henry stirred not, did not once look at the political maiden. His attention was riveted to an opposite corner of the room, where Marian, silent and unnoticed, sat mournfully. Now and then he saw her eyes were fixed upon him, and so earnest and piercing was their expression, that he could scarcely bear their scrutiny. Directly he looked at her, her eyelids fell, and were not raised until he had withdrawn his attention from her to another party.

During Henry's visit to Mr. Jackson's, he scarcely spoke ten words to Marian; but a language passed between them that only mutual love could detect—a language laden with purest eloquence—telling in a flash what a whole dictionary of words would fail to convey. Divinest poetry sparkles in a love-lit eye. There is an exquisite charm in the mute eloquence of love which words seem to contaminate and debase. A holy interchange of hearts must be made in silence.

> "Sacred silence—thou that art
> Floodgate of the deepest heart!"

Before our hero left Mr. Jackson's house, this gentleman inquired somewhat inquisitively into the affairs of Mrs. Gaps. Henry was not particularly communicative; for though he believed that Mr. Jackson had a right, as the father of Mrs. Gaps, to inquire into his daughter's true pecuniary position, he (Henry) had no disposition to violate the wishes of the de-

ceased Gaps, and so he satisfied Mr. Jackson so far as to tell him that Marian was amply provided for, declining to detail the codicils of the will. This reserve did not please the old gentleman; he felt annoyed that he had not been consulted in any way with regard to his daughter; not that his anxiety as a doting father made his powerless position unbearable, far from it; for, to speak candidly of Mr. Jackson, he had a remarkable disregard for the welfare of his offspring. Paternal love was by no means Mr. Jackson's strongest passion, nor could his bitterest enemy call him uxorious. Wives and families were to him little adjuncts that contributed to make a man steady and respectable; beyond this he did not see the use of them. He did not hide this harsh belief from his spouse. At first she looked upon his assertion in the light of a joke; but, by degrees, his altered behaviour towards herself and children, his open love of selfish pleasure, his want of tenderness, taught her to receive his degrading confession as his sincere opinion. This knowledge, so humiliating to herself, lessened her love for her husband immeasurably, and their disagreements were dated from this unfortunate discovery.

Mr. Jackson was in easy circumstances; report spoke of him as the recipient of £500 per annum, but nobody ever heard from his lips the exact value of his property. He wondered that Mr. Gaps had not left him a small legacy; but, (*after* he was assured that the deceased had not bequeathed one sixpence to him,) he said he always thought that Marian's husband was like the rest of the world, ungrateful and ungracious.

Mr. Gaps left a packet with directions that it should not be opened until four years after his death; but Henry, having so promised Marian, did not make any mention of this mystery to Mr. Jackson.

* * * * * *

Henry Gospitch went to his bed on his return from Clapham, with a well-digested resolve to win a position that should entitle him to make Marian Gaps an equal offer. The evening he had passed reminded him forcibly of those happy hours when he and Mary Maturin were accepted lovers; and the recollections of his entire faith in her truth, and of her subsequent faithlessness, made him tremble lest Marian should prove a second Mary Maturin.

How deeply is a man injured when he is deceived; for his

CHAPTER XVII.

"He that hath a satirical vein, as he maketh others afraid of his wit, so he had need be afraid of others' memory."—Bacon.

Captain Grasy, Mr. Shakspeare Sheridan Jackson, and Mr. Blandly Reeks demand a chapter: they shall have it. The captain has peculiar claims upon the reader's attention: he comes, reader, to you, on the wings of love. The gentle captain has marriage bells dingling in his ears; he is what ladies call "an interesting object;" interesting, because he is about to make a tremendous sacrifice—to monopolize himself. Nobody can deny that the ladies had special smiles for Grasy—that in their hearts they thought him "a duck of a captain." This is not astonishing—the captain had the best tailor in London. You might question the orthodoxy of Grasy's principles, but you could not find fault with the fashion of his dress. His speech, perhaps, was graceless; but nobody could affirm that his body was ill-clothed. If he was not an exceedingly clever man, at least he was a handsome tailor's block.

Much has been said concerning the character, capabilities, and pretensions of Mr. Shakspeare Jackson: one more word, and he shall speak for himself. Mr. Jackson was a man of very superficial attainments: he was superficial in all things. Nobody was ever intimate with Jackson—nobody knew his secrets, and he knew everybody's.

We approach Mr. Blandly Reeks somewhat timidly: Mr. Reeks was a talented individual. There really and truly was something in Reeks. He owned the respect of a large circle of acquaintance; he offended nobody. He had a poetical vein, and from the said vein very passable verse gushed most liberally. Shakspeare and Blandly were intimate friends; that is to say, Shakspeare Jackson knew Blandly's affairs thoroughly, while Blandly knew nothing of Shakspeare's.

This cordial intimacy, so characteristic of the respective individuals between whom it subsisted, had lasted for the space of two years; it owed its duration to the meekness of Blandly. He looked upon Shakspeare Jackson as an oracle—an unex-

ceptionable genius—a mortal whom it was his especial duty to reverence and consult; Shakspeare was aware of his friend's enthusiasm, and Shakspeare profited thereby.

The friends usually met at Blandly's lodgings; for Blandly had a decent income in spite of his poetical weakness, and so he could afford to entertain his male acquaintance upon terms of perfect equality.

Respecting the pecuniary position of Mr. S. S. Jackson, little information can be given, inasmuch as little is known: all that can confidently be said is, that the gentleman's parties were extremely few and certainly far between, nor were his apartments so respectable as those rented by Mr. Reeks. But enough of such vulgar details, as Shakspeare Jackson would have it—why tell to a gaping world the petty concerns of life! why allow a prying public to thrust its long nose behind the scenes of a decent bachelor's existence!

It has been said that imaginary wedding bells rang in the ears of the hero Grasy: and Grasy—thanks to his military education and native prowess—heard the chime, and trembled not. Thou wert a man of iron, captain—a hero worthy of being gazetted with leaded type!

Ay, it is with some degree of pride—it is with a glad swelling of the heart, that the writer chronicles the Irish officer's heroic firmness. Hymen was at Grasy's elbow, and he trembled not! Nay, he even ventured to meet the appalling spectre with jests and laughter. He undoubtedly hoped to be prayed for as a martyr, and so he resolved to be worthy of the prayers. He would meet his fate manfully: to show his unconcern and perfect resignation, he would even on the last evening of his bachelorhood have jolly companions with him: he would ask Shakspeare Jackson, the sentimental Blandly, the sharp young blade Brasely, and Mr. Ferdinand Short. Who will not admire this courageous resolve—who will not invest the captain with imaginary laurels? Worthy disciple of Mars thy conduct was exceedingly gallant!

The pen trembles in the writer's hand, and the brain of the scribe is oppressed with the magnitude of its responsibility, for it must describe the heroism of a Grasy on the eve of marriage.

Right manfully stalwart soldier did you behave! The blood ran smoothly as oil in your veins as you prepared to receive your single comrades—"jolly companions every one." There

was no cloud upon your fine masculine brow; and though your hair nearly covered the said brow, it was not to hide a coward's wrinkles. Your hand shook not as you shaved your soap-sudded chin. You tied your kerchief divinely. The parting of your hair was straight as an arrow. Your coat was guiltless of a crease. And thus perfectly adjusted, you lounged upon a sofa with as much unconcern as the mummies at the British Museum evince upon inspection. Your attitude, when you received Mr. Ferdinand Short, would have put Mulready in ecstasies: the calm, dignified, graceful, and even cheerful heart manifest in the elegant actions of a person to whom Nature (pardon the eulogy, captain)—yes, to whom Nature has been prodigal in her favours—you took Short's proffered finger with a dignified carelessness admirably befitting the dignity of your position.

"Well, Ferny, my boy," you said, "I 'faith you see a doomed bachelor before you. A married man, sir, to-morrow, as sure as the cock crows."

"Yes, it 's all up with you now," answered Short. "Where 's Brasely?"

And now, captain, the author must (though sorely against his will) discontinue addressing you individually, and proceed with his general narrative. In the course of half an hour Brasely, S. Jackson, and B. Reeks, Esquires, made their appearance, and were duly greeted by their host.

Mr. Brasely thus addressed Grasy:—

"Good evening, captain. Tacked to-morrow, eh? You musn't think I 'm joking when I wish you joy. I may be weak myself some of these odd days."

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson greeted his host after this fashion:—

"Captain Grasy, I am indeed delighted that I am able to congratulate you upon your marriage with Miss Maturin. I have weighed minutely the advantages and disadvantages of the married state, and I have, I think, come to this final conclusion—that the advantages exceed the disadvantages in the condition in question. You must be aware that our greatest poets have sung in praise of Hymen—sung like nightingales, captain (if I may be allowed the simile); and so, you will perceive, that you enter into the holy state with good recommendations. Marriage, captain, is a tie——"

"Not a Joinville, I suppose," suggested Brasely

"This is no time for jesting," Jackson made answer; and,

taking up the thread of his discourse, "as I said, marriage is a tie that cannot be untied."

"Then it 's a deuced hard double knot," interrupted Bob. "I suppose that 's what you mean, Jackson."

"No, Brasely, I meant nothing of the sort."

"Och! never mind, boys," said the captain, who was resolved upon having a jolly night. "Here 's the long and short of the matter. I 've been a fast dog, as you all know; I 've had a decent time of it for the last six years, and now, i' faith, I begin to think it 's time I should settle down quietly, and, in a spirit of charity towards my mother country, nurse babbies for the next generation."

"You know the advice given to a presumptuous and over-confident hen concerning the family she had in her eye," remarked Brasely.

But Captain Grasy was not to be hushed by Bob's facetious rebuke; he had made up his mind (that small parcel so easily made up in some cases) to let his friends understand the hopes and reasons which had led to the contemplation of the morrow's monopoly.

"Boys," he continued, and to be extra impressive he dropped his cigar, and pushed his grog into the middle of the table. "Boys," it 's too late now for any backsliding on the part of your humble servant, if, indeed, I wished to be free of the tender engagement which now binds me. It would be indecent in me to intrude any passionate mention of Miss Maturin upon the present company."

The company vowed that the captain was modest: he pleaded guilty to the weakness, and went on to say, "that he was in a very delicate position." In this sentiment the young gentlemen present agreed very cordially.

"I will not detain you long, boys," said Grasy, "but my heart is bursting: yes, boys, i' faith, bursting with profound regret at the idea of parting with you as bachelor companions, though I must insist upon calling you friends. Some of you may think that I am little better than an idiot in this little affair; well, perhaps I am so, boys—perhaps I am; but, then, you know, I 've many examples before me—I shan't be the only married fool in the world. Genius is not necessary to support the dignities of wedded life: there 's no credit in the matter I grant. A family man is not always a talented individual. There 's no credit in a family, though there 's a deuced lot of

trouble in it—but it is useless dwelling upon these considerations—what 's done cannot be helped, boys, so here 's to your luck every one of ye!" And the captain drowned his pathos in a bowl.

"We 'll drown it in a bo-o-o-owl,"

shouted Brasely, as he followed the pathetic host's example.

Enter Mr. Blandly Reeks.

"Reeks, my good fellow," shouted Grasy, rising to welcome the celebrated author, "I 'm excessively pleased to see you!"

"I have to congratulate you, captain, and I do so earnestly;" was the quiet and sensible address of the modest bard.

"We have been sadly in want of you," quoth Shakspeare, addressing his bosom friend.

"Is Mr. Reeks the author of 'Woodman, spare that Tree?'" inquired Brasely, whose idea of poetry was concentrated in the song in question; "because, if so, perhaps he will favour the company with it?"

Shakspeare Jackson, on the part of Blandly, disclaimed the authorship altogether. Bob was evidently disappointed, and he whispered aside to Ferdinand Short, "I hope he isn't one of the epic fellows—he'll be giving us a good dose about Juno, Ceres, and a lot more of 'em—we'd better change the conversation."

Ferdinand Short understood boating, racing, and fighting, better than poetry; for his part he could see nothing so clever in rhyming—he thought poets overrated people. Poetry was all very well when you wanted to propitiate yourself with a girl, that was the only use he could see in it.

"Gentlemen!" said Ferdinand, "I rise to propose a toast."

"Well done Ferny, my boy!" shouted the captain.

"Capital idea," vouchsafed Brasely.

"Yes," continued Short, somewhat awkwardly, "I rise to propose a toast. This toast is one that you will all thank me for; it is a toast that I am proud to propose; it is a toast that I intend to——

"Butter on both sides," suggested Bob, amid the laughter of the company. With angelic patience the head of the firm of Short and Company awaited the returning gravity of his audience. At length he continued:—

"As my friend Brasely wittily observes, I intend to butter this toast on both sides."

A giggle issuing from the throat of Shakspeare heralded something peculiarly biting. "Well," quoth the giggler, "let us hope, Mr. Ferdinand Short, that as you intend to butter the toast on both sides, the butter will be fresh."

"Hear! hear!" condescended Bob.

"I hope, with my friend Jackson, that the butter which I am about to put upon this toast will be fresh; I assure you it's of my own making," responded Ferdinand, still upon his legs. "I feel that I have arrogated to myself a heavily responsible duty. Gentlemen! there is an event in our lives which materially influences our happiness—that event is our marriage." (Hear! hear!) "When young men, like Captain Grasy, give up the society of a large circle of young—and I think I may add agreeable—bachelors, surely there is much room for regret."

"Plenty," again interrupted Bob.

"I believe I am right in saying that our worthy host has many, many friends who consider him a fine, high-spirited, frolicsome fellow, behindhand in no fun, foremost in any excursion."

Hear! hear! re-echoed through the house, and Captain Grasy smiled placidly. Mr. Ferdinand had not finished yet; he continued:

"Gentlemen! I have only a few more words to say with respect to our friend. He is about to lead Miss Maturin to the altar—he best knows why. He is about to relinquish the free jollities of a bachelor's life, and to devote himself exclusively to one lady—be it so. Humanity is weak, and even Captain Grasy is but human. (Loud cheers.) In conclusion, I would call upon all unengaged friends to avoid marriage till they have attained their thirty-fifth year. I hold (without any intention to be personal, captain) that the man who marries before he has attained the above age does not sufficiently appreciate the social jollities of life. Regretting, then, your secession from our circle, captain, I will, without further delay, propose the health of the bride elect, and may she appreciate the excellent social qualities of her future husband." (Given amidst loud cheering.)

"I'faith boy, I scarcely know why I marry, myself," confessed the husband elect of Mary Maturin.

* * * * * *

And, turning from the bachelors' revel, the reader shall be in

troduced to Mary Maturin on the last evening of her maidenhood.

The pomp of wealth, lavished with a free hand, surrounded the bride elect. Satins, silks, embroidery, jewels, choked the boudoir of the morrow's bride. The mansion was convulsed throughout with the magnitude of the nuptial preparations. Care was woefully painted upon the round countenance of the butler; he would be up all night. The maids of the establishment did their work fretfully, and thought despondingly of "their young men." The groom was grumbling at his extra work; the coachman vowed he would not be spotted with a favour; and his wife agreed with him that it was "infra dig." Mrs. De Gospitch was in high spirits; she had a dress for the occasion that, in her own humble opinion, was absolutely bewitching. People would mistake her for the bride; and the reader, connubially blest, must know how well married ladies like such mistakes—how they absolutely court them.

The bride: a broken flower! Young, a long life ahead, and Hope, a corpse before her! Hope—the maiden's child—was slain: the defunct would be buried on the morrow, near Hymen's altar. Miserable maid! Alone, amid the dazzling fabric fashion piles about a bride elect, Mary stood most silently. Bankrupt at heart—what joy could god-gold bring her? Her settled fate had wrought in her an even melancholy that, bit by bit, had plucked the rose from her cheek, and, drop by drop, the sparking dew from her eyes. Grim statue was she of pride-crushed love—grim picture of woman's worst weakness. The morrow would see her the honoured wife of a respected and royally descended man—she would have a conspicuous place among her friends—she would, in the gold-shot eye of the world, be somebody. Was not this a pleasing, happy prospect; or, at least, a cheerful route to one heaven-bound? Look upon the still figure of Mary Maturin and judge.

She kneels in the dark silence of a starless midnight: her sleek white hands are clasped together tightly, and the pure blood reddens the extremities of her fingers: she murmurs prayers, and looks upward keenly as though she saw her God, and he were smiling on her. Her murmured words fall sweetly upon the ear: the separate syllables are inaudible, but the worshipful murmurs have rapture in them. Why prays she now in such choked syllables? See! hot tears

trickle a-down her cheek, babbling her thoughts right mournfully. She is unhappy; but she has pride. The struggle is past—she is erect, and the curl is upon her lip again.

Oh! girl, you rose from prayers resolved upon a lie. You asked support in sin. You were proud—you were loved by a man of station. Loved! you were endured; you had the offer of a wedding ring, and, as he gave that accepted gold-wire, a man called himself your husband—used you as his wife—you, the proud woman, too haughty to love ungilded manhood—and what the sequel of your history? You are with the angels now, weak flower, and your story shall guide others: the end shall be told presently.

Suffice it now that Mary is Mrs. Captain Grasy. Pass we the wedding ceremonials in a few words. Mary is to love O'Reilly Grasy, Captain, with a heart as dead as a mummy's.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"There is often as much pride as love in a woman's nature."

On the morning of Grasy's marriage Brasely and Henry Gospitch met as usual at their employers' office. Henry was in good spirits, and in an industrious humour—Brasely had a headache.

"A friend of mine is to be turned off this morning," drawled Bob, when he had exhausted the usual topics of conversation. "He's only four-and-twenty, isn't it a pity?"

Henry laughed, and asked the name of the victim.

"Oh! a military acquaintance," answered Bob pompously. "Aw—Captain Grasy—very good family."

"And he is only four-and-twenty," quoth Henry listlessly. "What's the girl's age?"

"That's all—the girl's age? Why, let me see, I should say a good six-and-twenty; they say she looks it, that's all."

"Is the captain rich?"

"Not very. He gets money with the girl; and I suspect the money's the chief point in the marriage. The captain is fond of the yellow metal."

"Then you don't think he cares much about her individually, eh?"

"I wouldn't undertake to say any thing of the sort, old fellow; but, between you and me, I have an idea that the girl's purse is the point of attraction. I hear that she's a conceited bit of goods. In short, Gospitch, I don't believe that my intimate friend Captain Grasy of the blues would enlist in the *greens* by marrying Miss Maturin, an auctioneer's daughter, without she had plenty of ——"

"Hold, Brasely! as you value my friendship, I say hold!" shouted Henry passionately. "Miss Maturin is—I mean to say—*was* a friend—a dear friend of mine."

"Nobody more willing to beg a friend's pardon when he knows he's in the wrong than Robert Brasely, he flatters himself;" and Bob grasped Henry's hand very earnestly and very tightly. "I've never seen the girl, Gospitch, so you can't blame me."

"Dees Captain Grasy marry her for the paltry hundreds her brother in-law *may* give her?" asked Henry Gospitch impatiently.

"Now look here, Gospitch. My esteemed friend, Captain Grasy, is in no way responsible to any body; he may marry Miss Maturin or any one else if he please, and without asking the approbation or consent of his bride's friends. Friends are nobodies on such occasions."

"True, it rests with Miss Maturin and her chosen husband," agreed Henry. He felt that he was powerless in the matter.

Bob had a new subject of conversation, and a large fund of remarks to give thereon. "For instance, old fellow," he said, familiarly, "suppose you had a sister, and I were engaged to her, do you think for a moment that I, Robert Brasely, would condescend to notice any objections her friends might think proper to make to the match? What would her marriage or mine have to do with them? If the two parties concerned, by some odd coincidence, agreed, well and good; I'd be as deaf as an undertaker to the impertinent hubbub of her long-tongued relations. You know, and I do if you don't, that the old ones are always tremendously saintly and overbearing when there's any marriage afloat. For instance, when my sister Susan had been married about two months, I happened to meet with an old fellow who had met my father and mother once or twice.

This elderly man was celebrated for a certain peculiarity of dress, an enormous shirt collar, a fur-bound coat, &c.; he was fond of having a finger in every thing; he addressed me rather sharply, and I answered, as became the dignity of a Brasely, whereupon he gave me to understand that *he* did not approve of my sister's marriage, it had'nt *his* sanction. Now I have never discovered to this day what the deuce this meddlesome old buffer had to do with Susan's wedding."

Bob was right or wrong in his opinion, Henry cared not to weigh the justice of it; he had other thoughts struggling within him. Miss Maturin was a nonentity now to our hero, but any disrespectful mention of one who had been so dear to him smote upon his heart; and he could not forbear recalling her image, and blending with that stricken image a gush of purest pity. He was now assured that pride had curdled the blood of the maiden's heart; had, as Richter has it, "squeezed the red rose into a white one."

Henry's altered affection allowed him to contemplate the fate of his former mistress with a calmness that added unto the soundness of his philosophy. She has her wish, he thought; her pride is satisfied to the utmost. Her heart lacks the earnestness which enthusiastic affection demands. She will be happy with the captain; they will be courteously indifferent towards each other, and her feeble mind will have its full load of affection—it is incapable of more love.

On the evening of Mary's marriage Henry made a cheap dinner, and was home early. Bob pressed him to be one of a party on the river, but, recollecting his poverty, our hero was obliged to refuse. Let it not be supposed that Gospitch was in easy circumstances. He had a certain appearance to maintain at the office, and he had to feed and lodge himself upon eighty pounds per annum, about thirty shillings per week! His principles of economy were hardly taxed. He could not afford more than two coats a year; and many times when his employers imagined that he was filling their ledgers, was he engaged diligently inking the seams of his coat with the feather of his pen. It was a hard matter, too, to keep pace with Brasely; for Bob had a marvellous liking for sausage-rolls, meat-patties, ginger-beer, soda-water, and other delicacies of this kind, and would insist that they should send for one of these dainties by way of luncheon. Bob was not rich, but he

had no thought beyond the present—no hope to teach him thrift; and so he contrived to make a tolerable figure on his salary of one hundred and twenty pounds per annum.

It has already been written that Henry Gospitch was at home betimes on Mary's nuptial day. The din of town was annoying to one so absorbed in melancholy recollections of the poor soul he had loved in vain. He still had lodging in the home of the widow Grumblebum. When he reached the door of his house he heard a discordant hubbub within. He knocked, but still the clamour which Mrs. G. was distinctly heard to maintain, her sound lungs being exerted to the utmost, went on; and the lodger's knock had no attention. Again a rat-tat-tat echoed through the crazy tenement, and then the internal hubbub subsided. The door was quickly opened, revealing to our hero the panting form of his landlady.

"Mr. Gospitch! Ah! he'll decide it, Miss Pods, he'll decide it!" gasped Mrs. Grumblebum.

"Ugh!" groaned the maiden in the parlour.

"Oh! sir, you have come in the nick of time, you have," continued the obese landlady. "You will be able to decide in a minute, sir—*you* know what genteel society is sir—*you* were not born and bred in low life."

Mrs. Grumblebum's words conveyed an insinuation; in fact, Mrs. G. meant to say that somebody she knew, not far off, *had* been born and bred in the manner in question. Pods writhed under the satire of her friend.

"Well, madam," asked Henry Gospitch, "what is the question now?"

"Do step in just for a moment, sir; you would *so* oblige me if you would."

Henry complied. The parlour table was covered with heaps of clothing; two or three bandboxes stood here and there irregularly; the tea apparatus was upon the table too, and the bread and butter was smothered in the calico and flannel; and that fair and lean specimen of the gentle sex, who rejoiced in the distinguished name of Pods, sat, amid this elegant confusion, a perfect picture of dignified scorn. The maiden scarcely deigned to notice the entrance of Gospitch—she knew what was due to herself and to a certain person whose reputation was now identified with her own.

"Now, my dear," quoth Mrs. Grumblebum, "we will ask

Mr. Gospitch whether, when a lady—I say *a lady*—is about to bestow her hand upon a gentleman, she goes to church in a veil three yards long, and with an ivy-wreath twined round her head. Is it the thing, sir?"

"Why, I scarcely know indeed, Mrs. Grumblebum," answered Henry.

A smile of triumph shone from the features of Miss Pods. The dove-like maiden glanced furtively and disdainfully at her friend, and contented herself with the following observation: "There now!"

"Don't know!" reiterated the landlady. "Bless my soul, Mr. Gospitch, you must be joking; you, sir, who know carriage people, not to know how a lady should dress herself upon such an occasion? Come, come, sir, you don't mean that *I* know."

"Who requires this information," asked Henry, "if I may be allowed the inquiry?"

"This lady," said Mrs. Grumblebum, pointing to Miss Pods, "is going to make a happy man of Mr. Grist—a gentleman who has just established a good milk-walk on his own account."

Miss Pods, thus alluded to, felt it her duty to make a decided obeisance, which reverential feat she accomplished by spasmodically dropping her head upon her chest—resuming her perpendicular by means of a jerk.

"May I be allowed to congratulate you upon the forthcoming festivity?" vouchsafed our hero.

"Certainly, sir; no objection in the least," simpered the betrothed of Mr. Grist.

"This is the *trusso*, sir!" observed the widow as she displayed the heap of calico, muslin, ribbon, etc., including the bandboxes, before Gospitch. "This is Mr. Grist's wedding present to Miss Pods!" and Mrs. Grumblebum held up an enormous wreath of ivy, to which the veil, which had shocked the widow's notions of gentility, was attached. "The veil isn't so bad," urged Mrs. G., "but the ivy isn't at all the thing, in *my* own humble opinion; and I 've seen plenty of marriages in my time."

"*I* like it, and that 's enough!" exclaimed Miss Pods angrily.

"Then there 's an end of the matter: if you 're a fright, my dear, and people laugh and say what a vulgar dress, and

talk, and giggle, and gossip at your expense, don't blame me, that 's all; don't say I didn't advise you in the matter! I've been brought up with different notions I 'm thankful to be able to say; *I* know what 's what!"

"Well, I s'pose next you 'll say that a red dress with blue and yellow shot trimmings isn't proper?"

"Oh! pardon me, pardon me," interposed the obsequious widow, "I admire your taste so far, and am willing to bend to it, but——"

"And the bunch of hops in my bonnet, that I 'm going to Gravesend in; I s'pose that 's vulgar?"

"On the contrary, my dear; it 's becoming, mightily becoming."

"And my blue gloves, I s'pose they are unsuitable?"

"Why, they 're certainly odd, but nobody'd notice *them*; but the veil and ivy! I tell you again, dear, as I 've told you a hundred times before, such things are only fit for a young girl. They don't do for middle-aged people."

"I know," retorted Miss Pods, "they wouldn't suit *you*, for instance, my dear. If you were in my place it would alter the case entirely."

"Stuff! stuff! Miss Pods," argued Mrs. Grumblebum, "*I* don't disguise my age; I 'm thirty-nine come next January, and you were born in the following May; the difference is very slight you see, my dear!"

"I 'm a maiden," asserted Pods, and pride spake in her speech.

"Who said you were not, my dear?" gently asked the widow. "And I 'm a respectable married woman; where 's the difference? I got married before I was twenty, and you never had an offer till you were thirty-eight and past. Come, I think I 'm the better off of the two."

"Ugh! I don't know that; *I 'm* particular in my choice. Some people are not," insinuated the Grist-loving Pods.

"Particular! Well, I like that! I should like to know which is the best; a milk-walk—serving ha'porths to a set of low people—or a respectable pork-butcher, in a large and respectable way of business?"

The entrance of the husband elect here put a stop to this feminine jar. Miss Pods's face softened wonderfully as her betrothed shuffled into the parlour; but Mrs. Grumblebum,

who had no object to gain by her smiles, chose to keep on her best frown until further notice.

Grist looked uncomfortably clean. His face yet glowed with a vigorous and unusual towelling, and his hair was plastered down either side of his physiognomy most effectually. He was by no means an ill-looking fellow. He was a robust, fat-cheeked, good-natured looking workman, with short coarse sandy hair and whiskers to match! He was not tall, but he was squarely built; he had a good shoulder for milkpails. He had wonderful hands. He declared confidentially to Miss Pods that he had applied at seven shops before he got gloves large enough to fit him, and he could not bend his hands in the pair he did get. But the reader will be tired of Miss Pods and her young man. Well, they shall now be left to wedded bliss, and the privacy of their present conjugal circle of two shall not be again intruded upon.

Gospitch sat out some hours with the above amusing party; and when he retired for the night he was half convinced that woman's nature was composed of an equal mixture of pride and love.

CHAPTER XIX.

MATRIMONIAL SPECULATIONS.

"Do Clubs injure the Progress of Marriage?"

Miss Dinah Jackson's indignant Letter.

Leaving awhile the busy hum of London life, the reader shall (if he will follow the writer) be led to Clapham—to the quiet homeliness of Carnation Cottage. And though he will be introduced to two young and pretty women, he will nevertheless hear nothing of nymphs and goddesses. His patience shall not be taxed with well-worn similes, introducing Damons and Strephons, Dianas and Minervas, Hebes and Auroras; neither shall he be wearied with an account of the faithlessness of a Phillis, nor the life-long woe of an Amaryllis; he shall hear of two mortal women—two pretty feminine creatures—human and not celestial—resident at Clapham—not cradled in hyacinthine bowers. Does he like the prospect?—if so, let him follow from the next line; if not, pass on to the next chapter.

To paint a quiet homestead is a difficult matter. It is easy to detail the varying scenes of a company-giving family; but to impart much interest to the monotonous ceremonials of people "who live very quietly," is a task that demands a large fund of sentiment and imagination. It is not every body who can put sentiment in a warming-pan, or let their imagination run riot among the household crockery. Pots and pans are extremely useful, but very unromantic adjuncts to domestic economy. Omitting, then, any mention of the furniture and fixtures of Carnation Cottage, the inmates of that habitation shall at once be introduced.

Marian was gathering strength daily. Early hours, judicious exercise, and the even tenour of her life were restoring her to her natural state of health. What a happy picture was Marian at this time! The active spirit within her gave an intelligent fire to her expression; the bloom of woman's

spring was again gathering upon her cheek; her whole frame (to use an unromantic metaphor) was undergoing thorough repair; Nature, that effective handmaiden, the willing mender! It was the happy task of Dinah to watch her sister's gradual resuscitation. And if from the dark depths of sanctified soil Gaps could have arisen to see the flower he had plucked taking unto itself new root and a new bloom, he would have been thankful that his errors had not sent two sweet souls to a premature grave.

The unloved Dinah, though certainly stout, had not grown so with fretting. Dinah had the enviable talent of adapting herself cheerfully to any circumstances—any fate save one—and this was old maidenhood. Old maidenhood!—that bane of marriageable womankind—that torpid and contemptuous state so suggestive of ridicule to the "nobler animal"—Dinah could not contemplate with patience or Christian resignation. She would have gone to the West Indies or among the wildest Indians, if a husband had been promised, "for certain," when she arrived. Men! men! where were you all when this elegant and impetuous female specimen sighed for gold-wire and a wedding-dress? Years had passed, and yet the wooers had not made their appearance: miserable Dinah! The buoyant spirit of young life had somewhat subsided in the heart of the disappointed woman: the oft-renewed dream of wedded happiness had ended in a dream: Hope—the bright angel of her waking thoughts—had not performed his promise; and now Despair sat in the stead of faithless Hope—alack! a miserable substitute, Dinah, for the spirit-giving angel. Life must have some object. Hope must be at the elbow of humanity in some shape. To Dinah Hope had shown a husband—deceived in this vision (the happiest of her life) she naturally bade the deceiver change habit; and the obedient spirit presently appeared clad in print, and beckoned her to seize pen, ink, and paper, and give shape unto her thoughts. She obeyed, as the editors of magazines can testify.

Foolish, ill-advised woman! Soured by adverse circumstances, why vent your spleen in verse? why soak your vinegar into the innocent heads of inoffensive individuals? It was well to shake off the remembrance of your lonely destiny—but why tell the world of your misfortunes? There is no moral in your history (pardon the familiarity)—you have

set no wonderful example of patience—why write, then—why thrust upon an aching world more woe?

You do not instruct, neither do you entertain; you sadden your reader only. When he has finished your paper, he sighs, "Poor thing!" and tosses the magazine into the paper-basket. You have not informed him, you have not amused him, you have made him dull and weary of his children's laughter. Advocate the social advancement of woman if you please, but do not thrust upon an inattentive world a long list of your grievances. Every man has his pet grievance; and every woman has her pet wrong; but what woeful state of things it would be if every man and every woman in the kingdom were to print his or her grievance! Booksellers might as well publish "Grievances for the Million," or, "Unhappiness Made Easy," at once. Why send to the editor of the "Dummy Gazette" the following useless complaint? It served no end. Men will not marry because ladies object to clubs. They will not submit to be dragged to the altar like so many sheep. They will do as they like depend upon it. Then, why, my dear Miss Dinah Jackson, why write this unnecessary complaint?

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUMMY GAZETTE."

"SIR—I am sure you will give some of your valuable space to the sad complaint of a young lady. I am very young, sir, and I think I may say, without egotism, of rather prepossessing appearance. I have been well brought up. I can play the pianoforte, sing tolerably well, speak pure French, work fancy-work tastefully; in short, I am well versed in all the accomplishments young ladies usually have. I am certain my temper is good, and they tell me I have rather a fascinating manner. I am innocent, sir, as the most juvenile lamb, and have an excellent complexion, and a profusion of dark hair, which curls naturally. Well, sir, I now come to my story. Would you believe it, with all these advantages I have not had an offer for the last two years? When I was a giddy, foolish girl, I had plenty of lovers; but, of course, I did not mean to marry them; they were young, houseless men, averaging from twenty to twenty-four years of age: they were very well to flirt with at a ball, but not sufficiently advanced in the world to make eligible husbands. Years, Mr. Editor, passed, and gradually I found myself abandoned by these

young admirers. I then began to think that I had scarcely used them well; but it was too late for repentance, they had fled for ever. 'Where can they be gone to, now?' thought I to myself. I was soon relieved of any doubt upon the subject. I found that they had, one and all, become members of a club. Now, what I wish you to advocate is—the total abolition of all club-houses, for they are the bane of women. The homes of England, sir, will be abandoned if these places are not speedily abolished; in fact, men will have no homes to leave, and, then, a pretty state the country will be in! I attribute my ill-success in my matrimonial expectations to those wretched institutions, and I am sure, sir, you are too gallant to wish ladies to be left at home while a parcel of men are enjoying themselves in a private public-house (for these club-houses are neither more nor less than taverns). Do put down this nuisance immediately, and you will oblige

"Your constant reader,

"DINAH.

"[P.S. I inclose my card, so that you may be able to send me a copy of your journal when this is printed in it.]"

You complain that the editor of the "Dummy Gazette" did not insert your epistle; but consider this, Miss Dinah Jackson, the editor has perhaps a hundred such letters every week; and if he attended to the advice of all his correspondents, he would be compelled to advocate the abolition of every thing and every body—his own journal included.

Henry Gospitch had not seen Marian since the day he dined with Mr. Jackson, but he had been with her often in thought. She struggled to free herself from thoughts of him, but love had eventual victory in the battle. Weeks wore on: she trimmed her flower-garden daily; she walked out daily; and dreamed of Henry at night. Now and then her mother and father called, and spent the evening with herself and Dinah; but, with this exception, no friends appeared at Carnation Cottage.

Poor Dinah! how was she likely to find a husband? It was very pleasant employment trimming the pliant tendrils of the vine, or watering the roses and fuchsias in the evening, after a hot rainless day; but the task lacked sentiment in the absence of gentlemen: there ought to be a gallant

ever ready to fill the watering-pot and pump the water. Marian saw but one want—the presence of our hero.

"Marian," said Dinah one day, "it's strange Mr. Gospitch hasn't called; don't you think so?"

"I told him plainly I was not in a position to receive him," answered Marian coldly.

"But he might have called—he might have left his card, at all events; it's the least he could have done."

"He may be engaged all day," suggested Marian.

"He should make time."

"His business may have tied him to town," pleaded the young widow.

"Where there's a will, there's a way."

"A thousand things may have occurred to prevent his coming," said Marian.

"Ah! Well, *I* wouldn't put up with such an inattentive lover—that's all!

"What, Dinah! Mr. Gospitch, my lover!" exclaimed the startled sister.

"Now, don't deny it, Marian—you know you like him! I saw his name scribbled fifty times about your blotting paper, and I saw a large H. G. in pencil on the back of last week's washing-bill in your handwriting—so its no use telling *me* you don't think of him."

"Well, Dinah!" interposed Marian.

"That's not all. Wednesday's shower has brought the Virginia stocks up—accidentally, I suppose, in the form of H. G.? *You* planted the seed, Marian!"

Dinah's accusations were true enough. Marian's blotting-case was scribbled upon as described; the washing-bill was endorsed as above stated; and the stocks, obedient to the fair hand of their mistress, showed our hero's initials in full blossom.

CHAPTER XX.

A MOON OF HONEY AND VINEGAR.—THE GRASYS AT PARIS.

"Now the Kilmansegg Moon—it must be told—
Though instead of silver is tipt with gold—
Shone rather wan, and distant, and cold,
And before its days were at thirty,
Such gloomy clouds began to collect,
With an ominous ring of ill effect,
As gave but too much cause to expect
Such weather as seamen call dirty !"—Hood.

Captain Grasy and Mary, his wife, went to Paris to spend the honeymoon. Yes, the moon of honey was to be passed in the heart of holiday-loving Paris. A gay, congenial atmosphere is in the spirit of Parisian doings; happiness, in broad open letters, is written upon the features of every man, woman, and child therein; and a cloudless sky of a month's duration helps to realize a young girl's dream of honeymoon elysium. There is profound and honest rapture in beholding the glories of triumphant art on the grand place worthily called De la Concorde—hand in hand with an idolized woman ! The spirit soars beyond human ambitions, and drinks of life's most honied fountain. Love is in its utmost purity, and in its greatest strength. Moon of honey—of intense delight—of heaven-descending bliss to those whose interchange of hearts is complete ! The heart, open with the depth of its love, receives more deeply the new impressions which the grandeur of Paris always gives in a greater or lesser degree to the stranger. Few have stood under the Arc de Triomphe unmoved ; few have looked down the long vista of trees which leads to the palace-gates without feeling that human art has magic and magnificent creations.

Palais du Louvre—shrine of genius : Panthéon—"*Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie Reconnaissante*"—grand as the

sepulchre of Voltaire and Rousseau—grand as a national recognition of French wisdom: Nôtre Dame—sombre miser, within whose porch the vain trophies of Napoleon's pride lie rotting; where, framed in unmeasured gold, is shown a splinter of the "original cross;" where (for a franc) the traveller may behold the "sainted cloak" of the great Emperor: canon-built column of the Place Vendôme—grim monument of human bloodshed: and gorgeous Madeleine, of gilded celebrity, where the good meek queen of the crafty Philippe devoutly kneels:—your histories and intrinsic magnificence have warmed the souls of many Englishmen. And you, Mary Grasy, were you happy amid the magnificence of the French capital? With the gallant captain's arm to rest upon by day, the gallant captain your shield by night, were you happy? You had the luxuries pertaining to the aristocrat; you were superbly attended, and your husband was zealously attentive. He humoured your lightest fancy, was obedient to your wishes always; he flattered you, and he held himself your footstool; and were you happy?

Mary, you were as happy as you deserved to be; you gave your husband your hand when you had no heart to give him. Could you expect delight with the mere tool of your revenge; he was not your husband, he was only part of a plot conceived in your own weak brain, the object of which was vengeance—the bitter vengeance demanded by your wounded pride. You were severely taxed, Mary; your case was fitted for a firm and noble mind only. You lacked heroism; you lacked strength of affection. That you failed in these virtues was, perhaps, no fault of yours; you were badly schooled and naturally weak-brained. You did not understand the wrong you did Captain Grasy when you married him, or you would not have perjured yourself at the parish altar; you did not understand that you would perjure yourself, or you would not have gone to church at all with the captain. Your fault was the fault of a weak mind ill trained in its youth; your life was the natural consequence of your girlhood. Your beauty added to the sadness of your fate; had you been a plain-looking woman you had never married Grasy. He married your dark blue eyes—your delicate complexion—your pretty petite figure—not you—a creature with a heaven-soaring soul; and you married

his boasted station, not his heart and intelligence: you were perhaps worthily matched.

Captain Grasy had not been married above a fortnight when he discovered that it was necessary for a man of the world to mix in scenes unfit for the presence of a lady. He considered that a man was not half a man who did not enter into the sterner doings of life and hold converse with his brethren. Women were "darlings" in their proper places and at proper times, but a man was a milksop, a nonentity, who could not shake off their fascinating influence for a time, and engage in the manlier amusements of the age.

On the other hand, the Irish captain believed that it was the first duty of every gentleman to hold himself the servant of "the ladies" at all times; he therefore chose such times as would otherwise have been unemployed (save in converse with his wife) for a limited indulgence in "manly society and amusement." Mary was not hurt at this conduct; she scarcely missed Grasy.

Four weeks soon passed, and behold the Grasys an ordinary man and wife! The husband was imbued with a gallantry towards the sex which he displayed at all times to his wife. For instance, he never went out without having asked Mrs. Grasy whether she would require his company for a walk or the theatre; but she seldom took advantage of this attention; she seldom *troubled* him. The captain was delighted to find his lady so quiet, and he took advantage of her licence. He had made the acquaintance of some questionable characters on the Boulevards, and he was constantly with them. So quiet and unassuming was his wife, that he soon forgot to ask her permission ere he sallied forth to ——.

Mary's aristocratic notions had undergone a change in the past few weeks of married life. She found that it was no easy task to live with a man she scarcely liked. At first, the novelty of her position, and the consideration paid to her by her friends, reconciled her to the step she had taken: but when the novelty had worn off, and she saw herself linked for life to a man whose position only she had coveted, her heart was sick, and her pride was quenched, for she had mistaken degradation for triumph. When she fully understood this, the sight of Grasy was unwelcome to her, and his

gallantry offensive familiarity. She cared not how long he was away; his return would bring no happiness to her; he might be with his friends; he was more welcome to them than to her.

One night, about half-past eleven, a man entered the hotel where the Grasys were staying, and asked for the captain's lady. The captain's lady had retired for the night. The messenger's business, however, admitted of no delay; he must see Madam Grasy; he had a communication to make to her on the part of her husband which was of the utmost importance.

This pressing message was delivered to the lady in question: she dressed herself, and received the messenger. The man delivered to her a note in Grasy's handwriting; it ran as follows:—

"Dear Mary,—Send me the money you will find in my dressing-case: without it I cannot get away from the den in which I now am forcibly detained.

"Your loving husband,

"Grasy."

Mary read this letter and trembled—trembled for the first time on her husband's account. She obeyed his orders, and dismissed the messenger with the money. So thorough, however, was her indifference, that in a few moments she was sufficiently composed to fall into a deep sleep. Two long dark night-hours crept on, and again a man presented himself to the hotel porter, requesting an interview with Madam Grasy. Again did Mary rise from her bed, and again did she give audience to her husband's messenger. The man handed her a letter from the captain; it ran as follows:—

"Darling Mary,—Whatever money you may have send per bearer. I *must* have 2,000 francs; if you haven't the money, give the fellow the diamond brooch and bracelet I gave you—any thing to make up the sum—*I must have it.*

"Your doting husband,

"Grasy."

Mary was fairly bewildered. However, she did as she was

desired. She gave the man two thirty pound notes and her brooch and bracelet, and then ventured to ask him where the captain was.

"Il joue, madame," answered the fellow, as he withdrew precipitately.

"Cards!" gasped the wife; she scarcely understood the full iniquity of the practice, yet had she an indistinct idea of some foul and bad amusement enjoyed by wicked men, and called "cards!" Cards were the gambler's weapons she knew, but she knew not exactly wherein the badness of the gambler's profession lay. The thought came upon her like a lightning-stroke—she had married a gambler—a man who would be scouted in London when his profession became known. Her indifference was now hatred. She had been cheated, but only as she herself had cheated her deceiver. It occurred to her now, for the first time, that her husband had probably married her in the fond hope that she would have a moderate marriage portion from her brother-in-law; this fear added to the bitterness of her position. She resolved to have a full understanding with her husband on his return; she would know exactly what she had to expect from him, and what he expected with her. She did not return to her bed, but rested on the sofa to await the advent of the captain. She dozed at intervals, but she could not sleep. Horrible visions haunted her. There was but one taper burning in the apartment, and that was near her, so that the further end of the heavily furnished room was enveloped in a deep gloom. In this gloom Mary saw indistinct shadows of cards and fighting men; and then cards again; and then as she dosed she fancied she beheld Grasy in a prison, and she awoke to the imaginary clank of chains. These wild forebodings finally exhausted her, and she was lapsing into a heavy sleep, when a hand upon the door-handle awoke her, and her husband burst into the room.

Grasy was not prepared for an interview with his wife—he had hoped to find her fast asleep. He started when he found that she was awake to see him.

"Mary! Up at this hour?" stammered the captain.

"I have been twice called from my bed by your messages, captain, and I didn't choose to risk further disturbance, so I have waited your return here," answered Mary, firmly.

"Well, ye can get to bed now," quoth the captain, angrily. "Stay a moment," he added, "haven't ye any more money with ye besides those two notes?"

"I haven't another farthing in the world," declared Mary, boldly.

The cloud upon the captain's brow—the clenching of his teeth, and the blow inflicted on the table by the officer's fist, significantly declared the bitterness of the man's dissappointment. Mary's fears were confirmed fully.

"Now don't be concealing any thing from me Mary," said Grasy, sternly. "Do you mean to tell me that your friends have had the audacity to marry you to me, Captain Grasy, without giving you something in the shape of a marriage portion—do you mean to say this on your oath?"

The wife shook with fright; she answered faintly—"I do."

"Ten thousand curses on ye, and on all your kith and kin!" bellowed Grasy. "You 've *desaved* me, ye have. Now mind this, Mrs. Captain Grasy, for the future we 're on a different footing altogether. You 're my wife by a fraud, so you needn't be too proud of your name."

"Captain Grasy," Mary proudly made answer, "I have not deceived you, sir, as you have wronged me. You married me because you loved me you said—not for the wealth I might have. You told a falsehood, captain."

"Zounds, madam!" thundered the captain, foaming with wrath.

"You have acted your part well, sir, hitherto, but now you sadly betray your real nature. Your assumed character, captain, is better than your natural one—you had at least the bearing of a gentleman."

"Madam!" shouted the enraged Irishman.

"One moment, captain, you hoped to be dependent on me, and, though you shall be spared so humiliating a position, you shall not be burdened with me: I can return to my friends to-morrow."

"You shall do no such thing, Mrs. Grasy," bellowed the choleric captain; "here you remain as long as I please—I can tell you that, madam."

Without adding another word Mary withdrew from her husband's presence.

The captain was not the abandoned character his wife be-

lieved him. He had a small income, and he did *not* live by cards. He *was* of good family, though his blood was any thing but gentle. But some allowance should be made to him on the score of his profession. Captains are always choleric: who ever saw a captain that was not? They must live upon horse-radish and port wine: they are always ruddy and frowning. Grasy, on the evening in question, was "a little gone," as housemaids have it, when speaking respectfully of their masters' intoxication. On the morrow he had but a dim recollection of what had passed yesternight. He did, however, remember that he had spoken disrespectfully to his wife, and, spite of the emptiness of her purse, he begged she would forgive him his ill-behaviour. At the breakfast table Mary's red eyelids told her husband eloquently how he had hurt her—trampled upon her self-respect—her pride. He sought to sooth her; and she, glad to see so complete a change in his manner, was comforted.

CHAPTER XXI.

IS DEVOTED TO THE DE GOSPITCHES.

Mrs. De Gospitch was pleased to see her sister so "well settled in life." To direct the wedding cards was delightful pastime. "Captain and Mrs. Grasy!"—the names looked well upon an enamelled card, with silver bows! And the kissing doves upon the silver wafers—how well they looked! and the powdered footman who was ordered to deliver the "at homes" at the superscribed addresses, did he not look like an aristocrat's servant? De Gospitch took little interest in these proceedings; and when he did condescend to deliver an opinion, his manner was so very patronizing and careless, that his wife finally determined not to pay him the compliment of asking his advice for the future. For instance, when she showed him the cooing doves upon the envelope, and re-

marked upon the beauty and felicity of the design, he bluntly answered, "Fighting cocks would have been more appropriate." And to prove the utter injustice of this remark, the wife flew into a great passion, and vowed that her husband was a perfect brute—an unsympathizing block of a man!

These tart connubial bickerings in no way resembled angels' visits in their repetition; they were rather the vinegar and mustard of the De Gospitch life—the sauce that made the insipidity of their conjugal existence a little palatable. Some people love quarrels; they plunge head and ears into a red-hot broil with a relish at once invigorating and decided. They never mince matters — they declare that they will always "have it out at once;" they are easily provoked, and not easily pacified; they enjoy to its fullest extent the luxury of a protracted quarrel, provided the said quarrel be not allowed to slumber: they delight in active hatred: they thrust their disagreements down the throats of their friends without mercy; and they have an inexhaustible vocabulary of strongly seasoned epithets, and they fight miserably. Wasps in the domestic hive, they embitter the little honey to be found in every home where love is. The De Gospitches never seriously quarrelled, that is to say, they never talked of a separation; but their lives gave strength to the belief that these little disagreements, when they occur often, are, as Andersen has it beautifully—"The drops that wear the rock."

"There's a load off my mind now Mary's married," said Mrs. Gospitch to her husband on the morrow of the marriage day; "she was the cause of great anxiety to me — very great anxiety."

"Ah!" responded her husband, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"I shall hear from Mary the day after to-morrow—I confess I am anxious to know what she thinks of her husband—though, if one gives the matter one moment's thought, it will be evident that she can only be transported with delight. He is so good-looking—so very gentlemanly."

"Ah!" again observed De Gospitch, mysteriously.

"She looked wonderfully well, I thought—did she not?"

Ye-es," drawled the husband, "she didn't look bad."

"Ugh! I know what it is to expect praise from you, De Gospitch. I should as soon think of meeting with politeness in a costermonger."

"You forget yourself, Susan," proudly retorted De Gospitch, as he took up the morning paper; a delicate hint that he did not wish for further conversation with his lady.

The lady, thus quietly rebuked, was suddenly seized with an irresistible desire to practise her music. It was an odd coincidence that these musical fits only came upon her at such moments as the present. It was strange, too, that her voice, upon these occasions only, had double strength—and that the music was marked *fortissimo!* But there are many coincidences in life more remarkable than this. When the musical wife had closed the piano, her husband quietly informed her of the marriage of the Honourable Doodle Do with Miss Sarah Snapps, of Snapps Hall, near Snappton.

"I thought she would have him!" said Mrs. De Gospitch, gleefully.

"Ah, poor fellow!" sighed the sympathizing husband.

"Why poor fellow? Lucky fellow you mean."

"What! lucky in being tied to a fidgety flirt of a girl—a pouting puppet with neither manners nor money. He 'll soon discover his mistake, mark me."

"How can you say so? She 's as elegant a person as you could wish to see. For my part I 'm glad to see the girl had enough firmness to shake off that upstart Ferguson (though I 'm certain she liked him); she has married prudently depend upon it."

"Well, it 's their business, not ours. I hate these schemers."

"I should like to know what sort of matches you do like."

"Not *Lucifer* matches. Not a bride and bridegroom with falsehood in their hearts. Ugh! Marriage is a bitter business in such a case."

Mrs. De Gospitch, perhaps for the first time, left her husband's rebuke unanswered. The rebuke really touched a chord in her heart; it went home to her, and made her sad and thoughtful.

This thoughtful sadness was a bright moment in her life. It was a serious self-communing that made her tremble; that turned her thoughts awhile from worldly matters to take note of the world of goodly impulse dormant within her. She was as an engineer who, having driven his machine recklessly onward, suddenly bethinks himself of an injured crank; he would stay the engine, but, so great is his fear, that he lacks

the energy to prevent destruction, and so he is borne on to the terminus—to death.

A double knock rang through the house, and the curl was again upon the lip of the mansion's mistress.

The individual whose knock restored to Mrs. De Gospitch's lip what stiff paper only would give to her hair, was Mr. Shakspeare Sheridan Jackson. He was gladly admitted to the presence of the host and hostess; any visitor was preferable to a conjugal tête-à-tête.

The literary star of private life made his entrance with all the importance of an emperor; he had come to read them the prospectus of a paper which he was on the point of starting; it was to be called *The Universal Luminary and European Advertiser*.

Jackson made a point of reading his effusions to Mrs. De Gospitch, and to De Gospitch if he could catch him at home. Mrs. De Gospitch was flattered by this apparently high opinion of her literary taste, and she generally gave the author a sufficient dose of eulogy.

Shakspeare Jackson drew a sheet of paper from his pocket, and, having conned it earnestly for a few minutes, said:—

"I haven't the least doubt of the success of the thing; it's sure to go, but it'll want a little careful working at first. See, first we intend to issue ten thousand posters with—'Buy the Universal Luminary. Husbands buy your wives the Universal Luminary. Brothers buy your sisters the Universal Luminary. Grandmothers buy your grandchildren the Universal Luminary. Uncles buy your nephews the Universal Luminary,' and so on. Other journals have but half done the thing—merely appealed to the fathers and brothers of the kingdom; now we shall appeal to the entire community, for we intend to go through with the catalogue of relationship. So you see our circulation is certain. We shall give information for the gentler sex as well as for the nobler animal." And the beneficent Jackson simpered as though he had modestly spoken of a world-wide benefit he was about to confer gratuitously.

"We shall," he continued, "devote space to the fashions and court news, for it is our honest conviction that these subjects are intimately connected with the refinement of her Majesty's liege subjects."

"What!" interrupted De Gospitch, "you'll give long descriptions of ball dresses and wedding dresses, eh?"

"Certainly; and we shall endeavour to improve popular taste in these matters as far as possible."

"Well, now, I'll give you an improvement to start with. You know at weddings women wear orange flowers in their bonnets, eh?"

"Graceful plant! Yes, well," simpered Shakspeare Jackson.

"I propose an alteration, and I make you a present of the idea."

"Any suggestion from such a source will be valued indeed, my dear Mr. De Gospitch."

"It is, that nettles be substituted for orange flowers!"

"Ridiculous!" indignantly exclaimed the suggester's wife.

"Mr. De Gospitch, you jest," remonstrated the sentimental editor.

"It's infinitely more appropriate very often, you must own," said De Gospitch.

"*You* have no reason to say so, I know," minced the father of the Universal Luminary, and he glanced at the wife of his host.

"Ah!" sighed De Gospitch. He was now quite serious.

Shakspeare Jackson continued at great length to unfold the stupendous plan that was to convulse the earth from pole to pole. *The Universal Luminary* was to take the lead in politics, put down every other weekly newspaper, restore the nobles to their former pinnacle of unquestioned glory; in fact make

> "Laws and learning, arts and science die,
> But leave us still our old nobility."

The only literature that the *Luminary* would allow to exist should be published in the *Luminary's* pages, the *Luminary*, in short, was to be a "mental sun" to the wide world; for it was to shine alone.

Alas! for the vanity of all human hope, the *Universal Luminary* never went beyond the first number; and the frantic editor vowed that public taste was "wofully vitiated."

Mr. Sheridan Jackson had scarcely concluded his history of his forthcoming literary campaign, when a letter was handed

to Mrs. De Gospitch; the lady saw the writing, and vowed that she was glad to see that it was from her dear sister.

"What does she say about marriage?" asked Mr. De Gospitch with a sneer.

Having read the letter, Mrs. De Gospitch declared that her sister was in high spirits, spoke of her husband with affectionate respect, and was in raptures with Paris.

"I thought Paris was, of all places, the one to suit the refined taste of my sister."

"Paris is a delightful spot," said Sheridan Jackson, Esquire. "I—I really think, and I've said so often, Mrs. De Gospitch, that I could live and die in Paris. How grand is the Place de la Concorde!"

"Ay, and Tortoni's ices!" interrupted Mr. De Gospitch.

"Nonsense, my dear," quoth the wife. "Don't be so sensual, so unromantic. How can you think of ices at the same time as the Place de la Concorde!"

"Well, my dear, didn't you insist upon adjourning to Tortoni's before we had been two minutes on the Place?" asked the provoking lord of Mrs. De Gospitch.

"How can you say so!" simpered the lady, and she smiled, though in this case she felt that truth was ugly.

She quieted her husband by handing him her sister's letter, assuring Mr. Jackson that she should be happy to play him a quiet air if he would allow her husband to read Mrs. Grasy's missive—the interesting nature of the occasion she was sure would excuse the deviation from the strict form of etiquette. Mr. Jackson contrived an assenting bow, and the hostess forthwith commenced a "grand piece," while Mr. De Gospitch leisurely perused the following:—

"Paris.

"My dear Sister,—We arrived here yesterday afternoon, after a tedious journey, from Boulogne, of eighteen hours' duration. Mr. Grasy is quite well, and desires his kind regards to yourself and husband. And now, dear Susanna, that I am married—that my fate is fixed for life, I am better able to speak to you without reserve. You wish me to be happy, very happy, I know you do; you have been a good friend and a dear sister to me, and you cannot tell how much I love you for your kindness.

"I hope I have not been imprudent in marrying upon such

a short acquaintance—I don't think I have. I have nothing to complain of in my husband—nothing whatever. He is prodigiously attentive to me—he humours my lightest wish. He never presumes to smoke or read in my presence without having obtained my permission so to do; he is always ready to adjust my shawl or move my seat for me; he carries my parasol when we walk out, and he consults my taste when he buys any thing. We have now been together constantly for four days, and during this time I can confidently say that Mr. Grasy has never given me the slightest reason to quarrel with his behaviour towards me—he has been kindness itself.

"We have had delicious weather—I do not think there has been a cloud above since we left London—we crossed a sea as smooth as glass—all without has been propitious. I have been perfectly well, and my old headache has entirely left me. The air here is as pure as I can conceive air to be. Paris, with its million of wonders, is about me; I am in the very heart of the grand city. I have seen the Tuileries, Nôtre Dame, the Panthéon, and I have stood with awe before the masterpieces in the Louvre. I have laughed at the Vaudeville, and been amused this afternoon with the equestrian wonders of the Hippodrome.

"You will imagine from this glowing description that I am hugely happy—that my heart is oppressed with an excess of gladness, but I assure you it is not so. I am not certainly unhappy; I am contented—perfectly contented. As I have said before, my husband treats me as well as I could wish; he is gentlemanly and kind.

"I can scarcely believe that I am married—that I am to be with Mr. Grasy through life: my heart does not hold the whole truth. I often think I am in a dream; that I shall wake and find myself Mary Maturin.

"Did you feel this when you were married?

"In your letter, dear Susanna, tell me all about the first week of your marriage. How did your husband treat you? Did he sit close by you at table, or opposite? Did he hold your hand in his? Did he often kiss you? Pardon my queries; I am not, believe me, sister, an idle questioner. I cannot explain to you the troubles of my heart. I cannot define my confused state of mind. Do you ask me 'Am I happy?' I can scarcely answer you.

"My husband waits; he is going to conduct me to the theatre.

"Your affectionate sister,

"MARY GRASY."

De Gospitch saw at once the fate of his sister-in-law; she would not be long happy with the captain.

"Why don't you stand for Buckhorn?" asked Mr. Jackson, addressing his host.

"Buckhorn! Humph!" said De Gospitch, stroking his chin, as he gave the matter a moment's consideration. "Buckhorn! Well, I don't know."

"I don't think you do, De Gospitch; you 're candid, at least," answered the wife.

"Why you see, Jackson, I 've never dabbled in politics; I know nothing in political matters—absolutely nothing."

"What absurd reasons you give!" exclaimed the wife. "What has a knowledge of politics got to do with a seat in Parliament."

"You could carry Buckhorn easily with your influence," suggested Shakspeare Jackson.

"Of course he could," vowed Mrs. De Gospitch.

"You might take the lead on the Protectionist side," added Jackson.

"To be sure he might," said the lady.

"I scarcely know a Protectionist from a Free-Trader," owned De Gospitch carelessly.

"Really, De Gospitch, you are quite provoking; you are, indeed. I ask you again, what political knowledge has to do with a seat in Parliament? And now, as you will compel me to speak plainly. I will ask you—and I am sure Mr. Jackson will see the force of what I say—if every gentleman, entitled to the name, does not strive his utmost to have M.P. affixed to his signature? Just consider this, De Gospitch, you may one day persuade the ministers to have a baronetcy created for you."

"I am sure," gently interposed Shakspeare Jackson, "De Gospitch will be persuaded some day to sit for Buckhorn; won't you?"

"Well, perhaps so," carelessly muttered the host. "You see, I may want to go on the continent for a year or so, and it would be very awkward to be tied to town by a

trivial matter of that sort—the honour would be too dearly bought."

"You can easily arrange that; pair off," quoth Jackson. "Will you try?—safe to be returned."

"Do now," supplicated the wife.

"Very well; perhaps I will."

* * * * *

Buckhorn returned one member—De Gospitch owned estates near Buckhorn—had numerous tenants there. The seat was soon after vacant, and Mr. De Gospitch, accompanied by his friends, did the electors the honour of offering himself to fill up the vacancy.

Unfortunately, however, for the landowner, another gentleman appeared to contest the election—a man versed in the laws of his country—shrewd and earnest—independent in his views, though limited in his pecuniary resources. The show of hands was in favour of the independent thinker, and a poll was demanded on the part of De Gospitch. The polling took place, and at its close De Gospitch was mortified to find himself in a miserable minority. He cursed the impudence of his tenantry and dependants, and vowed that he would sooner die than give them such another chance. They had sent a pauper to represent their interests; they were a set of undignified, presuming persons, and had no business with a vote.

"This is the result of that bugbear, Progress," growled Shakspeare Jackson. "Progress will be the ruin of the aristocracy, if they don't take care."

"Ugh! Progress is a swindle—by no means a gentlemanly principle; it's good for bricklayers and carpenters, but no person of consideration would think of upholding a wretched bit of sentiment that seeks to put journeymen on a level with their betters," said the disappointed candidate.

This conversation took place as the election party were returning to town. A hearse passed the carriage as De Gospitch uttered the last words of the above speech, and a man, who was perched upon the top of the black vehicle, overheard them. And the fellow presumed to say, with a grin,

"It 's all very well, gents, but there are no betters in here, and perhaps we shall have the honour of carrying one of you some of these days."

CHAPTER XXII.

HENRY MAKES A STEP IN THE WORLD: HE ALSO MAKES A PROPOSAL.

Mr. Ferdinand Short was certainly not prepossessed in favour of our hero. The young head of the firm regarded his clerk, Henry Gospitch, as a slow, saintly person—a machine well adapted for ledger work only.

"He 's useful, they tell me," said Short one day to Brasely, "but I 'm hanged if he 's ornamental."

"Well, I don't know; I don't call Gospitch an ill-looking fellow by any means."

"Oh! no," continued Short, "he 's not so ugly as Sambo, my black footman, for instance."

This instructive conversation took place at the office; it was brought to an abrupt conclusion by a message from Messrs. Dewdycomb and Duffin, who begged a few minutes' conversation with their partner. Short strolled leisurely into the partners' private room, and seated himself near the gentlemen who had requested a brief interview with him.

"Well," drawled Short.

Mr. Dewdycomb opened the business of the meeting. He said:—

"Mr. Duffin and I have been minutely examining the affairs of the firm, and we wish to consult with you—as principal—about our future movements. We have no reason to complain of any of the persons we employ, with the exception of Mr. Robert Brasely. Mr. Brasely not only neglects his own work, but stimulates other persons to neglect theirs."

"Ah!" muttered Ferdinand Short. "Then I suppose the long and short of the matter is, that you wish to get rid of Mr. Brasely."

"No, not exactly," meekly interposed Duffin. "I have just been examining Mr. Brasely's books, and I find them so negligently kept, that I cannot conscientiously recommend

you and Mr. Dewdycomb to allow Mr. Brasely to remain in his present position."

"This is any thing but complimentary to me, gentlemen. Mr. Brasely is my particular friend: you forget that," angrily answered Short.

"On the contrary, Mr. Short," responded Dewdycomb, "we should not have endured Mr. Brasely's conduct so long, if he had been a stranger to you."

"Can't you find him any other employment?" asked Short.

"Certainly."

"And who do you propose as successor to Brasely's present office?"

"Mr. Henry Gospitch!" affirmed Duffin. "Mr Gospitch has not been long with us, certainly, but he has paid such undivided attention to his duties that we can put entire faith in his attention and ability: he is a shrewd accountant."

Short declared that he would not consent to have Brasely's salary reduced, inasmuch as he (Mr. Short) considered him to be a very useful and very gentlemanly part of the firm.

It was at length agreed that Henry Gospitch should take Brasely's books, and that Brasely should have employment in another department. Gospitch's salary was raised to 130*l.* per annum.

When this decision was made known to Bob by Ferdinand Short, Bob gave a loud whistle and a shrug of the shoulders.

"Do take care what you're about, old fellow," implored Ferdinand, "I had to fight hard for you."

"Ecod! yes, I will. I *should* be hard up if I got sacked."

Henry Gospitch attended to his new duties with zeal; he had made another step: he thought of the widow at Clapham, and worked with his heart in his labour. 130*l.* per annum! this would not suffice for the responsibilities of marriage. Henry examined his position minutely and calmly. He would not risk the probability of dependence—he would not marry until he made sufficient money to support his wife respectably. He, however, felt himself justified in addressing the following letter to Mrs. Gaps on the evening of his elevation:—

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I hope you will not be surprised when

you have read this letter; nay, I am even sanguine enough to believe that you have expected such a declaration as it contains.

"My position is improved—materially improved. I am now the recipient of a yearly income of 130*l*. This sum will not, shall not be the sole reliance of my wife. My object in writing this letter is to assure you of my continued adoration: to tell you that the time is not far distant when I shall be in a condition to offer you my heart—to ask your hand. I can no longer endure the doubt—the miserable suspense that has been gnawing at my heart for the last six months: tell me, beloved one, if I may hope—if my struggle after independence will be rewarded with your hand. I must be candid with you—as candid as I should wish my wife to be with me.

"I have loved before—have been scouted for my poverty—deserted by my friends—shunned by my relations—left to perish. I have struggled hard, and have to thank your late husband for my present success. I will hide nothing from you—you shall know my history fully ere you decide. Miss Maturin was to have been my wife. I loved her with my whole soul—she was my life. When my father died leaving the bulk of his property to my elder brother, I was without means. I embarked in business: I failed. As soon as my wealthy relations discovered that I was a grocer, their dignity was wounded, and they refused to recognise me as their kindred. I failed for 200*l*., a sum I sought to borrow of my brother—he refused me the loan—I was a beggar. I received a letter from your husband and a visit from you: God knows how thankfully these comforts were received. As you descended my staircase Miss Maturin mounted it—was ushered into my presence. I had not seen her since my embarkation in business. I asked her if she had been forcibly kept away: she answered "No;" and from that moment we have been strangers. She never loved me. In the utter wretchedness of my condition at this time I could not forbear contrasting the loving charity of your conduct with the cold worldliness of hers. Such is my history.

"I would urge you to remember that my devotion is not the rash and blind infatuation of an inexperienced youth. Whatever you may decide with regard to me, be sure I shall ever

think of you with gratitude; and I *must* add, love. You may refuse me, but you cannot leesson my adoration.

"Yours ever,

"H. GOSPITCH."

When Marian had read this letter her heart was full of rejoicing—the sweet spring of her inmost being was touched. She wept with gladness; Dinah sought to dry her sister's tears, but in vain. When joy draws streams from the well of tears no argument will stay the current.

Gratitude often awakens the intensest love. Many people affirm that gratitude and love are two very different feelings.—Is it so? Love, in its most exalted form, is a desire to give pleasure in return for pleasure bestowed. A pretty face awakens agreeable sensations; and we are impressed with a wish to make some return for the delight that pretty face has given us. In the same way a kindness received will awaken a wish, in every pure and good mind, to show kindness in return: and in this spirit of gratitude love has birth.

We feel no gratitude towards a person we hate, though he may do us innumerable favours. We rather shrink from his kind advances—suspect his attentions—we would be glad to be rid of his importunities.

It is certain that Marian's love for Henry Gospitch had its birth in pure and profound gratitude for his attention to herself and Mr. Gaps. And Henry's adoration was founded upon his everlasting thankfulness.

Mrs. Gaps determined to consult with her father, to ask his consent to her decision, ere she made her answer. Dinah declared that such delay was monstrous, and begged that Marian would accept the offer at once: Marian, however, objected to this course and went to see her parents.

Mr. Jackson gave his opinion somewhat pompously; he warned his daughter against the designs of young men who would seek to marry her for her money.

Marian could not listen to this suspicion; she declared passionately that Mr. Gospitch was too noble-hearted to be guilty of such wicked deception.

"Well, well," sagely responded Mr. Jackson, "I say no more—not another word. Do as you like, girl, because you will."

"No, father. I came here purposely to seek your advice; I should not have done so had I not valued and respected your opinion. But you cannot expect that I would listen silently to suspicions directed towards one I love with my whole heart."

"Mr. Gospitch may be the pattern you think him—I only hope it may be so for your sake, Marian," observed Mr. Jackson.

"Nonsense—stuff and nonsense," interposed Mrs. Jackson. "Accept him, child—your father doesn't know what he's talking about. Order your wedding-dress to-morrow, you have *my* permission."

"The marriage may not take place for years," said Marian.

"Not take place for years, Marian!" exclaimed Mrs. Jackson. "What impudence then to ask you to wait—goodness knows how long! Why, you might have a dozen better offers in that time! Oh! if that's the case don't accept him —don't have any thing to do with anybody on such terms."

"But I feel that I love him so," said Marian.

"That's all very well, child," answered the mother; "but do you think that you could wait perhaps three or four years for him or anybody else? Tush! it would be want of dignity in you to think for a moment of such a thing."

"But if I choose to wait all that time you will not object to Mr. Gospitch for my husband, will you?"

"Oh! no—certainly not," answered Mrs. Jackson. "I dare say the young man's decent enough, though he didn't look at all prepossessing when he was here. He seemed to me to be a staid, stupid sort of person, with scarcely a word to say for himself."

"You will think differently of him when you know him," urged Marian.

The young widow returned home and answered our hero's letter: she consented to receive him as her betrothed husband.

When Marian's epistle was delivered to Gospitch his hand trembled, and he paused ere he broke the seal. His soul was oppressed with doubt and foreboding. But when he had gathered the sweetness the woman's letter contained—had put the paper to his lips, and felt the pain of unutterable rapture—he prepared to make a visit to his mistress. He was soon at Clapham—soon at the feet of Marian.

Their first meeting as lovers was full of rapture. Formal custom was forgotten in the intensity of their love, and they sat palm to palm, and their hearts were mirrored in their faces.

"This is happiness! said Gospitch.

"Thank you a thousand times for saying so," said Marian.

There was something exquisitely pure and sweet in the meeting: there was no headstrong passion—no hasty thoughtless concessions. The germ of love had waxed naturally. There was no ball-room fantasy—no sudden infatuation. The love was founded upon respect and gratitude: the foundation was a rock, and the superstructure would be enduring. They faced the garden, and Henry saw his name traced in flowers. Marian confessed that she was the gardener—the tender nurse who had taught the plants to spell her lover's name. This evidence of devotion thrilled to the heart of the young man: he was grateful, happy.

CHAPTER XXIII.

COMPARISONS AND FOREBODINGS.

Mary Grasy asked her sister to communicate to her the emotions the latter felt during her honeymoon. The task was not an easy one. Mrs. De Gospitch had no very vivid recollection of her thoughts and feelings during that interesting period. She remembered only that a great change took place in her mode of life, and that some time elapsed ere she was reconciled to her new name. But these matters-of-fact—these vulgar details would not look well in a letter, so Mrs. De Gospitch tried to persuade herself that she felt a new joy—had in her honeymoon a passing, though faint, foretaste of Heaven. There was one comfort to her, she flattered herself that she could make up a tolerable letter; she was generally esteemed an exceedingly graceful and clever correspondent. So she took pen, ink, and paper, and prepared to create an enthusiasm that was utterly foreign to her cold nature. She shut herself up in her room for an hour, and wrote a letter that read very well—was after the most approved style of female authorship.

Mary received this specimen of pure cant, and read it with thankfulness. The letter was so warm and enthusiastic, detailed the delights of a honeymoon in such radiant colours, that Mary wept when she contrasted the negative happiness of her first month of marriage with the professed rapture of her sister's.

The young bride was a stricken woman—disappointed in the grand hope of a woman's life. A woman unhappy in her marriage is blighted for ever. Weeks, months, ay, years, has she looked forward to her union with the idol of her soul; her whole being has been and ever will be concentrated in him; she will be the mother of his children—will bear a mother's anguish cheerfully for him; he shall be her oracle—second only to her God! She will minister every comfort unto his ailings; she will hover about his emaciated frame

with all the loving-kindness of the honeymoon-bride; her love shall know no decrease—shall attend him to the grave, and plant roses on his rotting clay; her whole being—her earthly mission shall be linked with him, and know no separation. It is a grand thing to be the object of such adoration—to call forth in another such angelic devotion. And when this noble affection is repaid with indifference and scorn, how degrading to manhood is the picture! A woman's whole life depends upon her marriage: a man has other pleasures, other pursuits to fly to when his home does not present to him a welcome picture. A woman is tied to her house as to her life—she must endure the home she has chosen, be it good or bad; we therefore attach more disgrace to a woman who makes marriage a cool bargain, than we should to the mercenary match of a man.

All men dislike worldly women. Men want heart in their wives before brain—a love of home before a love of books, music, &c. Accomplishments are graceful recreations, but men do not marry to hear a song or have an opportunity of admiring moss-roses daubed on Bristol board; it may be a weakness in the "nobler animals," but they are exacting enough to require something more, and before accomplishments in women. Young ladies imagine that when they have mastered a few pieces on the piano, and can blot paper with glaring sketches of flowers and fruit, and speak French with a pure Clapham accent, that they are to all intents and purposes "good matches." They are wofully mistaken. Men do not care two straws for these proficiencies—they prefer the real flower to the artificial one—they are not won with polkas, painted posies, and mangled French. Simpletons that they are, they prefer the household virtues to distorted art!

Men do not sigh for pudding-making machines, but they certainly do prefer wives who have some taste for home comforts. Men may like apple-dumplings, but it is monstrous to say that they would marry to obtain this delicacy. If this were the case, cooks would become peeresses, and ladies should be brought up in the kitchen.

Mary depended upon her accomplishments and graces in her marriage. She thought the captain would be proud of her as an accomplished woman, whereas he had not once asked her to sing since they had been married. He was her admirer—not her lover. He was dazzled with her exterior

beauty, not with the pure goodness of her heart. And it was Mary's misfortune to feel this—to become more convinced daily that marriage had not made herself and her husband one.

She dreaded returning to London; everybody would see that she was unhappy. In vain she strove to throw off all melancholy thoughts—to "put a bright face upon matters." She was not strong enough to make a counterfeit of happiness. She could not forget the night her husband had passed in a gambling-house—her diamonds were gone, and Grasy did not think of repurchasing them. What would her friends in town say? She one day ventured to ask the captain whether he intended to give her back her jewels soon.

"I' faith, Mary, my dear, I don't know," answered Grasy; "they 're not so easily recovered."

"Where are they?" ventured Mary.

"Where are they!" echoed her husband, "that 's more than I can exactly tell you, my dear."

"What did you do with them?—sold them, I suppose," said Mary, angrily.

"That 's not to the point. I promise ye this, my dear; if I can't get the jewels back, I 'll buy you some paste, that 'll look quite as well, and is ten times as cheap. So make yourself easy on the subject."

The captain mistook the character of his wife. She loved jewels because they were valuable, not because they were beautiful to see. A stomacher of diamonds is prized, because it is worth a large sum of money: who would care about the stomacher of paste? and yet the eye cannot detect the difference—the one is as beautiful as the other. The fact is, jewels are esteemed as a stamp of wealth—as an assurance that the wearer has full coffers. If diamonds were cheap they would be little worn.

The recent glut of pine-apples has made them vulgar fruit, because they are within the reach of the poorest mechanic. It was well to stand a pine on a rich man's table when it represented five sovereigns, for the host in this way impressed his friends with a sense of his liberal expenditure, but now that the fruit represents only a few shillings, it has become a plebeian luxury—it may be purchased from Whitechapel stalls.

This purse-pride was Mary's pride. Paste, indeed! She would not wear rubbish! Her objection was not founded upon a refined objection to falsehood: she did not hate the counterfeit be-

cause it was a lie, a deceitful imitation of the pure carbon, but because it was not worth a twentieth part of the sum diamonds would fetch. In short, Grasy made a dangerous experiment when he attempted to represent his wife's jewels with paste.

Mary began to suspect that her husband was not so well off as her sister expected. How dreadful it would be to find that he was an adventurer—a gambler—a moneyless man! What would people say! Really she would go mad. How that Gospitch would enjoy it too! How he would laugh at her expense! It was very strange that he refused to give her back her trinkets. If he had plenty of money their cost would be a mere trifle to him. He talked of paste! This looked wofully suspicious. He had borrowed her money, too, and was evidently mortified to find that her relations had not given her something in the shape of dowry. These were not comforting reminiscences.

But she still had one joy to cling to—he was the descendant of a royal line. An Irish prince was his ancestor; but had he no noble relations living? She had not heard of any. To be sure he talked very pompously of wealthy friends inhabiting the Green Isle, but he had never very distinctly stated their whereabouts, or described their possessions very accurately. However, she refused to give place to these latter suspicions in her mind—she would believe that he had blood royal in his veins. And so she partly comforted herself. People might pity his misfortunes, but they would not despise him as an upstart.

She was afraid to communicate these forebodings to her sister. She was too proud to acknowledge her unhappiness.

After a few weeks Grasy began to find things "very slow." His wife was not a smiling, laughing bride. She was a haughty, cold, and pensive woman. She wanted animal spirits. She was too aristocratic for him. He liked dignity as well as any man, but he was soon tired of the cold formalities of a strict aristocrat. He began, too, to reflect, and rather seriously, that he, Captain Grasy, would have to support his wife in all the luxuries she so dearly prized. She had not a farthing of her own; she looked to him for every thing. This state of things was painfully perplexing. He was not overburdened with money. True, he had a decent income, but it was decidedly inadequate to the demands his

wife would make upon it. However, he would not be miserable—he would leave the future to the future. His great consolation lay in the belief that Mary was an aristocratic beauty; he knew people would admire his taste. He had married well at all events.

These honeymoon scruples did not augur well for the future. They were both young—would probably have to pass some thirty years together, and, starting with indifference and suspicion on this long journey, they could have no very enviable anticipations.

Grasy wrote to his friends in town. His letters were rapturous, but he himself was not in an ecstacy of delight. His wife was not his sole comfort—his sole joy. He had found companions—he had been to Mabile, to the Château Rouge, ay, to the Chaumière. He had contrived to say a few words to a few grisettes: he had even indulged in a polka at Mabile. These amusements furnished ample topics for his correspondence. He suited his letters well to his various friends. To Ferdinand Short and Robert Brasely he wrote long and lively accounts of his nocturnal excursions. The following is an extract from a letter to the latter gentleman:—

"Well, old fellow, you see I and my Parisian friend (you should see his beard) had had a very slow afternoon; we had been sipping coffee and smoking since dinner-time, so we were determined to compensate for this dull day in a trip to the *Château Rouge*. We hired a *Citadine*, and away we crept—the coachman indulging in the most absurd exclamations by the way—such as *E-aw—E- Cr-r-r-e animal-va ;*—and such paving! such springs to the vehicle! Ecod! it was no joke after a hearty dinner. Well, having been horribly jolted and thumped against each other for the space of half an hour, the crazy concern came to a sudden stop outside the Château gates. There was a pair of those diminutive individuals known as French soldiers at the entrance; and the little fellows were as peppery and talkative as monkeys, pushing their little bodies against the crowd with an air of authority quite ludicrous to behold. I thought at the time that a sprinkling of Tipperary boys would annihilate a regiment of such fellows in a few minutes.

"The gardens, I must own, were pretty—in d—n good taste —hanged if they were not! The women, too, were wonderfully got up. There 's no mistake about it, Bob, the French

girls do understand dress; if they *do* pad they know how to do it. Pretty girls are miserably scarce in Paris; but they all have taste, and are as lively as eels. The men are impudently ugly; I wonder how they can look an Englishman in the face. They look as though they lived upon soup, and washed in it too. Macassar must be popular over here: some of the fellows have so much hair I wonder how they get their hats on. Their beards are terrific; they have to thrust their food through a hedge of hair before it can reach their mouths. However, I have met one or two passable specimens."

Such was the strain in which Mary's husband wrote to one of his London associates. To Blandly Reeks he gave a different picture. He wrote:—

"What a miserable state is bachelorhood when compared with the exquisite bliss of married life! Here I am in the loveliest city on earth with the girl of my heart wedded to me for life! For life! This is rapture; this is something approaching to true bliss. It has been said that nothing is perfect under the sun. I deny it; Mary is. You, as a poet and a philosopher, will agree with me that perfection may be found in some specimens of the gentle sex. It 's the fashion to abuse women now-a-days: the fashion, I say emphatically, is disgusting. The darling creatures should rule our hearts as they did in the age of chivalry. I only wish Englishmen would re-establish tournaments; you 'd find me an enthusiast with the lance, and my sweet reward, when conqueror, should be a glove from Mrs. Grasy's hand. Sure you will laugh at me: I am too sentimental perhaps. Ah! it 's a failing that will go with me to the grave. Sometimes I feel I can scarcely move for sentiment. It oppresses me awfully."

There is a marked contrast in the spirit of the foregoing epistles, yet were they traced by the same hand on the same day. Grasy must not be accused of falsehood. His letters may appear inconsistent at first sight, but if we pause to examine them and compare them with the character of the writer, we shall discover that they harmonize perfectly with their author. Grasy had made a mistake very common with people of his temperament. His impetuous nature led him to the hymeneal altar with sentiment—not love—in his heart. He was sentimental, and Mary was the object of his sentiment; and the sequel of their lives may show how great

the mistake is when sentiment only attends a couple to the altar. Grasy was honest in his professions of attachment when he married; he had not examined his heart; it was not manifest to him that love had no seat therein.

But an extract from a letter written a year and a half after his marriage, will perhaps sufficiently exemplify his mistake:—

"You ask me in your letter whether I am as sentimental as ever. I' faith, old boy, I fear my sentiment is gone altogether. I am not the enthusiast I was: I no longer rave for tournaments and opportunities of displaying my gallantry. I am now a poor, quiet, dull, plodding, married man—a father. I 'm not often at home: there 's no sentiment in a screaming child, in pap-spoons and bibs. The mother chatters gibberish to the child all day (and half the night for the matter of that), and has scarcely a word for me: she talks more to the nurse than she does to her husband. The old woman tells her long yarns about the wonderful babies she has attended; about hospitals, and the different fashions for the infant's linen. Then the old creature will enter into a tedious account of her personal ailings, the 'terrible times' she has had, and the oft-repeated assurance of her medical man that she couldn't live long. All this rubbish is told in an undertone, and I may do what I please—in fact go to Jericho, and I should scarcely be missed. You recollect the time when Reeks treated us to a long rigmarole about mothers and children: at the time I believed him; I now think his argument utter nonsense. He talked a lot about women doting upon their children, and looking in the little urchins' eyes to catch a glimpse of the father's expression. Well, this theory of a mother's love pleased me excessively at the time. It was pleasing to contemplate a woman looking for one's features in her child: my blood warmed at the idea. But it 's all nonsense, it 's worse than nonsense, it 's positively sinful to give men such rapturous ideas of conjugal felicity: such felicity does not exist.

"When your wife has a child she thinks as much about you as she does about a stranger. I 'll venture to wager that any thought of the child in connection with its father does not enter her head. It was once my happiness to believe that they loved their children as the incorporation of their flesh with the flesh of their husband; but I have lived to

find that it is not so. So if you marry, old fellow, and you become a father, be prepared to resign your exclusive nook in your wife's heart to your child: she 'll scarcely think of you after. As for your bed-room, you may give it up to nurses, doctors, female visitors, and chambermaids: it is no longer a conjugal sanctuary: it has been invaded, and its privacy is gone for ever. You and your wife are two—distinctly two."

It will be seen that eighteen months sufficed to take away the web of sentiment, and to show the absence of good, honest love in the Grasy household.

The imagination of the reader must now be taxed.

Matrimony hangs menacingly over our hero: matrimony is already the lot of Mary. It is known that Henry's proposal differed in spirit from Grasy's: and the fate of the two shall be unfolded in future pages. The contrast may teach a good lesson. The limits of the present history are too confined to allow of protracted description. Some of the events connected with the lives of the Gospitches must be omitted, but the historian takes credit to himself for having selected those passages in the biography of his heroes which are most pregnant with interest and precept.

The domestic affairs of the De Gospitch, Gospitch, and Grasy households, remained much in the same state as we have described them throughout a year; and the differences and changes that took place after the expiration of the said twelve months, will be the subject of future chapters.

In short, the historian boldly, though advisedly, dips twelve months in Lethe, and, satisfied with the immersion, resumes the thread of his narrative.

The Meeting of the Captain's Creditors.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH MR. ROBERT BRASELY DISCUSSES VERY FREELY AND VERY EASILY WITH A DIGNIFIED SENIOR; THE SAID SENIOR REBUKING BOB'S PREMATURE CONFIDENCE. BOB RESOLVES UPON A STEP, WHICH HE PUTS INTO EXECUTION IN THE NEXT CHAPTER.

SUCH attention as Henry paid to the business of Short and Co. could not fail in attracting the attention of the working partners of the firm. Ferdinand Short saw no wonderful ability in Gospitch, but this, perhaps, was a fact in favour of our hero's capabilities. Dewdycomb was certainly a man of strict justice, but he was too pompous, too self-opinionated. He watched Henry narrowly, and found him always so trustworthy, energetic, and clear-headed, that he soon felt convinced the firm had gained a very valuable acquisition in the person of our hero. Poor Brasely was looked upon as dead weight in the house, only held to please the principal. Notwithstanding his unpopularity, and his friend's progress, the amateur boxer quarrelled not, neither did he covet Henry's increasing influence. Some intricate and important business well transacted by the latter had raised his salary to £200 per annum.

With this settled annual income the fortunate possessor thought confidently of a wedding ring and its pleasing etceteras. Henry was with Marian every evening; and Carnation Cottage was tenanted by happy hearts. Dinah certainly sighed for a lover, but it is probable that she would have found it possible to spin out her existence to a ripe old age without a husband; not that she would have ceased complaining of the bad taste of the sterner sex on her dying day. The evenings at Carnation Cottage were enlivened by frequent visits from the Jacksons. Henry had often mentioned the name of Bob Brasely to his betrothed and to her ascetic parent; and his accounts of the dashing young gentleman had so pleased them, that Mr. Jackson once asked his son-in-law elect to bring his facetious companion: this Henry promised to do. Bob vowed that he was not at all the sort of

fellow to be trusted among the decencies of a respectable and quiet family; really the sort of thing did not suit him at all. It was very kind of Henry to ask him, but he must be excused—he was not born for domestic bliss—he felt that he could not stand such quiet business. He believed he was a very decent sort of a fellow with his set, but he would be quite out of his element in a lack-a-daisical drawing room. Henry would listen to no such excuse, and Bob was at last persuaded to accompany him to Clapham. Vowing that the affair was slow, Brasely strolled Claphamwards with his friend.

"What sort of people are they?" asked Bob.

"Why, they live very quietly."

"The deuce they do!"

"But they are good-hearted and hospitable."

"How slow!"

"They are excellently well educated. Miss Dinah Jackson is a little boisterous, perhaps, and her father has odd crotchets in his head."

"Miss Dinah Jackson, Harry, is frisky, is she?"

"Frisky!"

"Yes, you know. Fond of fun, polkas, incipient flirtations, picnics, promenade concerts, boating, and bagatelle."

"She 's not so steady as her elder sister."

"Steady! Stuff! Steadiness may be the sort o' thing at five-and-forty, but it 's a deuced bore in young people. Now if you want to insult me, Harry, call me a steady, respectable young man. I couldn't stand such abuse from anybody."

"Shall I call you a dissipated dog?"

"Why that 's nearer the mark, though I confess I should prefer 'frisky' to 'dissipated.' The term frisky is admirably vague—'dissipated' smells too strongly of gin-and-water and pickwicks."

Brisk walking soon conveyed the young men to the door of Carnation Cottage; and a well-performed double-knock, given with exquisite relish by Mr. Robert Brasely, obtained admittance for them. Bob was certainly out of his element in the presence of the Jackson family; he was not particularly awkward, but, at first, he was perfectly silent. What was there to talk about? The ladies had no taste for pugilism, horse-racing, nor boating; what could he say to them? He had used up the weather, and he was ignorant of the state of the

crops, or of the marriages on the tapis; the Jacksons had no dogs, no birds to elicit his admiration and display his knowledge upon: really this state of things was unpleasantly embarrassing.

"Are you fond of flowers?" asked Miss Dinah Jackson, addressing Brasely.

"I put a rose in my button-hole now and then." And Bob grinned knowingly.

"We have a few choice specimens. Perhaps Mr. Brasely would like to see them."

Mr. Brasely assented to this proposition, and Miss Dinah Jackson led him into the back garden, leaving the betrothed couple to enjoy solitude, if indeed love knows loneliness.

Bob did not feel at all comfortable alone in the company of a respectable British female; he was not at all used to the sort of thing. She was not bad looking, thought Bob. She was a good figure, and she had a neat ankle, he saw it as she descended the garden steps. He walked nervously at her side, acknowledging profusely the extreme health and beauty of the garden. Miss Jackson sustained her part admirably, and her agreeable and unaffected manners soon put her companion a little at his ease.

"Really, Mr. Brasely," said the young lady, in answer to a compliment paid her by Bob; "really you must be an enthusiastic admirer of flowers. It is a taste, however, more prevalent among ladies than gentlemen, I think."

"Perhaps so. Men are more given to horse-racing and boxing."

"Boxing!" Miss Dinah got up a most effective expression of surprise. "Boxing! really, Mr. Brasely, you don't say so!"

"Oh! I assure you, I'm a capital hand with the gloves—any fellow of my own weight."

"Good gracious, Mr. Brasely, is it possible? Do *gentlemen* fight for fun?"

"Ecod! I beg your pardon, Miss, I meant—yes—yes, gentlemen—noblemen patronise pugilism."

"Really! What, noblemen, peers of the realm!"

"I should say so—not a few neither.

"You surprise me. I beg your pardon, I'm sure, Mr. Brasely, but I always thought fighting so very, very vulgar."

"You have been misled, grievously misled. Boxing is a noble art."

"Bless me, sir, is it?"

"A difficult science and no mistake. It isn't everybody that can figure decently."

"I have been indeed misinformed. What is it like? Do they hurt one another?"

"Nothing to speak of when they're practising. We spar twice a week."

"Spar!"

"Yes, do the moves—so." And Mr. Robert Brasely entertained the sister of his hostess with a specimen of his pugilistic contortions, much to the young lady's amusement.

It was an unlucky coincidence for Bob that Mr. Jackson (who had arrived during the time occupied in the above conversation) was looking from the back parlour window, and could see his daughter occupied in witnessing the science of her new acquaintance.

"Who's that young man in the garden with Dinah?" asked Mr. Jackson sharply of his widowed daughter.

"He's a friend of Henry's, Mr. Brasely. *You* asked Henry to bring him."

"The fellow's mad. He's wriggling about there, at the bottom of the garden, as though he had determined upon boxing with your ten-week stocks, Marian. What's the young man about—see, Henry—do. And there's that Dinah laughing and chatting with him as though she had been brought up in the same cradle with him."

"Always finding fault, especially if your own flesh and blood's in the case." Need it be added that Mrs. Jackson was the author of this sentence? The husband had barely time to hurl a look of indignation at his plaintive spouse ere Miss Dinah entered the apartment leaning on the arm of Mr. Robert Brasely. Mr. Jackson condescended to perform an exceedingly stiff bow towards Bob, Bob was equally stiff and ludicrously ceremonious.

Matters tended to promise an exceedingly dull evening. The lovers were no company, (lovers are always dull people to talk to,) and the Jacksons were, as was common in their refined circle, at variance. The old gentleman viewed Bob with suspicion, and, for a time, avoided any conversation with him. Dinah took up her frame-work, and lisped one, two, three, carry one over, &c., &c., and Mrs. Jackson read a volume on domestic economy. Five minutes had been passed in the

most perfect silence, when the old gentleman, turning to Bob and viewing him as he would an ill-mannered animal, said—

"You play chess, young gentleman?"

"Chess! Never saw a chess-board in my life. I believe it's a fearfully dull game."

Brasely unconsciously wounded Mr. Jackson in the tenderest part of his mental anatomy. The old gentleman had contributed very extensively to wear out at least a dozen chess-boards in his life; and to him chess was as dear as his wife, his children; though, as his spouse would have had it, "it might easily have been that."

"Young gentleman," said Mr. Jackson, determined upon reading the adventurous young man a lecture; "young man, you will live to know better. You will live to see the serious part of life where now you see but puniest folly."

"Meant no offence, Mr. Jackson. If chess is your hobby I wouldn't say a word against the game for the world. I hold my opinion of an intimate friend, a friend who is thoroughly up to all the moves of the game."

"As I said," continued the old gentleman pompously, "you will live to know better. You young fellows of the present day should have been born some thirty years ago. In those times youngsters had to rough it; *they* knew the difference between an old and experienced head and thin empty craniums."

"Well, I thank my stars, I can tell you, that *I* wasn't born in the happy times when the old ones dined off three courses, and gave the young ones a meagre allowance of pudding, and any amount of the whip."

"Gently, sir,—gently, young man,—you forget the reverence due to age."

"Indeed not, Mr. Jackson."

"Well, well, I'll tell you this much, you young men don't appreciate the freedom progress has given you. If smoking, and drinking, and fighting, be gentlemanly accomplishments, then are you all perfect specimens of good breeding."

"I don't call myself a gentlemen because I've got half a dozen Cubas in my pocket—you mistake me. By the way, do you smoke?"

"Smoke! that's not to the point. I opine that age has to do with such tastes. *You* surely don't smoke."

"Not much. I did some years back, but I gave up the habit. Doctor said it played the deuce with the lungs. Don't think he knew much about it—but however—"

"Did some years back! Why you must have been dry-nursed upon tobacco-water, and weaned upon cheroots!"

"I'm very well after it if I was—that's all I can say. Have you seen the new cigars that have just come up, with straws?"

Mr. Jackson's temper was no match for Brasely's well-sustained coolness. Bob saw his victory, and continued his off-hand discourse. He said—

"What d' ye think about Ireland? They're in a nice mess there. They say they haven't a kidney among 'em, poor devils."

"What!"

"A kidney potato I mean, of course. Have you never heard of potatoes with this name? Oh! they're very common, very common indeed."

"Heard of kidney potatoes! Bless you, before you were born or thought of."

"So we're going to give 'em eight millions by way of doing the thing handsome. It's a stiff sum, isn't it?"

"Young sir, the legislators of this enlightened country, in their progressive wisdom, believe the loan in question to be necessary for the salvation of that unhappy country. Young heads should not criticise their seniors. Ireland now is certainly in an awful state. For my part, I oppose the loan as unconstitutional and absurd."

"Well, for my part, I don't believe that Nestor was grey-headed. I can't believe, say what you will, that wisdom always wears a grey wig; it's a flam, in my humble opinion. As for the loan, I think the starving wretches ought to have it."

"I differ from you. I say educate them."

"Of course,—we all know that,—but give the poor devils their breakfast before you send them to school. Ecod! I should like to see you or anybody else learn your A B C on an empty stomach."

"Stuff, young man, stuff. At present the Irish peasantry are utter barbarians; it's a sad fact, I know, but it is, nevertheless, true. Give them books, say I."

"And give them beef-steaks, say I."

"Why look at the state of morality there after all the efforts of the pious men who 've been over there distributing tracts."

"Yes, of course, barbarians! No wonder! You try to cram 'em with bundles of dry and musty pamphlets instead of victuals. Moral food, you say; yes, but where 's the stomach full? Ecod! you preach so much to them about civilization, it 's enough to make 'em savage."

The discourse between old and young England was interrupted by the entrance of "the tray," and a general conversation ensued, with which the reader shall not be troubled. One or two tiffs between the parent Jacksons took place as usual. What an unhappy couple they were! How they had contrived to get through some three or four and twenty years together is a mystery unfathomed. They did not appear to have one feeling or opinion in common, and their tastes, as regards their table, were diametrically opposed. Mrs. Jackson loved double Gloucester cheese for her supper, a love which she indulged at times, to the extreme annoyance of her lord, who vowed that she went to bed primed like a rat-trap; on the other hand, the husband was fond of shalots, and his lady hated them, and she declared that sometimes "Mr. Jackson smelt so oniony that there was no coming near him."

As Henry and Bob walked homeward, the latter avowed that he had spent a more pleasant evening than he had anticipated; he had been amused with the "old fellow's" extreme dignity. "He 'd patronise the crowned heads of Europe, if they favoured him with a call," said Bob. "That Miss Dinah Jackson is a decent sort of a girl, Harry; upon my word, if I wasn't too knowing a hand for the sort of thing, I 'm not certain that I wouldn't make her an offer. Has she any money?"

"Not a sixpence that I know of."

Bob gave a loud whistle, a habit in which he indulged whenever he intended to be unusually impressive, and said, "She won't do for me, then, that knocks her out of my book at once. No money! The game 's up, then, there."

"The game 's up! There must be two parties to an agreement, Bob. You forget that."

"What! Refuse me! Refuse Robert Brasely! Come,

come, you joke. No, no, girls now-a-days have a large amount of cheek, I know—but hang it, no—not enough for that."

"Money, Bob, isn't the first consideration. Believe me, old fellow, I speak earnestly and truly, a money-marriage is a bitter bargain; you buy the gold in a dear market."

"Perhaps you're right; but there's some truth in that old saw of mine, 'an empty cupboard makes an empty heart.'"

"You couldn't spend the money out you do now if you were married, old fellow, I know that. Women, when they love, have few wants, depend upon it."

"Ecod! Harry, my income wouldn't buy her gloves, not if she consented to wear cleaned ones. But I must say Miss Jackson *is* a nice girl, there's no mistake about that; there's no fuss, no nonsense about her. The game's getting desperate with her now, I should suppose, isn't it?"

"I don't think she's above two or three and twenty."

Miss Jackson's opinion of Mr. Brasely was highly complimentary to that young man. He had, in the opinion of this young lady, a thoroughly manly spirit. He was not a namby-pamby sort of a person; he had plenty of courage, and of all things she liked to see valour in men. He was not an Adonis, his dearest friend could not say that he was, but honest good-nature, British good-nature, twinkled from those little dark grey eyes, bespeaking inward beauty,—bespeaking a heart. Whether it demanded the valour of a Nelson "to square up to" a bunch of ten-week stocks the reader shall determine for himself; suffice it that Miss Dinah Jackson's heart was dangerously alive to the perfections of Mr. Robert Brasely, clerk.

Mr. Jackson returned home with his wife, and his mind was not disturbed by suspicious forebodings of the possibility of any intimacy between his daughter Dinah and that smoking, barefaced upstart with whom he had condescended, in the absence of a fitter companion, to hold discourse. As for Mrs. Jackson, she saw nothing so much amiss in the young man. He certainly did give forth his opinions with a certain degree of assurance, but, in her own humble way of thinking, this boyish failing did not prevent the young man from being a very sensible, well-behaved person. Perhaps Mrs. Jackson entertained so favourable an opinion of Bob in consequence of

her husband's dislike to him; this point, however, must remain unsettled, inasmuch as the parties concerned in its promulgation are very far north, and beyond the reach of the chronicler.

Brasely went to bed with a determination—a warm and fixed resolve. He had talked the matter over thoroughly with Henry, and he was determined upon making the venture. He did not see how his entire project could be realized—he gave the ultimate end of the affair no consideration whatever—it was not in his nature to be provident or cautious. He did not question the success of the first step in the matter—he gave no heed unto the future, and so he put his head upon his pillow snugly, serenely. Not a thought was in that head that could rob its owner of a moment's rest, though some peculiarity in its construction soon gave loud and convincing proofs that its possessor was alive and well. Bob did not dream—he confessed that he did not know what it was to see people in his sleep—to have glorious or melancholy night-visions. And Bob, lacking experience in dreams, was unconscious of a sleeper's heaven.

CHAPTER XXV.

CANDIDATES FOR MATRIMONIAL HONOURS.

It went to the heart of Mrs. Grumblebum when she heard that she was about to part with her lodger, Mr. Gospitch. He was such a quiet, gentlemanly soul—so unassuming—and of late so regular in his payments. There was some mysterious connection subsisting between the widow's capacious pockets and the widow's heart. Touch the pouches slung at her side and you pulled at her heart—but this refined organization dwells in all human anatomy, so we will not give further prominence to its development in the person of Mrs. Grumblebum.

"Ah! Sarah," said the widow, addressing a lank, smileless, old-womanly girl of fourteen, (who in consideration of *2l.* per annum and her board did the "dirty work" of the establishment,) "Sarah, you 'll miss Mr. Gospitch—that you will. It isn't often that such quiet, untroublesome lodgers comes into a house—that it isn't—mind that. Bless him, he 's a good-hearted gentleman; and pays his way honestly, and never questions one about the sundries in the bills, as some vulgar people would do."

"Oh! yes, mum, he is, mum, a dear gen'lman: there 's hardly a bit of dirt on his boots when he comes back of a night. Some o' the folks like him go ankle-deep 'cos they don't polish their own leather."

"Yes, Sarah, and they wear the hard brush all to nothin' in no time—they do; and (I've often said it) I do believe them gentlemen as dirty their boots so are in the pay of Warren's Blackin' Warehouse."

"Lor, mum! I shouldn't wonder, now you say so, mum! Well, if ever I heard such a thing in the whole course of my born days." And as it is more than probable that Sarah had not heard this suggestion before her born days began, the force and brilliancy of her exclamation will at once be recognised.

" Mr. Gospitch is a treasure, quite a gem of a lodger. Not like folks of his stamp usually are."

" Lor, mum! no. Where I was last you should ha' seen the lodgers. Awful, I was on the stairs half the day. Gen'lmen and ladies is so high and mighty in general, mum."

" Speak more respectfully of your betters, Sarah; at least in the presence of your missus."

" Didn't mean to offend, mum. Everybody calls themselves my betters;" and the miserable slave sobbed and wiped her tears with her bare arms as she slaved on.

She, the humblest, meekest, perhaps the ugliest of her lowly class, saw the cruelty and width of the gap that parted her from the Mammon-favoured classes.

A day was appointed for the nuptials of Henry Gospitch; it wanted but three weeks of the time. He took up his abode for the remaining space of his bachelorhood in Great James Street, Bedford Row. His new apartments were (in spite of the assertions to the contrary of the jealous Grumblebum) a great improvement upon the old. He had now two rooms, and a box behind the bedroom called by courteous visitors his dressing-room. The front room had three windows in it, was on the first floor; he had an arm-chair, a sofa with three castors, and a gaudily painted fire-screen, to say nothing of a wonderfully polished small copper coal-scuttle :—the smallness of the latter article may be accounted for by the fact that the worthy landlady of the establishment charged for coals to her lodgers "sixpence per scuttle;"—and no Irish servant, together with other luxuries. The rent of this superb suite materially exceeded the rent of Mrs. Grumblebum's first floor, but we will not light a fire of contention and rivalry between the two establishments; we will allow each landlady to consider her establishment the very best in the market. Human vanity must have some vent, and these ladies vented theirs in their first floors.

Bob Brasely called his friend's new abode " a jolly crib;" the room was high, and would hold any quantity of smoke, even pipes would not be oppressive. It was a delicate, an embarrassing mission that directed Bob's footsteps to Great James Street on the morrow of his visit to Clapham. A certain nervousness apparent in the young man's manner plainly manifested the existence of some unusual passion or feeling in

his heart. His companions would have said that he was deuced dull, and they would have misinterpreted his appearance: he was certainly the very opposite of dull. He had a pleasing swelling at his heart that gave him thoughtful delight, not thoughtless jollity. Henry was at home and gave audience to his friend.

" I 'm going to surprise you, old fellow—going to make a fool of myself. I know it, but—the deuce take it, I can't help it. It 's all up with me, I 'm gone to the dogs. D—n it, I can't stand it any longer."

" What calamity 's this, Bob?" asked Henry in alarm.

" It 's deuced ridiculous—absurd. I don't know how I shall show my face again anywhere. How the fellows 'll quiz and annoy me!"

" Tell me at once, what has happened? What have you done?"

" Done! It 's all up. It 's too late, old fellow, beyond recall; must go through thick and thin now or fork up damages. I can't tell you—came on purpose but can't do it. Any spirit in the house? Let 's smoke—have you any cigars—pipes—cheroots—anything?"

" This is extraordinary. You 've got into some scrape at one of the cribs, eh?"

" Ecod! no, Harry. Worse than that. Row at a crib! I flatter myself such a trifle wouldn't ruffle Bob Brasely. *You* ought to know that before this time."

" Smashed a boat, then, one of Searle's best, eh?"

" Too knowing a hand for that. What I mean 's too ridiculous to talk about."

" That won't do! Come, come, you 've excited my curiosity; out with it, Bob, I promise no joking."

" Well! you promise. No talk about it to anybody."

" Faithfully—well!"

" I 've done it, sir—nailed myself, Harry. I 've proposed to Miss Dinah Jackson!"

" No!'

" I 've done it, Harry. Now don't let 's have another word upon the subject; I feel deucedly ridiculous, a perfect jackass. I don't know how I did it. But the letter 's gone, sir—penny paid—a sixpenny envelope with gold doves and flowers and a lot of tom-foolery, and birds with their beaks together on the

wafer, a clear eightpen'orth. Havn't I made a jackass of myself, old fellow? But never mind, don't answer me, not another syllable upon the subject."

"Well, Bob, I 'll only say this, she 'll make a very pretty, clever wife."

"Wife! Harry, Harry, you startle one. Fancy a *Mrs.* Robert Brasely! I 'm so frightened at the notion, that upon my word I begin to hope she won't accept me. Let 's hope she won't; I 'm d—d ugly—that 's one thing in my favour; and rather uncultivated in my small talk, that 's another. Come, considering all things, I don't think I 'm presumptuous in believing the girl 'll refuse me."

"Bob, this isn't fair. You 've no right to make sport of the most serious, the most sacred part of a woman's nature."

"You mistake me, Harry; I like the girl. But the idea of being in love—married—and all that sort of thing, *is* spoony. It isn't knowing, you must admit."

Early in the evening the friends adjourned to Bob's lodgings. Bob expected an answer to his letter and was anxious—most anxious. Punctual as clockwork the answer was upon his table, not a moment had been lost. Bob was visibly confused. The note was wonderfully perfumed, and the gilding was profuse. "Forget-me-not" was the seal; this, thought Bob, was ominous. However the young man gathered courage and read the letter. He was the colour of the healthiest peony ere he had finished reading. He handed the scented effusion to Henry: Henry read it seriously, and then looked attentively at Bob. Bob looked grave and nervous: he did not speak.

"I hope, Bob, you have thought this matter over seriously. Your life is at stake. I look upon the priest as the grimmest executioner when he marries mercenary or indifferent people."

"All right. She says she is disposed to regard me with affection, but that the shortness of our acquaintance will not allow her with propriety to give me her assent just now. That means, of course, that in a short time she 'll have no objection, I suppose. Well, it 's considered the thing, isn't it, to call upon the lady at once. I dare say we shall be very comfortable—only keep this quiet, old fellow, for the present. I must get myself up a bit, just dazzle her with the extent of my wardrobe; it 's a pity I can't put on two waistcoats; here 's a couple —last fashion—considered the thing on the Boulevards."

And Mr. Robert Brasely forthwith prepared to visit Miss

Dinah Jackson. The young lady had received Brasely's letter delightedly, it must be owned. Her answer was not so warm as she could have wished: Marian had cautioned her; but Dinah, for her part, though she felt herself in a measure disposed to obey her sister, could not refrain from expressing her belief in love at first sight; and she further declared that, in her opinion, prudent and calculating people were generally the coldest.

Bob was sorely puzzled to discover how he should contrive to face the responsibilities of marriage with his modest income. He did not see how it was to be done at all; his wife would want forty pounds a year pin-money; "and then," soliloquised the trembling bachelor, "diminutive specimens of myself and Mrs. Brasely may bless us; baby-linen, pap, nurses, doctors, drugs; no, no! the thing 's impossible! it can't be done." Bob soon persuaded himself that he would be acting the part of a prudent man in "stretching the courtship to its utmost length;" he would make it cover a year or so—this he resolved to do. In three weeks a man in holy orders would bless and join our hero and Marian, and Dinah was to be her sister's bridesmaid. The bridesmaid would have preferred acting a principal part to that of a supernumerary in the sacred drama; but the usages of society called for patience, and she must wait, how long she knew not.

Dinah had original notions concerning the etiquette of love; she preferred "the wooing that 's not long a doing;" and she regarded with dissent the popular fallacies about studying a husband's character, &c., &c., &c.—nonsense fit for greybeards and foolish women. Her love creed included a thorough belief in an instantaneous passion. Cupid in her eyes was a nimble lamplighter, setting hearts on fire with a celerity outrivalling the travel of electric fluid. Marian had more respect for the opinions of the world than her sister; Marian paused ere she branded a widely-accepted theory with that popular female brand—stuff and nonsense! and the widow's prudence curbed the maiden's enthusiasm. Dinah was blinded by the poetic nature of her lover's letter; Bob had quoted his friend Blandly Reeks to some advantage. The poetry to the maiden's mind was charming, so aptly introduced—so true to nature—so impassioned. The reader shall not be compelled to accept Miss Jackson's opinion as a just one, he shall judge Mr. Reeks for himself.

"Time was when life had little hope,
When all with taint of earth
Was dull'd—nay, almost dead to me;
When subject for my mirth
Was heartless sarcasm—biting jests
Flung at friends—at foes;
And measured by the wound's own depth,
My joy-cup fell or rose.

* * * *

Time was when erst a wandering heart,
Unfettered and unfed,
Lack'd sympathy; and so in gall
Was poisoned—all but dead.
And in this sickliness—this strife—
This war 'twixt night and day,
A soul of kindliness drew near,
And my winter-life was May.

* * * *

The birds whose tunes till then had been
A whistle shrill—a pest—
Sang sweetly as through balmy air
They winged their way to nest.
The world that ever yet had been
To me a soulless clod,
Grew joyous—and I recognised
The handiwork of God.

* * * *

I've never stooped to passion base,
Or owned one act to blush;
A mediocre man—I hold
All sentiment a rush—
A sickly effervescence, then,
The knack of ladies' churls,
A weakly, stupid side-ache, felt
By milk-and-water girls.

* * * *

I hated sentiment—and do—
And now I loathe Bohea,
I've heard so many maidens
Swallow sentiment with tea.
I thought earth lacked an earnestness,
Enthusiastic love;
I sought the lion's majesty,
But found a puling dove.

* * * *

I could not be content with this:
I watched the lion's lair—
I waited long—and found a heart
Magnanimous yet there;

A gentle, loyal, trusting heart,
Most sensitively strung,
Yet yielding not to vanities
By which the weak are wrung."

This lengthy quotation cost Mr. Robert Brasely an entire sheet of "richly-ornamented perfumed paper, two shillings per packet," to say nothing of the time occupied in the execution of sundry flourishes made to separate the verses. Bob's first attempt at love-letter writing shall not be made public: Bob begs that it may be "kept quiet;" he is not proud of his virgin effort; he knows the style is "green," and that "dabsters" would laugh at him. Bachelors in love for the first time will sympathize with Mr. Brasely's bashful and retiring behaviour in this matter.

The meeting between the newly-made lovers was embarrassing to both parties concerned. The gentleman did not know what he ought to do, and so he did nothing; the lady was annoyed at the gentleman's awkwardness—she expected a squeeze of the hand at least. They had soon exhausted every imaginable topic of conversation, and were utterly at a loss how to look or speak. Dinah went to the glass and adjusted her ringlets; Bob, from the opposite side of the room, grinned his admiration of the lady's graceful performances. Now Miss Jackson's nose all but touched the glass, and now she tested the truth of the sentiment concerning the loan with which distance is said to favour the view.

"Ah! Miss Jackson," ventured Bob at length, "looking-glasses are the ruin of ladies."

"Mr. Brasely!" and the wondering female turned sharply round, displaying her figure to the best advantage.

"Women love their glasses, you must own."

"Well, and what if they do? It's an innocent love."

"Oh! certainly. I read a capital story about women and mirrors a day or two back."

"Do tell it me." And Miss Dinah Jackson seated herself near Bob, and looked in his face beseechingly—she did so love a story.

"With pleasure. To the best of my recollection it was this:—

"One of the popes—I don't know which, but it's no matter,

it has nothing to do with the point of the story . it was one of the Innocent gentlemen, I think; however, it was a pope who ordered a priest to insinuate himself like a burglar into all the nunneries about Rome, to persuade the nuns, if he found anything in the shape of luxuries, such as lavender-water, or brown Windsor soap, or Rowland's kalydor, to give them up as little wickednesses in which holy women shouldn't indulge. Well, off the old lynx started, and he peeped into a number of cells, and returned to his master with a complimentary account of the religious women's piety in general.

"'Well,' said the pope to the priest, as they were sitting together over their wine and nuts; 'so you found the nuns abstemious. Glad to hear it: pass me those olives, and the nutcrackers.'

"'Your holiness,' replied the priest, 'I found them generally well conducted, and thoroughly imbued with the sanctity of their mission.'

"'How were the cells furnished?' said the pope. 'I hope they contained no costly material—no luxuries pertaining to the sinful people. This wine is not half cooled.'

"'Here and there, your holiness,' said the priest, 'they had brooches and silks, and in one cell I certainly found a pot of rouge.'

"'Blessed Virgin!' exclaimed the pope; 'how extremely horrible! Pass the rose-water.'

"'I easily persuaded these devout women to abandon their remaining luxuries, and the lady who had the rouge is learning a long penance to atone for her wickedness. I've presumed to tell her that your holiness will let her be booked for Paradise when she has executed the atonement I pointed out to her.'

"'We shall see,' said the pope. 'These nuts are full of maggots—Pugh!' and the holy gentleman disgorged the unsound fruit."

"What an odd man!" interrupted Dinah.

"He was an odd fellow—a very odd fellow. He got through his business at the cathedral in half the time his lazy predecessors took to do it; and he ate as much as all the cardinals put together.

"'Your holiness,' continued the priest solemnly, 'these

godly women parted willingly with all their trinkets, except one.'

"'And what was that? Woman woman!' exclaimed the pope, 'is another name for vanity. Do you think my new robes are effective?'

"'And this no persuasion could force them to abandon: it was their looking-glass.'

"'Is it possible!' said the horrified papal sovereign, and over his wine and dessert he pitied the sensuality of the holy sisters who loved to see a reflection of their pretty, pale faces."

"Well, for my part, I admire the firmness of the nuns; that I do—so there!" said Miss Jackson.

"Yes; but still it's as I say, a proof of women's adoration of themselves," said Bob.

"Sir!" said Dinah, indignantly.

"Present company always excepted."

"That's a commonplace evasion."

"Here's a mess," muttered Bob to himself; "I've gone too far. Hang it—respectable women are so deuced particular." Addressing Dinah, "You forgive me?"

"I don't know whether I ought."

"Yes, you will." Bob here ventured to put his hand within two inches of Miss Jackson's.

"You're so rude!"

"You'll teach me better—polish me."

"Perhaps."

"Yes, you'll varnish my roughness."

"One would think you were a drawing-room table. Var nish your roughness, indeed!"

"You know what I mean, pretty trifler."

"*I*'m no trifler, Mr. Brasely; I can't allow you to call me anything of the sort."

Bob returned home in a disconsolate state of mind, fully persuaded that it was impossible to please a woman. "Tell them plump they're pretty," he soliloquised, "and they're offended at the clumsiness of the compliment; tell them that they've more mental than physical beauty, and they're ready to tear your eyes out; don't pay them any compliments, and they're disgusted with you. After all, men are the fel-

lows—there 's no nonsense about them. They don't care twopence for compliments, and don't mind being told they've a pug nose or a cast in their eye. A pretty donkey I 've made of myself! I can't help liking the girl with all her faults. This love-business is the greenest part of my life." And Mr. Brasely went to sleep, and dreamt of a mysterious affinity between himself and a certain animal more known by its ears than its sagacity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A WEDDING, AND THE SPEECHES IT OCCASIONED.

——— Dress
Shows man more perfect, and fair woman less.

The preparations for Henry Gospitch's wedding were on an extensive scale. All the females in any way connected with Marian Gaps were determined to make the best of such an opportunity for display. Cousins and aunts met to discuss their theories of colour, and to differ with each other in all things. Dinah's aunt said that her niece looked best in blue, and Dinah's cousin said that nothing suited Dinah so well as pink or purple—and the matter was discussed as gravely and warmly as though the fate of the nation were at stake. Each female member of the family had her own original version of the etiquette of marriage, any departure from which would plunge the whole affair into the utmost depths of vulgarity. The minutest details connected with the marriage were weighed and put to the vote with all the gravity of a national senate; and the final arrangements did not please the majority, inasmuch as the power of the family assembly was in a great measure restricted by Mrs. Jackson, who very properly conceived that she had more to do with the arrangement of her daughter's wedding than the bride's cousins and aunts, whatever the said aunts and cousins might think to the contrary. The mother had her full share of that property so peculiarly the possession of the softer sex—self-will: she was not a person to be set down by anybody, if she knew it—not she.

Mr. Jackson's philosophical dignity would not allow him to take part in these interesting discussions; he merely thought (and rightly) that there was a prodigious fuss all about tacking a couple of people together. He would let them fight it out; he knew married women took a savage delight in seeing the matrimonial execution of their maiden friends. "Women sing wondrously loud at a wedding, but exceedingly small when the honeymoon is past," said Mr. Jackson, sardonically.

Your philosophy was sour, Mr. Jackson. You surely would not have women careless in the matter of dress—you would not have them appear at a wedding in gingham. Let them find delight in the embellishment of their gracefully moulded persons—recollect that their love of dress is in some degree a compliment to men. It is a universally credited truth, that women do not cultivate their dress to please each other; it is notorious that they court the approbation and admiration of men. You say this is all very well for young maiden ladies. Who can deny that married women do wrong when they court the attention of any man except their husband; but do you not judge them uncharitably, nay, unjustly, when you affirm that wives hope to fascinate the gentlemen they may meet, when they bedeck themselves for a party? Is not this a harsh view of human nature? Would you not rather believe that they are more delighted with one compliment from their husband than with fifty from any other gentleman, be he grandee or emperor? This belief may not be deserved by all women, but why class the majority with the minority? Look, then, kindly upon the fuss and flurry of your expectant household—the excitement is innocent if not amiable. Let Mrs. Jackson wear a sky-blue silk; even bend so far as to compliment her upon the agreeableness of her appearance in the dress, and you will give her joy: if she has pleased you, she will remember her daughter's nuptials with a delight increased tenfold.

Mrs. Jackson, in the firmness of her determination not to be the slave of her husband, (a determination perhaps laudable in a woman who has married a tyrant,) forgot that freedom and rebellion are two different states. She asserted her independence some fifty times per diem. If poor Jackson asked her to pass him a dish at table, she would let him know that she was not going to be his servant; if he asked

for a taper to seal his letter, she was not a footboy. She soon grew tired of wrangling, and Jackson was like the generality of his sex. At first he suffered these rebukes and answered not; but he was a mortal, and gradually the natural quiescence of his temper was ruffled: the freezing nature of his wife's temper soon caused his to be rough-shod. His smooth disposition lost ground in contact with the icy slipperiness of his wife's. A woman who is a fault-finder posts a hedgehog at her street-door, nor guest nor husband passes the threshold scatheless; and soon the husband and the guest seek peace elsewhere.

Marian saw her mother's mistake, and resolved to avoid a similar error. Henry Gospitch had an excitable disposition —he was soon "up," but he was easily conciliated; and Marian's adherence to her resolve would make her happy with her husband: each would sway the other, and they would know undisturbed peace.

On the morning of the marriage the sun rose into a cloudless sky, and if there was truth in the old household proverb, the bride would that day be blessed for life. The simple and solemn service of the Established Church had made Marian Gaps Mrs. Henry Gospitch; the bride had received the salutations and congratulations of her friends, and the wedding party, which included Robert Brasely, were discussing the dainties of a well loaded table. There was a wonderful assortment of the human family at the *dejooner alla fourchette,* as Mrs. Jackson persisted in calling the jellies, custards, fowls, tongues, and round of beef, which she had helped to prepare for her relations. Cousins, who never met except at family marriages and family funerals, were on this occasion wonderfully cordial, and wondered that they did not meet oftener—a wonder they had experienced upon five or six similar occasions, and which they had not taken the trouble to do away with. However, the most interesting part of the after-ceremony was undoubtedly the speeches. Mr. Brompton (who had nursed the bride) opened the proceedings with the following neat specimen of eloquence, emphasizing certain syllables with a fork:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Little did I expect—I say little did I expect that—I—an humble individual—yes, a very humble individual, though an old friend—(hear, hear, from the host)—yes—that I, an

humble individual, would be selected from such a brilliant assembly to do—uh, uh—honour—uh, uh—to the couple—uh—I may say the newly-married couple before me. I have known Mrs. Gaps—uh—I mean Mrs. Henry Gospitch, from her cradle. (Sensation.) I have watched her almost daily—(breathless silence)—I have—I may say—so strong—uh—has—uh—been my regard for her—that—uh—I think I may venture—uh—to say that I look upon her almost as a daughter." (Here Mrs. Jackson stared at her husband—frowned—and stared again: the general company tittered.) "All I can say is—uh—I am sure—that—uh—if the bride make no better wife; no, no, I mean the husband; no—no—it can't be that: I say that if the bride make as good a wife as she has been a daughter, why Mr. Gospitch is a lucky fellow. I 've nothing more to say, except that—uh—gentlemen and—I mean ladies and gentlemen—you will drink long life and happiness to the bride and bridegroom." (Loud applause.)

Mr. Brompton had scarcely uttered the last word of his speech ere Mr. Glutting—though in opposition to the wish of his wife, who in imploring accents begged of the host to persuade Glutting not to commit himself—stood upon two pedestals remarkably like in shape to two curled cucumbers, and which he dignified with the appellation of legs, and begged to add a word to the eloquence of his friend Brompton.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Glutting, "there is a day in our lives unlike all other days—I mean our marriage day——"

"Nonsense, Glutting," said Mrs. G. "Do, somebody, stop him—he knows nothing of speeches."

"Mrs. Glutting!" said Mr. Glutting, "you forget yourself, my dear. Well—ladies and gentlemen, I would impress upon the new couple that the tie of marriage is a solemn one——"

"We all know that," said Mrs. Glutting.

"And one that should not be lightly entered upon. I trust—indeed I am certain—that the many virtues of the new couple before me will ensure them happiness till they shuffle off the mortal coil."

"Now he 's talking of shuffling—do, somebody, beg of him to sit down," said Mrs. Glutting. Glutting frowned awfully, but kept his legs with firmness—a feat which, considering the

peculiar shape of the said legs, we must regard as noble in the extreme.

"I have little more to add——"

"Thank goodness!" said Mrs. Glutting.

"But I will say——"

"I was afraid he would," muttered the wife.

"That two such enlightened and virtuous persons as Mr. and Mrs. Gospitch it is difficult to meet with. I was not prepared to speak——"

"Oh! oh!" interposed Mrs. Glutting.

"When I came; and so you will pardon the bluntness and ruggedness of my speech. That 's all I have to say."

"That 's a good man—*do* sit down," said Mr. Glutting's wife as this gentleman resumed his seat.

Henry Gospitch, in a few words, thanked his friends for their expressions of goodwill.

Mr. Jackson rose to give "the bridesmaids." He said:—

"We have met here to celebrate the nuptials of my dear daughter Marian with Mr. Henry Gospitch—a gentleman, in my opinion, possessed in no ordinary degree of those virtues and talents which may adorn and hallow any station in life, from the highest to the lowest. What can I say of my darling child? (Vehement application of handkerchiefs to the eyes of ladies.) May she be as happy as she deserves to be. I have to thank the bridesmaids—who, I dare say, hope some day to require of others the services they have performed so gracefully to-day for my daughter—for their kind attention to Marian. I believe that we have reason to anticipate another wedding in the family—before long. (Here all eyes were bent upon Dinah, who looked considerably confused. Bob trembled.) Parting with his children is a sad business for an old father. As age gains upon us we insensibly cling more closely to those we love. Children should be their grey father's prop—his guardian angels; they should attend him to the churchyard. Girls are daughters until they fall in love—and then—it must be said, though *I* have had no fault to find—the father is forgotten for the husband. It ever was, and ever must be so. The father is a small person beside the husband. I will not, however, cast a gloom over the present festivity. Forgive the troubled prattling of a man who is now parting with one child—and may soon lose another. I should pay an ill compliment to Henry Gospitch

were I to sit down without previously deposing before my friends that I do not tremble—feel no hesitation—no anxiety in confiding to him the happiness of my first-born, my own good Marian."

Here the tears fell adown the old man's cheeks, and his astonished auditory wept and wondered.

"I'm a foolish old man, and can't help prattling—ay, and crying. Forgive me, my friends—forgive me. I propose the bridesmaids."

The veteran's unexpected pathos overwhelmed his wife and daughters particularly: they were, unhappily, little accustomed to such kind mention on his part: he was generally isolated from his children and at war with his wife. It has been said that people grow wondrously affectionate at parting. Uncharitable thinkers probably looked upon the old man's tears as part and parcel of a "well got-up" scene—premeditated and rehearsed: kindly souls said that the old man's tears streamed from the thawing of an ice-bound heart. Mrs. Jackson was rejoiced to see her husband again so warm; Marian and Dinah were bewildered. When children stare at kindness their home is assuredly unhappy.

The task of returning thanks for the bridesmaids was confided to Mr. Robert Brasely, he standing in an interesting position with regard to one of the said maids. Mr. Brasely rose nervously, and said:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Upon my word I don't know how to do justice to the response confided to me by the ladies who have, on this auspicious occasion, acted as bridesmaids. When I say that they deeply feel your courtesy, I am sure I echo the sentiments of their hearts. (Applause.) And as for Mr. Henry Gospitch, why, having known him for some time past as a companion—a jolly bachelor—I can only say that if he makes as good a husband as he has—a chum—why his wife—be she angel—is a deuced lucky woman."

Mr. Brasely's speech was the last elocutionary effort of the company.

At three o'clock the individuals popularly called "the happy pair" left Clapham for Tunbridge Wells, there (as the "Morning Post" has it) to pass the honeymoon.

The after part of a wedding day, when lingering guests strive their utmost to prolong the excitement of the morning,

The End of Pride.

is generally a tedious failure. When the happy two have departed in search of honeymoon bliss, the company lose spirit directly. The ladies have lost the interesting butterfly, and there is nothing left for them to pet and kiss—save their husbands: husbands may be kissed at any time—they can kiss them when they get home. The gentlemen of the party generally find consolation in cigars, and bowls or bagatelle; and drearily the women examine the presents the bride may have received.

Dun evening darkens the earth, and the guests forget the departed couple in the excitement of Sir Roger de Coverleys, &c., &c.

The party at Jackson's whiled away the remainder of the day, and were thankful when it was dark enough to have lights. The elder gentlemen had got a little—just a little winy, but not sufficiently so to attract the attention of the ladies—though the wives of the gentlemen in question saw "the disgusting state" their lords were in at a glance. Angry glances were fired across the drawing-room when the gentlemen entered it, by their several wives; and the married malefactors returned smiles in answer to the fire of their frowning "good ladies." Mr. Glutting was particularly "touched:" in truth his lady vehemently affirmed that "the disgusting person couldn't walk straight, if you 'd pay him to do it." A profound silence marked the entry of the gentlemen. The ladies had previously agreed that their several husbands were making pigs of themselves; and, they were sure, were not in a state to put foot in a drawing-room. Mr. Glutting unfortunately stumbled against a chair as he made his entry, an accident which fully satisfied the ladies that they were perfectly correct in their anticipations. The gentlemen seated themselves, and endeavoured at various intervals to engage in conversation with the females of the party, but without success.

A dead silence reigned in the room, and Mrs. Glutting having cunningly insinuated herself close beside her husband, gave him what she considered a gentle push between his fourth and fifth rib. Mr. Glutting turned sharply round and looked daggers at his spouse.

"Pah!" said Mrs. Glutting in an under tone, and raising her handkerchief to her nose; "there 's no coming near you for the filthy spirits you 've been drinking. One 'd think,

to smell you, that you 'd been born and bred in the bar of a low tavern."

Miss Dinah Jackson entered the drawing-room in a high state of glee: she had made a discovery, which she held in her hand.

"We have missed a speech—such a good one too!" said Miss Jackson; and turning towards Mr. Brasely, "Will you read it to the company?"

"Not the least objection."

Mrs. Glutting whispered to her lord with considerable vivacity; whereupon Glutting stared, and said, "Where? Who?" And then Mrs. Glutting whispered again, to the evident confusion of her listener.

"Well," said Brasely, "if the company is *quite* agreeable, I will do myself the pleasure of reading this effusion." The company ceased talking. The following were the contents of the paper:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"There is a day in our lives unlike all other days—I mean our marriage day."

The whispering between the Gluttings here became more violent.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, I would impress upon the new couple that the tie of marriage is a solemn one—"

The Gluttings were visibly confused.

"And one that should not be lightly entered upon. I trust—indeed I am certain—that the many virtues of the married couple before me will ensure them happiness till they shuffle off the mortal coil. I have little more to add; but I *will* say that two such enlightened and virtuous persons as Mr. and Mrs. Gospitch it is difficult to meet with. I was not prepared to speak—"

Here the company laughed heartily—laughed till laughter became pain. It was a general laugh—a hearty, simultaneous, and universal burst of merriment. Was Glutting ill, that he did not join in the fun? Wherefore such confusion, Mrs. Glutting? Brasely continued to read:—

"I was not prepared to—(another general burst of laughter)—speak when I came; and so you will pardon the bluntness and ruggedness of my speech. That 's all I have to say."

Brasely recollected well that he held the copy of the speech with which Mr. Glutting had favoured the company in

the morning; but he had too strong a sense of the ridiculous, and too rich an appreciation of it, to take pity upon the writer and speaker.

Bob glanced towards Glutting; and being, as he affirmed, a foe to humbug in any shape, he turned to the disconcerted gentleman, and lamented the similarity between his speech and that he had just now read.

"It can't be yours, Mr. Glutting," said Bob. "You see the gentleman says he didn't expect to speak."

"Yes, he does," answered Glutting, colouring considerably.

"What if he does, sir? It's a white fib," said Mrs. Glutting.

"A what, Mrs. Glutting?"

"A white fib."

"Oh! if a lady excuses the gentleman, of course nothing more must be said upon the subject." And Bob folded the paper, and placed it upon the mantel-piece. The company now began to dance; and Mrs. Glutting, taking advantage of the guests' activity, was presently observed by the vigilant eye of Brasely to snatch the written speech from the mantel-piece, and plunge it down her bosom with an agility which she, in her innocence, believed was calculated to ensure perfect secresy. The Gluttings did not stay late at the Jackson's that evening.

* * * *

Marian and Henry, at Tunbridge Wells, passed their time most happily. If the honeymoon fails to bring happiness, what time in life—what happy circumstance—can wring a man's soul from thoughts of barter and bless him with unqualified delight. Marian often thought of her first honeymoon—with streaming tears she thought of it; and when she remembered the bad acts of her late husband's life, she was doubly miserable: she could forgive his treatment of herself, but it was a difficult task to her when she strove to excuse his conduct towards her dead sister. A woman seldom forgives an insult offered to one whom she loves.

Sunny spring weather gladdened the honeymoon of the lovers; they were the world to each other—engrossed in each other—almost unconscious of the existence of other fellow-beings. Eyes reflecting a mutual love—palms pressed together—their days were one long rapture—unwearying and ever intense. With an affection strengthened by a more intimate knowledge of each other, they returned to Carnation Cottage,

to take their share in the common business of the world—to mingle with their fellows, but to be as closely bound together nevertheless.

The family outcast was about to assert his position among his fellow men—to win, if not wealth, at least a decent competence. His wife had a property of the annual value of £300; this property was settled upon her for life, and was to descend to her children, should she have any. He was well placed in the firm of Short and Co.; and was likely, if he continued to manifest the diligence he had hitherto shown, to rise to the dignities and emoluments of a partner. He would most probably never be a drone in the hive of partners; but he would most likely be a working bee, with his full share of the honey. He had fought his way, and was proud of his victory.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FASHIONABLE DOMESTICITY OF WOULD-BE FASHIONABLES.

The Grasys spent a whole year on the continent. Grasy found it more convenient to do so, for reasons with which he did not think fit to trouble his wife. Mary returned to England a mother, without a mother's hopes and delights. The birth of the child, instead of drawing the parents together, had estranged them: Grasy loved not the babe, for he had not loved its mother. He had not anticipated its coming with the delight that could encourage his wife to bear a mother's anguish with cheerfulness: she presented him with a babe, and he felt no gratitude. And was this the ardent, the enthusiastic Captain Grasy, who had boasted the possession of a heart that could enfold the universe? Even so. This indifference augured bitterly for the child. It lay in the maternal lap, unlooked upon by its father, wept over by its mother.

The Grasys took very fashionable apartments in town:

Grasy felt that he must make an appearance. Mary was ensconced in a house that would have been fit lodging for a princess. She had men-servants and maid-servants. She did not nurse her child—she could not. Was she not strong? Yes.

The husband is identified with the child; and so a bad father often makes a bad mother. An absent husband, tired of home, and fond of pleasures foreign to his hearth, may estrange his wife from her children. She will not always watch with tenderness the flesh of a truant, alienated man.

And now, Mary, is your pride satisfied? Have you drained the bitter cup of revenge? Have you withered the heart of the man who spurned you in his poverty? Has your proud heart been equal to the conquest? Have you shrunk from the full completion of your heroic plan? Are you revenged—fully, sweetly revenged?

Humbled beauty! no. You undertook to play a part without the necessary power—without the strong, heroic soul the sacrifice demanded. Your weak and sickly spirit could not look the horror full in the face. You! live with a man you loved not, with a smile ever upon your lips—you! play the daily hypocrite—you! hold a Momus-mask to the world, with a bleeding heart behind it. No! such grand deceit demands a noble soul—firm in its resolves—steadfast and implacable in its hatreds. You have not such a soul.

The first twelve months of your married life remain for ever shrouded in the most profound mystery. How and where you lived "on the continent" is known only to yourself and husband: he has commanded your silence upon the subject, and you will obey him. It is a miserable sight to behold the estrangement of hearts young as yours and your husband's; but this estrangement excites no wonder. You inspired Grasy with a sentiment—you made use of your conquest—entangled him in a web of fascination (a web, in truth, as frail as a spider's)—and you were married. He was rash, and you were hypocritical. You each have your merited reward. Murmur not; you have yourselves fabricated your fate—you have been your own enemy. You have been the object of Grasy's passing passion, and he has been the instrument of your revenge. Alike false to each other, you must bear the bitterness of mutual hypocrisy.

You have even failed—utterly failed—in your purposed

revenge. True you live in splendour, and your old lover has a plainly furnished abode; and in your little mind this difference *is* revenge; but love nestles about his stuccoed hearth, while indifference mopes upon your white marble. Now, who has the victory? Enjoy to the utmost, if you can, the gold and glitter with which you are surrounded; love it—revel in it—bless it—it is all that remains to you—make the most of it; but remember—you have failed in your revenge: Henry Gospitch, in spite of your aristocratic alliance, is happy and well!

A heart ill at ease is the undertaker's best friend; it prepares many customers for him. Mrs. Grasy's unhappiness preyed upon her health, slowly it is true, but surely. The lily was imperceptibly supplanting the rose upon her cheek—and the lily's growth marked her progress to the churchyard.

"What sweet rooms!" said Mrs. De Gospitch one morning, during one of the matutinal visits with which she favoured her sister at intervals.

"How bitter the price at which I have bought them!" Mary might have made answer.

"I declare they 're fit for an emperor; what exquisite taste the Captain has—he is quite an *homme du gout!*"

"They 're pretty."

"My dear Mary—pretty! they 're exquisitely charming. What a fortunate girl you are to be the husband of such a connoisseur!"

Mary smiled faintly, and bowed her acknowledgments.

"Those stuffed birds are in delicious taste; they 're even more brilliant than those you painted on velvet for me."

"Do you think so?"

"Oh! yes, my dear; they 're absolutely bewitching. How delighted Mr. Shakspeare Jackson would be with them. He 's a beautiful naturalist—knows all sorts of wonderful things about birds and beasts."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, it 's delightful to hear him, I assure you, dear. He talks about the tribes and genuses in the most wonderful way—it 's quite miraculous."

"Indeed!"

"Is the Captain out?"

"Yes."

"Long?"

"Since yesterday."

"Since yesterday, my dear—impossible! Well, I never heard of such a thing!"

"It isn't the first time."

"Oh! my dear Mary, how shocking! What *would* people say if they heard of it?"

"I can't tell."

"How bad it would look! What can the Captain be thinking about?"

Not of his home, Mrs. De Gospitch—not of your sister. The Captain's conduct of late had been the subject of mysterious conversations in many quarters. His establishment was kept in a first-rate style—the most punctilious aristocrat could not quarrel with his domestic arrangements; but many people—vulgar-minded, matter-of-fact people—marvelled at the extent of the Captain's expenditure, and began to whisper unpleasant suspicions abroad. These suspicions did not come to Grasy's ears. He met his friends—his old friends—daily, and was one of them again; his marriage had not weaned him from bachelor delights. With Bob Brasely he was on the most intimate terms.

"Hooked at last, sir!" said Bŏb one night, to the Captain, in a moment of close confidence. "Yes, sir, I 'm a doomed man."

"Take my advice, then, Bob, and don't be executed," said the Captain.

"Damages, Captain. Awful!" said Bob, with a long face. "She has me, safe enough, upon paper."

"Risk the damages. Any amount of money is better than the damage done to one's comfort. But, if you 're a clever fellow, you can escape without damages of any sort, trust me."

This news seemed to gladden Brasely's heart; and he eagerly asked by what means he might shield himself to wound a woman.

"Draw out the courtship," said the Captain. "Say you can't afford to marry on your present income."

"But if she agrees to wait?"

"Let her, Bob, let her; she 'll soon be tired of waiting. Do any thing you please, Bob; but listen to experience, and don't marry."

Brasely was fairly frightened. He had ever looked upon what prosy people called "married bliss" with incredulity. It was, he thought, a bit of Utopian humbug, foisted upon

greenhorns to entrap them. Where were the examples? He had seen plenty of married people in his time, and he could safely say that he had noticed no wonderful happiness belonging peculiarly to them: they were very much the same, in point of happiness, as other people. Married men were slow—talked about wives sitting up for them, &c., &c., &c., when a set of fellows were just beginning their evening.

This might be very proper, and all that sort of thing; but it was not lively, to say the least of it. And he was about to join the dull crew; this was not a pleasant look-out. Grasy seemed to have found the sort of thing a failure; but he must confess he liked Dinah—he could not persuade himself to the contrary. She was just the girl for him—no nonsense about her—you might say any thing to her, and she would not be offended. He was afraid he would not be able to part with her; and yet it was slow—it was green and inexperienced to get spliced—no knowing fellows did it.

Bob told Grasy of Henry Gospitch's marriage: Grasy returned home, and in the course of a conversation with his wife gave her the news.

"A friend of Mr. Brasely's—his name's Gospitch—some distant relation to your sister's family, has just married a buxom widow at Clapham," said the Captain to his lady.

"What! Henry! married!" gasped Mary.

"Well, madam, what has Mr. Gospitch's marriage to do with you, that it should trouble you so? Oh! oh! do I see the smouldering embers of an old flame?"

"I will not be questioned upon the subject."

"I'faith, madam, I am your husband: you will recollect I have a right to know."

"True, sir—I had forgotten my slavery—I was asserting a free woman's right: command me." The proud, weak girl was bowed to the earth.

"Madam, I must repeat my question: Is Mr. Henry Gospitch an old lover of yours?"

"He is, Captain Grasy."

"How was the match broken off?"

"You must not ask me this—it wounds my pride." Mary's pale head was now erect.

"I'faith, madam, then I must gather the truth of the matter from other sources."

"No, Captain Grasy—you shall not—I relent. You shall

have the history, though my heart break as I tell it. Myself and my sister Susanna lived with our parents quietly; Mr. Henry Gospitch, then the son of a wealthy man, who supported him like a gentleman, made the acquaintance of my father: he visited our house often, and won my heart: he offered me marriage, and I accepted his offer. He introduced his elder brother to our family circle, and my sister ere long became Mrs. De Gospitch. The parent Gospitch died, and his eldest son inherited the family estates, leaving Mr. Henry penniless. Mr. Henry embarked in petty trade—my sister persuaded me that I was too good to be a retail tradesman's wife. I listened to her for a time, and did not receive my lover. One day, hearing of his extreme distress, I relented and went to see him. I saw him, and he spurned me from his garret door—my pride was wounded—nor was it healed until I had married you, Captain Grasy."

"Coolly told, upon my credit," said the Captain. "Then I am to understand, madam, that I have married the cast-off mistress of Henry Gospitch—a retail tradesman. Zounds, how deucedly have I been duped!"

The Captain left Mary to nurse her unhappiness alone.

Mary sat alone all day and all night—the Captain remained out. Sad was the long, long night to her—welcome the first faint glimmer of day. She had not been to bed—she had not been to sleep. Her husband's last words had been ringing in her ears all night—*the cast-off mistress of a grocer!* When morning came, and the household were astir—when the pomp and vanity with which she was surrounded were again fully before her—her broken spirit nearly sank with the weight of its humiliation. *The cast-off mistress of a grocer!* The liveried attendants who awaited her call seemed sent to mock her — their attention was satire — their stateliness, impudence. She felt that she was a beggar upon velvet — a lowly thing, raised by artifice to an unmerited station. She did not wonder at the Captain's wrath; she knew that she would have been as wrathful had she been so deceived. She had got her present station under false pretences: she was, in fact, an impostor whose imposition was, in the eye of the law, guiltless. And petted by pomp—a piece of human hypocrisy in hypocrisy's worst form—the neglected wife sat in her misery and pride, grim spectacle of woman's worst

weakness. She had purchased the glitter about her with her heart; her pride had urged her to close the bargain; and now she saw in all its hideousness the meanness and lowliness of her position. She had sold her affection at a Jew's valuation —she had disposed of it fairly—it had fetched what it was worth—nothing.

Her soul was indeed apathetic, nay almost dead. Women craving for bread at strangers' gates, and women nursed on thrones, forget their misery and majesty in their offspring. Mary cared little for her babe: she hated its father, and it was the incorporation of his blood with hers. This knowledge, which should awaken intensest rapture in the bosom of a wife created disgust in the heart of Mary Grasy. Her blood incorporated with that of a man she hated! The thought was horrible—maddening. Alas! what was the luxury about her —what the parade of wealth to one so empty at heart—so blighted and so lonely? Her beauty was fading daily—hourly. A few years more, and she would be wrinkled as an old, old apple—and as yellow.

"A gentleman wishes to speak to you, madam," said a footman, humbly.

"Did he give his card?"

"No, madam. He says he bears a message from Captain Grasy."

"Show him up."

While the servant was gone to tell his mistress that a gentleman wished to speak with her, the person to whom the footman alluded as "a gentleman" was engaged in the hall, arranging the huge folds of a wonderfully tinted cravat before the glass. The "gentleman" evidently regarded the reflection of his person with a sufficient degree of satisfaction. He smoothed his black and well-macassared locks very scrupulously, and brought two huge patches of hair down either side of his face; he adjusted two enormous breast-pins, and made many endeavours to display every inch of the gold chain attached to his watch; he pulled down his wristbands, evidently determined to impart to the company above the pleasing intelligence of his having that morning indulged in the luxury of a clean shirt. They would perhaps think him extravagant, but he could bear such an accusation for the sake of an unusual effect.

"Mrs. Grasy is visible, sir," said the footman to the dandy.

"Ah!" said the dandy. "Very well, John—show me up. I 'm afraid she won't be so very glad to see me."

"Any thing happened to master, sir?"

"Does he owe you any thing?" asked the gentleman, sarcastically. There was a swagger about the stranger that awed John.

"A quarter's wages."

"Poor devil! won't get a sixpence. Is this the room?" And the mysterious dandy forthwith introduced himself to Mrs. Captain Grasy. The lady made a cold obeisance.

"Well," said the stranger, "things will fall out unlucky now and then. There 's no help for it, I s'pose."

"Sir! your business."

"My business! Why, madam, mine 's an unpleasant errand—a very unpleasant errand."

"Pleasant or unpleasant, sir, I should thank you to be brief. I am unwell, and cannot give you a long audience."

"That 's a pity," said the stranger, deliberately seating himself upon the sofa.

"If you wish to see the captain, sir, he is not within; and, as you appear to have no message to deliver to me, I will ring for my servant to see you to the door."

"I don't care about the captain much, now I 've got hold of his goods and chattels," simpered the stranger.

"Who are you, sir?" asked Mrs. Grasy, angrily.

"An officer of the Sheriff of Middlesex, at your service." And the man bowed low.

"Where is my husband?"

"Safe enough, madam—safe enough."

"Where is he, sir?"

"Somewhere not far from Chancery Lane; and in quarters not quite so splashy as these."

"Have you any message from him?"

"Not any. Madam, I must leave a man in possession, if you please. Here, Blowman," shouted the officer from the landing-place—"all 's right." And, putting his head in the drawing-room, "Good day, Mrs. Grasy. Any message for the captain?"

"None."

In the afternoon of the day in question, persons passing by

the mansion wherein the Grasys had lodging might have seen that the knocker was carefully and effectually muffled, and that the blinds of the second-floor front windows were pulled down. Late in the afternoon a handsome equipage stopped before the door, and a middle-aged lady, who alighted from the vehicle, was admitted to the house. A maid met this lady at the bottom of the stairs, and whispered to her, "She 's a little better." The lady and maid then went up stairs together. The room which they entered was magnificently furnished—the bed, a bed of state. The lady drew the curtains aside, and saw her sick sister.

"My dear Mary, how flushed you are!"

"Flushed! I 've a raging fever. Feel my hand."

Mrs. De Gospitch touched the proffered fingers, and withdrew her hand as though she had come in contact with a red-hot cinder.

"My dear girl—you 're very ill!"

Mary smiled faintly. She knew well enough the danger of her illness. Danger! Where was the danger to one so miserable—so forlorn?

"Have you had advice?"

"Yes, they 've done all they can for me." And again a smile was upon the sufferer's face, as though she were rejoiced to believe that no human skill could snatch her from unearthly happiness.

"Who 's the dirty man below?" asked Mrs. De Gospitch.

This question brought all the horrible reality of her situation again before the sick woman. Heaven-soaring thoughts had for a time blotted the grim circumstance from her mind. She started with the re-awakening consciousness of her forlorn position, and gazed wildly and madly at her sister. Mrs. De Gospitch trembled.

Tremble, proud woman! for you see the victim of your schemes. This emaciated semblance of beauty came to you a weak, but guileless piece of innocence; you have turned the purity of a soul to mud, stayed the noblest pulsations of a woman's heart, and poured into its empty crevices the bitterness of unchecked pride. Tremble! for you have blighted a sister's peace—you have taught her error. You shudder as those glazed eyeballs stare at you fully and wildly. Go—go to your little ones—teach them anew. Teach them to have

larger hearts; check their inordinate pride; instil into their pliant natures glad principles of harmony and perfect concord. Then pray for the repose of Mary Grasy.

Mrs. de Gospitch left her sister in a state of delirium.

Joshua Blowman, the man in possession, threw his soul into his business; he was a person who prided himself upon his experience in all things. He had seen the world "in all its ups and downs—its ins and outs;" and so he was persuaded that his opinion was valuable on most points. Yes, Blowman, weighed by his own standard, was an authority to be consulted with the utmost respect; his decisions ought always to be final.

> "O! wad the world the giftie gie us,
> To see ourselves as others see us!"

Blowman was a type of a large class. Blowman always "put down" his juniors by flinging his experience in their teeth. If he could not refute an argument, he would declare emphatically, and with a judicious sprinkling of oaths, that a person of his experience knew better, and that, when Mr. Somebody was his age, and had seen as much of the world as he had, Mr. Somebody would not talk so. Whereupon Mr. Somebody would sit corrected. It was a pity that Joshua Blowman's profound mundane knowledge did not include just a vague notion of some of the simplest grammatical rules. But we are severe—Blowman shall be spared: yes, we will show mercy to one of the law's ugliest limbs, and then who will question our natural forbearance? Blowman was a character—a character it was our delight to study: he had a heart in spite of his calling; and we feel, Joshua, that with all thy faults we love thee still.

Mr. Blowman had a hearty hatred of the "great folks"—the "airistocracy;" and it was a delightful time to him when he was left in possession of a lordling's "traps." It made "these proud 'uns sing small," they were at his mercy. He had been too long in business not to know that it was to the interest of a man in possession to propitiate himself with the domestics; his love of a good dinner had taught him this. The law compelled the debtor to give the legal underling the commonest food only, whereas the debtor's servants were willing to pay in kind for the enjoyment of Mr. Blowman's society. Blowman never threw his conversation and wit away;

his pleasantry was measured by the goodness of the entertainment. If the cook was a stingy, ill-humoured person, and only gave him bread and cheese for supper, Blowman was taciturn and sulky; but if a good-humoured and well-disposed culinary professor set a cold fowl before him, then would his wit enliven the inhabitants of the kitchen and set the housemaids giggling.

The Grasy establishment included two maids and a footman. The primary and profound object of this select trio was —to do as little work as possible, and to entertain as many followers as they could conveniently secrete in the back kitchen. And this enlightened and vigorous purpose was effectually and satisfactorily carried out with the entire concurrence of two young men and one young woman; the young men "keeping company" with the females, and the young woman with the footman's calves. We say with the footman's calves advisedly; for the young woman had been heard to declare that the superb pedestals of the young man had walked into her affections, his calves had won her heart. "Well, well, young woman, calves do win women's hearts more often than is dreamt of in thy philosophy."

Mr. Blowman's appearance in the kitchen was certainly not hailed with enthusiasm, his person did not prepossess the cook or the housemaid. His creed was manifest in his nose, and his errand had been declared by the footman. The cook and housemaid had agreed that he would be a bore of an evening when their young men came; and Nathaniel, the footman, was afraid the fellow's glib tongue might wean his young woman's heart from him. So, when Mr. Blowman entered the kitchen, the females frowned, and Nathaniel whistled scornfully.

"Well, ladies!" said Blowman, putting on one of his blandest smiles, "I hope we shall soon be fast friends."

The housemaid looked volumes of indignation, and the cook looked whole libraries of abuse. Blowman, nothing daunted, continued:—

"You mus'n't confound me with the misfortun'! I 've nuffin to do with; it I 've been a long time in the world, and haven't had experience throw'd away upon me; and as a man o' the world I would advise you to look at matters with Christian resignation—I always do."

"*Christian* resignation!" muttered the indignant cook.

"The *jewce* you do!" said Nathaniel; and his calves shook with the violence of his laughter. The housemaid presently caught a glimpse of the bad joke, and giggled gleefully.

Meanwhile Blowman was left standing in the centre of the kitchen.

"You 'll find a chair—'dare say—if you choose to look about you; if you don't, stand, that 's all!" said Nathaniel, utterly disregarding the majesty of a legal functionary.

"Sir!" said Blowman slowly, and dwelling for half a minute on the final r.

"Well, old fellow!" answered the unabashed Nathaniel, to the evident satisfaction of the cook and housemaid. "Doin' the dignity business, eh? better squat down, and put your tongue in your pocket."

"Sir!" shouted Blowman with greater vehemence.

"If you make that row, I 'll turn you out of the room, you presuming wagabond, you ugly apology for a decent individual," said Nathaniel.

The legal underling had a large stock of assurance and a very small ditto of personal courage. No threat save that of violence made him tremble. Threaten him with law and he would smile; clench your fist menacingly, and the quaking of his remarkably formed knees would sufficiently manifest his fear. And this contemptible character was Blowman. The threat of the well-fed footman had the desired effect, and the man in possession dropped upon a chair in a distant corner of the room. Nathaniel saw the fellow's timidity, and resolved to take advantage of it.

"Well!" said the footman. "So you call yourself in possession here, do you?"

"I do," said Blowman, meekly.

"Congratulate you," said the footman, with a chuckle of deep meaning.

"Do you expect the captain home soon?" asked Blowman.

"No sauce," answered the captain's footman. "*You* won't set eyes on him if he does; that 's enough for you, you dilapidated Lord Chancellor."

"I only asked the question in my private capacity, and not as a legal practitioner."

"You a legal practitioner! Stuff, old fellow,—'might as well call the housemaid's duster the housemaid."

"You 're too extra severe with the gentleman," interposed the cook.

"That 's right, cook," said Blowman, advancing towards her.

"Now then, master, keep where you are—no comin' anear me. There 's the wooden-bottomed chair nigh the dresser, and you 'll please to plump yourself there, and not bother a lady in the exicution of her dooty."

"Give it him, cook," said Nathaniel.

"Exicution of your dooty!" echoed Blowman. "Pugh! you 'll never have a rap for it; so make yourself easy."

"Bless us!" shouted the housemaid.

"Goodness gracious me!" shouted the cook.

"Don't believe him," thundered Nathaniel.

"Don't believe me, if you don't like; only understand the Captain's bolted, and I 'm in here for his debts. All that 'andsome furniture—ay! that plush, old fellow, too—'ll be sold, and none o' *you* 'll have a sixpence." Having delivered himself of this pleasing and romantic intelligence, Blowman sat down and whistled like a conqueror, for he saw horror plainly painted on the features of the Grasy menials.

"I shall pack and go," declared the housemaid.

"I don't cook no dinner for 'em, hang me," avowed the cook, deliberately unspitting the meat and taking the vegetables off the fire.

"Those boots may go to Bath, Bristol, and a snug continental tour arter that, afore I touch 'em," said Nathaniel.

"Better go on with your dooties," suggested Blowman.

"Why?" asked the trio simultaneously.

"Acause you had," was the logical reply.

"But why?" reiterated the trio.

"Acause you may get some o' the scrapins—you may have a few shillin's apiece." Blowman grinned.

"Is that the law, sir?" asked the housemaid.

"Bad enough to be legal," said Nathaniel, surlily.

"Respect for the constitootion," said Blowman, gravely.

"Not while you 're a part on it," answered Nathaniel.

"You 're jokin'," said Blowman.

"No insiniwations," answered Nathaniel.

This exceedingly instructive and very amusing conversation ended in an essay on the English law of debtor and creditor by Mr. Blowman, in the course of which he de-

nounced the degrading enactment which declared that men in possession should receive only plain food. He, Mr. Blowman, confidently looked forward to the time when the man in possession would occupy an elevated position in society, and have an honourable place at the table of the families his duty might oblige him to visit. Mr. Blowman's profound knowledge of the law—a knowledge that included an intimate acquaintance with the law's dirtiest and meanest offices—gradually won for him the approbation and respect of his hearers; and before night he was a popular man in the kitchen.

Mrs. De Gospitch returned home from her visit to her sick and lonely sister in no very enviable state of mind. The young bride—so well married, linked to the old blood of extinct royalty—was ill, without means, and alone. She had been duped—miserably, irrevocably duped. Mrs. De Gospitch would not believe that she had ill advised her sister: she was too proud to judge herself justly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONTAINS (THE AUTHOR HOPES) A FEW HOME-TRUTHS.

"It was a foolish business all along," said De Gospitch, in answer to his wife's promulgation of the Grasy affairs,—"a very stupid business. *You* thought Mary was on the high road to heaven. I knew what Grasy was—I could see through him. I warned you. I was certain that he was an adventurer, tricking you foolish women with his profuse and absurd compliments. A pretty business you 've made of it! I 've no pity for you."

"Who would expect sympathy from *you?*" asked Mrs. De Gospitch.

"This is not fair treatment, Susanna; I hope and believe I do my best for you and yours; but I must and will express my sentiments in this miserable matter, and let you know plainly that the match always was distasteful to me. But Mary was your relation—not mine."

"That captain 's a good-for-nothing person. What faith is to be placed in men!—they 're all alike."

"Henry would have been a better match, after all."

"Would he? Then I suppose you forget his disgusting behaviour to me—his presumption in returning the picture and cheffonier—and his impudent letter."

"True, Susanna—I had forgotten. I shall never pardon my brother while you live to thrust his past offences in my teeth. He is working his way steadily, and has married money."

"I pity the poor woman who has him."

"Do you?"

"Clapham, too, of all the places in the world! Well, they 'd be out of their element, perhaps, in a more refined quarter. I dare say they find their level there—buried in a set of retired linen-drapers."

"You ill conceal your nervousness, Susanna."

"My nervousness!"

"Yes, your nervousness. Your heart tells you that you have done wrong, but you are afraid to listen to it."

"You will drive me mad, De Gospitch. What have I done to deserve this?"

"You have sacrificed your sister to your unbending pride—you know it."

Mrs. De Gospitch did not—would not acknowledge the error of her teaching: she maintained that she had acted with prudence and a laudable dignity throughout, and that Mary's misfortunes were the result of fortuitous circumstances. She alleged in her defence that the natural badness and desperate cunning of man had blinded herself and Mary, as it would have blinded any other portion of innocent and confiding womankind. She asked—with that vulgar assurance assumed by women when they play a desperate game—what chance of escape a simple girl had when a wary villain of a man chose to put in play all the talent of his bad nature to deceive and win her for his wife?

Easy task to attribute to the innate badness of human nature the effects of our own misdeeds!

It was a double pang to the haughty woman that the outcast suitor was now a rising and prosperous man—married to money, and likely to become a person of some consideration. His prosperity was additional evidence of her error—a condemning fact. These considerations and pleadings worried her incessantly; and she found no soul to comfort her. Her husband was arrayed against her—she could nowhere find pity or justification. Her ill-schooled temper could not calmly survey this trouble: she vented her anger on De Gospitch, whom she accused of ill feeling, want of love, disrespect, and injustice. He bore these accusations with the firmness of a hero—a firmness not unmixed with scorn. Mary's illness did not move him; he cared little about the girl's distresses: she was not his relation, and absence of connection justified, in his opinion, a want of sympathy. The De Gospitches were warmly discussing the merits of Grasy's conduct, when Mr. Blandly Reeks was announced. Mr. Reeks, to the horror of Mr. De Gospitch, and, as a natural consequence, to the delight of Mrs. De Gospitch, held a manuscript in his hand.

"We are going to be favoured with a fresh effusion, I hope," said the lady.

"Not my own," answered the modest author.

"I'm so sorry for that."

The bard bowed.

"It's a beautiful allegory—quaint and thoroughly original."

"Do let us hear it, Mr. Reeks."

"Certainly." And Mr. Reeks forthwith unfolded his paper, and, having given forth the name of the author as Christian Andersen, read as follows:—

"Should you, after a thunder-storm, go into a field of buckwheat, you will probably find the crop quite black, just as though it had been burnt. The farmer attributes this blackness to the lightning; but what, in truth, is the actual cause? You shall hear what the sparrow told me, and the bird had it of a willow-tree that stood in a field of buckwheat, and stands there still. The tree bends till its branches almost sweep the ground; and its foliage has very much the appearance of long green hair.

"In the neighbouring fields crops of rye, buckwheat, oats, &c., were flourishing. There the grain stood, in golden fulness, putting one in mind of a dense flock of bright canaries; and, as the fruit waxed heavier, the stalks would bend with their load in a spirit of patient humility. The buckwheat field lay around the willow-tree; but the buckwheat was proud, and would not bend like other grain—it stood erect derisively.

"'I am as rich as the ears of corn,' said the buckwheat; 'and, besides, am I not more beautiful? My petals are as handsome as apple blossom; it must be quite delightful to look at me. Am I not splendid? Did you ever see any thing more beautiful, old willow?'

"The tree made no answer, but gave a nod as though he meant to say—'Yes, indeed, have I.'

"Hereupon the buckwheat set the willow down as a stupid, insane old fellow—so very aged that the long grass was near upon suffocating him.

"A fearful storm arose. The flowers folded their leaves and bowed their tender stems before the superior strength of the hurricane; but the buckwheat stood proudly erect.

"'Bow thy head, even as we do,' advised the flowers.

"'Not I,' answered the buckwheat.

" ' Be warned, and take our advice,' said the corn. ' The spirit of the storm is near upon us. His wings reach from the clouds above to the earth; he will crush thy fragile anatomy before thou canst ask mercy.'

" ' I bend not,' returned the obstinate buckwheat.

" ' Shut up thy boasted flowers, and bend thee,' quoth the willow-tree; ' look not at the flashes of lightning, even mortal man dares not do that; for through the flashing fluid God's heaven is seen, and such a sight is too grand for humanity. What then can we vegetables expect if we do that which man may not practise?'

" ' Tush!' said the buckwheat, ' I will gaze into God's own heaven.'

" And the presumptuous plant did as it had threatened. Lightning came so fiercely that the wide heavens appeared as one mighty expanse of flame. The storm passed over. The flowers and corn stood in the fresh pure air, invigorated by the rain; but the lightning had singed the buckwheat to a mere cinder, and it lay dead and useless upon the earth.

" The willow was agitated by the gentle breeze, and drops of liquid fell from its trembling boughs as though the old tree were weeping. And the sparrows chirped, ' Why are you weeping? It is delicious here. Look at the bright sun and passing clouds! Inhale the sweet fragrance of the hedgerows and flowers! Why then are you woful, venerable tree?'

" And the willow told the sad story of the buckwheat's pride and presumption, and of the certain punishment of these vices. The sparrows are my authority. One evening I begged for a fairy tale, and *they chose* the history of the buckwheat."

During the reading of the above, Mr. Reeks did not perceive the confusion of his hearers; he did not see how blanched was the curled lip of his hostess—how penetrating and set was the gaze of his host.

" Sweet thing," said Mr. Reeks, addressing Mrs. De Gospitch.

" Exquisitely so."

" A fine moral, purely conveyed," continued Mr. Reeks.

" Very purely."

" It teaches aptly a grand truth," he added.

The lady started, and gave a furtive glance towards her

husband. This trepidation did not last many seconds. The lady answered firmly—" Beautifully pointed, certainly."

" It aims at the root of the grand and defenceless social wrong of which human arrogance is guilty daily."

The troubled woman was silent, and in a state of agony.

" It upholds the principle of universal equality, and points correctly to the consequences of inordinate pride. And how grand, how noble, and how welcome must any writing be, fraught with such a purpose!"

Mrs. De Gospitch left the room.

" You and I, Reeks, never agree in these matters," said De Gospitch. " You're a Radical—I'm a Tory, a thorough-going Tory, who believes that servants are servants, and nothing more; and that the Early-Closing Association, and all such bodies, only tend to let a parcel of dissolute young fellows upon town at an early hour. I shouldn't wonder if the Association were found to be a base conspiracy got up by the licensed victuallers for the sake of custom. They know, as well as I do, that early closing will fill their tap-rooms and parlours."

" You judge human nature harshly."

" No, no, Reeks, *you* are a sentimentalist—you're in a wrong school—you're throwing your talents away—you're worthy of a better fate. As Captain Flyblown said to me at the club the other day—' Why, De Gospitch, these humanity maniacs talk now of educating our privates like gentlemen. We shall have the fellows talking Latin and Greek, and discussing the fate of the nation with all the importance of commissioned officers. Fancy a private on guard pacing up and down with quotations from Shakspeare, and those fellows, dropping from his plebeian tongue. Ecod! they'd better make us mere tutors at once—and a pretty state that'd be for a gentleman and an officer to descend to!' Captain Flyblown, in fact, thinks with me, that there's a deuced long distance between a gentleman and a plebeian, and the sooner you come round to that way of thinking, Reeks, the better."

" You'll never convince me," said the lost poet; " never! I love the belief in universal equality. Is it not a grand thing?—Listen!—Is it not a grand thing, I say, to believe that we are all here—we—millions and millions—with one common destiny—one common heart—one common right!

that torture the mandates of Providence as in our blind arrogance we may, we must still return to this—that the dust of the meanest peasant will, in the course of time, mingle with the dust of the emperor—that the bosom of mother earth will enfold the ashes of all with equal surety—and that the peasant and the emperor have their deeds alike recorded for that grand and solemn judgment of man by God!"

"All that sort of thing sounds well, Reeks—extremely well; it's good in theory, extremely good; but doesn't do at all in practice. I confess I like a distinction; I like to see the line betwixt master and servant definitely and broadly marked. I hate the cant about the amalgamation of classes."

"Wrong, De Gospitch, wrong," continued Reeks. "You forget the grandeur of progressive movement in a detestation of some obscure and insincere agents. Canters cling to every popular cause, cling as leeches to beauty's flesh, and die with the bad blood of the fairest cause in them. You confound men with principles. I do not now seek to uphold individuals as gods; I advocate the cause which they advocate. I place myself in their ranks, not because I admire them, but because I sympathize with the object of their exertions. And if in the ranks some canters may be found, let us not confound their cant with the genuine principle."

"There's something in that," vouchsafed De Gospitch. "But I've been accustomed to entertain very different notions. I don't see what there was to complain about; the old state of things was very comfortable."

"Ay! De Gospitch, to you, very comfortable; but you forget that millions groaned to give the few those comforts;—that the few fattened at the expense of the many. I tell an old tale, but a true one."

This conversation only served to strengthen the two gentlemen in their respective original notions, the old issue of argument. The abrupt disappearance of Mrs. De Gospitch was a prudent step on the part of that lady. Andersen's story had no beneficial effect upon her. She retired to hide her confusion, not to make any good resolve. How well pride had choked her heart! how well she had learned the world's worst lesson! How worldliness had dammed the hot-wells of her soul—had plunged disdain, like an ice-ball, into the warm recesses of her nature. Behold her—a woman stately as a queen—an empty image—a faultless piece of statuary, per-

fectly modelled, yet wanting soul to give to the beauty, beauty's highest attribute. Behold her tread upon lowly humanity as upon the commonest footstool—behold her lost to all save pride. Where is her affection—where her faith? Religion is not in a soul so mudded—affection herein is a love of self. She has little faith; and so, though propped by wordliness, and to all appearance happy, she cannot hold self-questioning —she is content to use her worldly station, and to close her eyes upon the future and the past.

> "Take faith from man, and man is both
> The dastard and the slave;
> And love is lust, and peace a sloth,
> And all the earth a grave!"

Any person or circumstance that stood between her and the object of her blind ambition was treated recklessly; the means were not weighed against the end. Weighed against the satisfaction of her pride, a heart was nothing—witness the fate of Mary Grasy. And this woman was a mother—the God-appointed tutor of three young souls, who were alive to every impression—who implored her daily aid in their weakness and ignorance. And what did she—in the impressive lessons of example—teach them? To cherish an ennobling feeling of brotherhood with all people about them? No!—To call goodness nobility? No!—To understand that their future station must depend upon themselves? No! Their early lessons were,—contempt for servants, pride of birth, (grandchildren of an auctioneer on the maternal side, and of a monied nobody on the paternal!) and a total disregard of others. What wonder if children so taught grew up and included their teachers in this disregard!

[illegible] in conversation with [illegible]

CHAPTER XXIX.

DISSOLUTION OF THE INTENDED UNION.—SOME WHISPERS ABOUT LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

"O strong as the eagle,
O mild as the dove,
How like, and how unlike,
O Death and O Love!"—Sir E. L. Bulwer.

Happiness calls not for deep philosophy. "Man wants but little here below." Gold is not legal tender in the marriage market. Our happiness is in our own hands. We are the makers of our misfortunes. Old, old truths—trite sayings—choice mouthfuls for moral fathers and maternal women—mouthfuls to which daily practice gives daily solidity. It is ennobling to feel that we have been the unaided architects of our own fortune—to know that we have laid the plan, raised the scaffolding, and built the edifice. Pride of birth and heritage of wealth may give pleasure to their possessors and confer worldly consideration upon them, but the decent competence earned earnestly and hopefully is worth a coronet to its possessor. There *is* such an absurdity in the world as love in a cottage, though respectable people with household ambition beyond their means mistrust the phantom. Love, in the minds of some very sensible individuals, must have at least a brougham—would die a sudden death in an omnibus. Cupid cannot subsist upon less than three courses and a dessert; plain living would bring him to a premature grave. Cupid stickles for footmen and liveries, a French cook and a pair of bays—the boy-god cannot drag through a weary existence under £300 per annum—at £150 he would soon yield up his ghost; and Cupid's ghost is the most horrible apparition it is possible for humanity to be haunted with. The ghost of Cupid (the information is given for the benefit of inexperienced maidens) has been christened Indifference. Attend to the following, young ladies.

Love cannot endure stocking-mending, pudding-making, dress-making, omnibus riding, or plain living. So, if you wish

the rosy god to nestle in your home for ever, your house must be in a commanding situation, it must be sumptuously furnished, and be inhabited by servants in plush: choose then the lover who can command these essentials, and avoid all suitors who have only "modest incomes," and who talk of your being "all in all to each other." Some romantic and quiet people have had their notion of perfect happiness fully satisfied with a lover of slender means, but it is well to assure young women that such results are the exceptions which prove the rule.

It is perfectly true that Henry and Marian Gospitch lived happily together. The theory of wedded bliss is so complicated that any attempt to explain it within the limits of this history would be preposterous: so the writer must confine himself to an unprefaced report of the life within the walls of Carnation Cottage. It must, however, be shown that this connubial felicity was fully merited.

A man's head is his Mentor—a woman's heart is always her master. It may be true that woman's brain is less wise than man's, but she has that which makes a happy and effectual substitute. Her feelings obscure her sight, but they always lead her along the right path; she may be blind, but she has a sure dog Tray in her bosom. A woman will read another's character at a glance; few men have this grand faculty. This fact may account for the frequent mistakes made by men in marriage. A woman is seldom disappointed in her love—but a man is rarely confirmed in his first opinion of his mistress. When he sees her for the first time he looks upon her as a being almost angel—he knows her, and discovers that she is but a woman—with woman's failings and caprice. Sad the experience that takes the cestus from woman—revealing her infirmities and her baser passions: to youth she is a goddess—to age an attentive and willing nurse. Marian's love for Henry was born healthily; she loved his good qualities before she loved the man. To be more explicit, her affection was founded upon her gratitude for his honest and manly kindness to herself and Mr. Gaps; he won her heart by doing good—not by courtship. She watched him narrowly whenever she had the opportunity—she watched the better impulses of his nature as they resolved themselves into actions—she watched his friendless struggle with the world—she saw that his end was

an honest, if not a glorious one—and she loved him—loved his soul. He was worthy of this love.

The couple sat together one evening shortly after their return to town, in the light of the setting sun. Grand masses of cloud rose from the sun's blazing bed of state, and birds were chirruping their last song, or arranging themselves in their warm nests, and men were thronging homewards from the busy city. All creation seemed to be homeward-bound, and gleeful.

Marian and Henry were alone: Brasely and his affianced wife were out walking. Henry took the sleek white hand of his wife, and said to her in an undertone—that musical murmur which gives utterance to the heart's truth—

"My dear Marian, how inexpressibly do I feel the purity of our happiness this evening."

No words passed Marian's lips; but he who has mastered the alphabet of the heart might have read in her melting eyes an eloquence too grand to be translated by the tongue. Her husband continued—

"A shocking circumstance occurred to me yesterday; it made my blood run cold."

"My darling!" murmured Marian, appealingly—her hand upon the arm of her husband.

"It is a sad story, Marian."

"Anything happened to your proud relations?" asked Marian, tenderly. A frown gathered upon the brow of the young man at the mention of his kindred.

"No," he said, firmly and lowly,—"worse."

"Henry, dear!"

"You shall hear it. You have heard of Mary Maturin—now Mrs. Grasy?"

"Yes," faltered the wife, sadly, as though the knowledge of her husband's former passion were a black spot on her heart—a spot now shown to her anew.

"You know that an engagement existed between Miss Maturin and myself."

"I did."

"And you can easily understand how nearly I am interested in her happiness."

Marian started—withdrew her hand from her husband's arm—and turned aside her head. It was hard to feel that she was second tenant in Henry's heart—but still harder was it to know that the first inhabitant yet held a wing of the sanc-

tuary. Henry saw that he had wounded Marian—how could he soothe her?

"This is ungenerous," he said.

Again Marian clasped his arm warmly—again was her sleek hand tangled in the waving of his hair. The dove had dropped its wing, concealing from its mate the open wound. "It is, Henry—go on."

"Her husband is a ruined gamester—a man without a farthing."

"And his wife—*your* Mary!"

"I did not ask. He came to borrow money from me: I lent him a few pounds, and he hastened away from me with a blush-burn on his cheek."

"But why was he so confused?"

"He sought me as a stranger; he had heard of my past relation to his wife, and was cowardly enough to take advantage of his knowledge on the subject. He thought I could not refuse any thing that could keep the wolf from the door of my old love, and so he sought me. He has a deep knowledge of human-nature, a knowledge that he turns to meanest purposes."

"You know nothing then about his wife. She may be alone—friendless, and in want. Oh! Henry."

"Marian, the fate of Mrs. Grasy, be it ragged penury, has not been influenced or brought about by me. She has long been dead to me. To think of her is to wrong you."

"To love her—yes. You may still pity, if you have ceased to love."

"Good, good, Marian, you teach me charity: it shall be so. If she be in want *you* shall convey comfort to her. *I* will not wound her with my presence."

"Wound her!"

"Yes. Those we have slighted in prosperity become our terror when we fall."

Gospitch, you knew not the full extent of Mary's bitter pride—you knew not that the marriage with Captain Grasy was a plot of revenge conceived to bow you to the earth—conceived to impress upon you the generosity of Mary's condescension in having once promised to link her life with yours. You were ignorant of the struggles you had occasioned her—of the throes, the heart-pangs your love had cost her. She exerted the utmost energies of her proud but nerveless nature to wound you—if you trampled on a worm it turned upon you

savagely. In this she was human, but in the meek endurance—in the gradual recognition of error—in the last act of her life (which will be unfolded presently), she was divine.

"Grasy (I heard to-day) has escaped to the continent: I know nothing about his wife: she *may* be with her sister; if so, she is not in want."

"Have they any children?"

"One."

"Poor woman! He has, perhaps, left her alone in some obscure part of town, allowing her a miserable pittance. Isn't it possible to know something about her?"

"It is just possible. But I do not conceive, Marian, that I am at all connected with or called upon to befriend Mrs. Grasy."

"Henry, if she is in want you *must* and shall do something for her. You think you will excite my jealousy. If I had any such feeling it is past—smothered as an unchristian thought—*now* I feel intimately interested in her. Do try and know something about her—I will see her."

About nine o'clock in the evening Miss Dinah Jackson and Mr. Robert Brasely returned. They were both in high spirits, in spite of their prolonged tête-à-tête.

"Moping at home," said Dinah, addressing the newly-married couple. "I've just been explaining to Robert that home duties are not in my way at all."

Bob's face wore a serious expression at this moment. He was probably reckoning the expense of keeping a housekeeper, two maid-servants, and a cook—a mercenary fellow!

"What will *you* do with a house?" said Marian to her sister, in joke.

"What! Sleep and dine, and now and then sup in it, to be sure. I'm not of the domestic order at all, and Robert knows it; and what's more, he likes it."

"Yes," muttered Bob, soliloquising; "it's very well to talk, but where's the money? I ask a simple question, where's the money?—that's all about it." Brasely was anxious to change the topic of conversation. This unpleasant recurrence to the capacities of his extremely limited exchequer was not calculated to instruct or amuse either himself or the company. Miss Dinah Jackson's facetious allusions to their wedded bliss in prospect had considerably cooled the passion of her husband elect. He did not choose to be the butt of a giggling

female's insipidities—so he said. He was determined, in short, to court Miss Jackson for years—to hold the wedding-ring (as ingenious donkey drivers do carrots before asses) so that she might seem nearly within reach of the dainty always, but never be allowed to swallow it. He felt certain of victory, from his faith in the universality of female impatience. Little did the confiding Dinah imagine that such a base determination lurked in the heart of that "duck of a fellow," Robert Brasely.

"Don't you allow him to be out o' nights?" asked Bob, addressing Mrs. Henry Gospitch in a tone of good-natured raillery.

"Suppose he doesn't wish to leave home."

"Well, but suppose he does?"

"Then he may go."

"Attend to your sister," said Bob, addressing Dinah with mock gravity; "you hear Mrs. Gospitch declare that she allows her husband to go out at night whenever and wherever he pleases."

"You don't go out alone," answered Dinah, assuming a commanding tone of voice.

The quick closing and reopening of one pair of Bob's eyelids said very plainly, "Ha! ha! won't I though."

Bob, it must be owned, played his game with consummate skill. He concealed his cards, it is true, but they turned up trumps. His first was played to inspire his fair opponent (or, in other words, his mistress) with disgust towards himself; and it was a long time before his play promised success. His opponent would sing to him—

"The heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;"

and he would listen to the strain with fear and doubt. "Ecod!" he would mutter, "if she persists in this loving to the close business it's all up with me; but let's hope she'll relent. I'll tell her of my games about town—here goes.—Dinah, dear!"

"Yes, Robert, dear."

"I've done two or three things in the course of my eventful life which my duty compels me to tell to you. Will you hear me?"

"Yes—I know my Robert can't have done anything very wicked."

"It is, though, Dinah, very wicked—if I may be allowed to express myself so emphatically—deuced wicked."

"Go on—how romantic! You 'll have to kneel at my feet; and I, like the wronged young lady in the novel of the 'Fat Heiress,' shall have to forgive you on one condition."

"Ah! Dinah. You 'll never forgive me—I know you won't. I 've assisted at a rat-fight."

"Is that all?"

"All! I wish it was, Dinah. I 've been at a number of cock-fights!"

"You naughty fellow!"

"Yes—and helped to spur the cocks into the bargain. There!"

"Oh! how wicked!"

"Put 'em on steel claws, my dear, as long as your finger, and as sharp as a needle."

"Dear, dear me!"

"Ah! By Jove, I wish that was all."

"Robert, I shall faint."

"Nonsense, my dear; you know you won't do anything of the sort. You know fainting females are my aversion—so mind."

"Relieve me of this dreadful suspense. What else have you been guilty of?"

"Of gambling in a small way."

"In a small way! How?"

"Tossed for tuppences, when gentlemen skyed for pounds."

"Gentlemen! Why, Robert, what do you call yourself?"

"Now, I appeal to you, Dinah; and I 'm as cool as a man up to the ears in a snow-drift.—Do you think it was gentlemanly to toss for malt?"

"Malt, Robert!"

"Yes, dear—ale, stout, beer, and that style of thing. Was it gentlemanly?"

"My dear Robert, these are the follies of very young men. I forgive you—forgive you with all my heart. Now are you happy?"

Happy! Bob was exceedingly mortified and perplexed. He was afraid it was a hopeless task attempting to disgust her; however he would make another trial.

"My dear girl," he said, in a sepulchral tone—"Ah! ah! how wicked men are! Your innocent, unworldly bosom little

imagines the extent of corruption there is in the world—not only in the world, but in London—not only in London, but at Clapham—and not only at Clapham, but very near you."

"Oh! dear me!"

"Bottle this, Dinah; bottle this screaming, and listen quietly, like a sensible woman. I 've betted largely at horse-racing; and what 's more, have always lost."

"Well!"

"What a creature it is!" muttered Brasely, annoyed at this persevering forgiveness.

"I forgive all—everything—my own Robert. I could forgive anything in you. I should have been horrified at all this in anybody else; but in you I feel that it was but the effect of an exuberant spirit, bursting with uncontrollable impulse—struggling beyond retention for any satisfaction. You have now had experience of the world, and know well how hollow all its bad pleasures are. You will lean on your own Dinah, won't you? like a good, sweet fellow, as you are."

"I have not yet told all."

"Go on, darling. I am prepared to forgive, whatever the fault may be."

"I once knew a lady who——"

"What! what! you treacherous, deceitful, cruel, dangerous, ungrateful man. Oh! oh! what *shall* I do?" The fair questioner herself satisfied this query by bursting into an alarming flood of tears. Bob feared that he had gone too far in the matter; however, after a little consideration, he settled in his own mind that he had acted for the best. His notions were not purely selfish. He argued, and with a show of truth, that it was better to part from a girl than to drag her from a comfortable house to a miserable two-pair back and cold meat—to say nothing of the absence of pickles. The separation might be a shock to the girl; but it was better to give her one good shake than a series of shakes; and so Mr. Robert Brasely calmed that troublesome part of the human animal—his conscience.

The romantic Dinah was at a loss how to act with regard to her lover's conduct. What did he deserve?—That was not the point.—What was due to her dignity? It was an intricate question. She recollected many heroines in similar situations. For instance, Lady Humdrum, in the *False Fair One*, when she heard that her lover had been guilty of love towards

another before he met her ladyship, declared that her dignity would not allow her to accept the leavings of another lady; while Miss Blushbegone, in the *Last Red Rose*, liked her lover all the better when she heard of his early passion for another. This contradiction was terribly perplexing—she was sure it would drive her mad. Would not the incident, treated in a thoroughly original manner, (in fact as she *could* treat it if she liked to take the trouble,) make a capital chapter for the novel she was at work upon? that it would. Mr. Robert should be in print, and it would serve him right. She could give his character (and it would not be complimentary) in a very few words. A critic in the *Devil's Dyke Gazette and Chain Pier Advertiser*, said, in his criticism on her article in the *Belle Assemblée*, where she signed *I. B. R. S. T. V. A Lady*, that she had "a quick perception of character and a force of expression that should recommend her writings to the attention of all classes of the community. Nothing could surpass the vividness and truth of her description of a great-grandmother's nightcap—it must come home to the hearts of all." Whether the nightcap or the truth of her description did go home to the hearts of all, is a point the historian cannot undertake to decide. It is sufficient for the elucidation of the story that Miss Dinah Jackson agreed entirely with the above-quoted writer; and further, she considered him to be a very profound, not to say an impartial critic. And so the critic encouraged Miss Jackson to venture upon a larger and more complete work; and if the public have had occasion to find fault with the exceeding weight of Miss Dinah Jackson's subsequent productions, let the said public quarrel with the *Devil's Dyke Gazette* critic, and not with the flattered female.

> To skim bad books—such is the critic's trade!
> To gloat o'er faults, and put all "points" in shade.
> He turns the pages ere he strikes the blow;
> (The publisher's address he wants to know).
> Know ye not whence the critic's favours spring?
> "With us you advertise—your book 's the thing."
>
> * * * *
>
> Unjust the critic who forbears to praise;
> More cruel still—who crowns the fool with bays.

Brasely, though he was grieved to see the unhappiness he had caused, was determined to make the best of his manœuvre; so he continued his fiction with a well-feigned sadness.

"I knew her," he continued, "when I was a boy. We grew up together, as the song says, 'like double sweet-peas!'"

"Where *do* you expect to go to?" This tender inquiry concerning Bob's post-mundane expectations did not ruffle its object in the least.

"My dear Dinah—"

"Don't dear me, sir. Proceed with your story, Mr. Brasely, and blush if you can."

"Well, then, *Miss* Jackson, I will tell you one thing, namely, Robert Brasely will not be insulted. Robert Brasely has done nothing that he need blush to tell."

"No. I dare say, in his own opinion, Mr. Robert Brasely ought to have a pair of wings at his back, and be sitting upon a bunch of clouds, like a cherub in a picture."

"I 've my faults, Miss Jackson. Am I to consider myself as no longer engaged to you?"

"Just as you please, sir."

"Very well—good morning, Miss Jackson. There is your hair, and I 'll send your letters by the Parcels Delivery Company." So saying, Bob rushed from Carnation Cottage.

Dinah called after him, but he would not hear her. His name was Robert Brasely, he muttered to himself, and he would not be trifled with by anybody.

Having fully assured himself of the firmness of his resolve not to be trifled with, and having also settled in his mind the probable expense of carriage *per* the Delivery Company to Clapham, and congratulated himself upon his very dexterous and excessively happy escape from the clutches of grim Hymen, he steered his course towards his favourite night haunts, with the intention of enjoying his newly gained emancipation.

A morrow's headache is the only recorded evidence of the successful termination of Bob's laudable pursuit. Bob met Henry at office; moreover, Bob noticed the studied coolness of our hero towards him.

"You have heard all, I suppose," said Bob.

"You allude, Brasely, to your quarrel with Miss Jackson, I presume."

"Exactly!"

"I can only tell you that, when I left home this morning, my wife was bathing the poor girl's temples. She is very ill."

"The deuce! You don't say so!"

"A woman's heart is not a toy, Brasely. It isn't a plaything to be flung aside carelessly—wantonly." Henry's keen eye was fixed upon his friend as he spake these words.

"She, herself, refused me."

"Refused you! You know how it was, Brasely. Refused you!" Scorn was marked on Henry's lip. "Are you a man, and cannot bear with a girl's temper?"

"I am answerable to nobody, Henry."

"Be it so, Brasely. I do not plead for Miss Jackson; I am even pleased to know that your engagement with my sister-in-law is at an end. You were not suited for each other."

The veil had fallen from the maiden's eyes; the rose-tints of her prospect were removed; love's bright colours had faded and disappeared, and her quondam lover was her present aversion. It *is* true that a deceitful man wrongs mankind, and plants a barrier of doubt between his victim and the world. Dinah vowed eternal enmity towards the sex. Men had not one good quality, she affirmed; there was not one redeeming trait in their character. As for Mahomet, he didn't know human nature, or he would have written—women only shall go to heaven, and men shall be put where they will have little opportunity of catching cold. A frail bark, disabled at the outset of her voyage, she must struggle onward, in the hope of getting into port before long. A rose-bush whose budding beauty was frosted; a dove, wounded beyond the possibility of cure; a wingless lark, that once trilled its lay of hope, and soared above the earth at mid-day.

When Mr. Jackson heard of Brasely's conduct with respect to his daughter, he declared that it was precisely what he had expected—exactly the line of conduct he always imagined the young man would pursue. This fatherly declaration did not contribute to soothe the maiden's sorrow-choked heart. Mrs. Jackson refrained from giving any very decided opinion upon the subject; the whole profundity of her rhetoric being engaged in the solution of a very important and very delicate question—namely, could Mr. Jackson rake up sufficient evidence against the faithless swain, to enable him to support an action for breach of promise, with success?

Having deeply considered the *pros* and *cons* of the case, and having in her own mind, and to her no small satisfaction, decided that a breach of promise action might be supported against Mr. Robert Brasely, bachelor, Mrs. Jackson one evening proceeded

with an unusual and elaborate ceremony, to lay before her wedded master her studied and deliberate opinion in the matter. Mrs. Jackson called upon her husband with some warmth, and an interminable vocabulary, to give her profound advice his most earnest and impartial consideration. It was not for herself, goodness knew, that she urged this step; *she* wouldn't gain a farthing by the proceeding, that was very clear. Mr. Jackson listened to this discourse with extraordinary attention, and to the utter astonishment of the entire family circle, agreed with his wife upon the subject. He would bring an action—to be sure he would. Why shouldn't he? Impressed with the importance of this determination, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson proceeded to Carnation Cottage, in order to procure all evidence necessary for the favourable issue of the cause.

"We will lay the damages at 300*l.*," said Mr. Jackson, when he was comfortably seated in the front parlour of the cottage. "Yes, we 'll say 300*l.*"

"Jackson, you must be stark mad!" said that gentleman's faithful spouse.

"Mrs. Jackson!"

"My daughter's peace of mind to be valued at the paltry sum of 300*l.*! I never heard of such a thing in the whole course of my life! and since I've been married I *have* heard queer things, gracious knows."

"Pray, Mrs. Jackson, what may your valuation be?"

"Three thousand pounds, and not a farthing less; and if the jury don't find for every shilling of it, they 're no gentlemen; that 's all I have to say. Three hundred, indeed! I wonder what next?"

"Mrs. Jackson, you are an inexperienced person in these matters."

"It 's my misfortune, Mr. Jackson—that I am so." This connubial thrust incensed its object beyond description.

"Madam, I desire that you observe a strict silence during the remainder of the discussion upon this important subject. We don't want petticoats in our law courts."

It was at length determined that Mr. Jackson should wait upon his legal advisers immediately, and leave the matter in their hands.

Messrs. Gruff and Tuff were acute fellows—men of exceedingly sharp practice. They never despaired of a case so long as money was forthcoming. They had done business for Mr.

Jackson before, on the speculation of success or non-success; and Mr. Jackson wished Messrs. Gruff and Tuff to conduct the present action upon the same condition. But a very laudable prudence suggested to the Gruff of the firm an inquiry with respect to the defendant's worldly circumstances; and in consequence of the plaintiff's unsatisfactory answer to this very natural question, the firm declined the job with many thanks, and with earnest assurances that they would be happy at all times to undertake the conduct of Mr. Jackson's legal affairs. We will not say what Mrs. Jackson thought of Messrs. Gruff and Tuff's "shabby behaviour;" suffice it, that the action was abandoned, Mr. Jackson being determined to have recompense for the loss of his daughter's peace, in the shape of a pull at the nasal organ of Robert Brasely. In justice to Dinah, we must add, on this head, that she had nothing whatever to do with the proposed legal proceedings. Though her love was but sentiment, she would not have her feelings valued like goods; her heart-pangs should not be paid for at a jury's valuation. Dinah took up her pen, and made her private wrong a public nuisance.

CHAPTER XXX.

CREDITORS' RESPECT.—THE AUDITOR'S WIFE.

THE gentlemen whom Captain Grasy had honoured with his custom, considered it a prudent measure to assemble at a tavern called *The Keys.* The assembly was a well-attended one, for the gallant captain had not allowed any man to engross his patronage. Hence five tailors made their appearance; four bootmakers; three hairdressers, whose united genius had cultivated the debtor's whiskers to a high state of beauty; seven hosiers; twelve glovers; three livery-stable keepers, one of whom declared that the fugitive debtor had broken the wind of four of his best "'osses," to say nothing of the damage done to innumerable whips; and fourteen tavern-keepers, who unanimously bore witness to the cultivated taste of their debtor's palate: "it was no use trying to give him the second-rate for the first-rate port." This highly respectable and learned body voted Mr. Toddy, tailor, and principal creditor, to the chair. Mr. Toddy, who clipped the Queen's English as though the said language were a piece of superfine Saxony, rose amid the plaudits of his fellow-sufferers, and said—

"Gen'lemen,—We ha' met here on an extremely unpleasant business—there 's no doubt about it—very unpleasant. I an't accustomed to speechifying in the least; it isn't my business in no way; but I may say, without rousin' the hindignation of my co-tailors, (if I may be allowed the expression,) that I am fust fiddle in my line. Capting Grasy has chose to make hisself scarce, without payin' us poor tradesmen a farden. Now what I want to know—and I dare say what you all want to know likewise, and very natural—is, what Capting Grasy's firm is worth? Gen'lemen, I don't b'lieve it's worth a shillin'. Well, what course is left to us—that 's what we 've met for to decide. Well, gen'lemen, I must leave it to your cleverness to suggest—that is to say, to point out some course whereby we may recover some of the worth of our respective goods. So, gen'lemen, I shall take the liberty of settin' myself down." (Vigorous cheering.) Mr. Toddy resumed his seat with the

air of a man who had settled the fate of an empire. He glanced at his blue satin waistcoat, and felt in his heart that he was the first of tailors.

Mr. Brandyton, livery-stable keeper, then rose. Mr. Brandyton was a corpulent, red-faced, puffy individual, troubled with a "short breath." He gasped once or twice, and then said, pompously—

"Gen'lemen,—Fate 's a wixen, an out-and-out wixen, as does good to nobody, and plays the fool with everybody. When Captain Grasy called on me for the first time, and said, says he, 'Brandyton, your best hack—mind, no cat's-meat—I 'm a bit of a judge, I can tell you'—I clapped my hand on the left side of my waistcoat, and gave him my best 'oss. Well, gen'lemen, the captain was such a knowin' hand, and such a henthusiastic rider, that I thought with his recommendation to back me up my fortun' was made. Now I see the truth of what my good woman told me at the time. 'Brandyton,' says she, 'that 'ere captain an't a nonerable captain: he 'll shove you into the Bench afore you can say Jack Robinson!' 'Get along, Sally,' says I, at the time, for I 'm nat'rally exceeding dignified; 'get along; you knows nuffin of the matter, and shouldn't presume to give an opinion.' Well, gen'lemen, I 've come sharp round to my wife's way of thinkin'; and what *I* mean to do at once, and without further ceremony or talk, is to hand my case over to my lawful adviser."

Mr. Brandyton resumed his seat amid the congratulations and plaudits of the assembly. At this point, a hairdresser, a bootmaker, and a tavern-keeper rose simultaneously, and clamoured respectively for preference. The hairdresser only wished to ask the company one single question; namely, could he, if he met the captain, take his wig from his debtor's head, as the debtor had not paid even for the peruke he wore. He only wished he could spoil the whiskers he had brought to such an enviable state of perfection; it would be a little revenge. The bootmaker wished to know if he would be justified in keeping a pair of boots which the captain had worn, but which had been left with him to have spurs fixed in them. "Ah! to spur my 'osses, the blackguard!" interrupted a livery-stable keeper; and the tavern-keeper wished to ascertain whether he could legally claim certain charges for waiters who had attended upon the captain. The entire assembly asked questions of the entire assembly, and the entire assem-

bly was ignorant of the law upon the various points at issue. The meeting was a most stormy one, and would have ended in various personal encounters, if a gentleman, who had hitherto remained silent, had not interfered to quell the clamour. This timely peacemaker was Henry Gospitch, who had attended at the request of his wife, to make matters as easy as possible to the sick wife of a heartless, cowardly, and dissipated man. Henry rose, obtained silence, and said:—

"Gentlemen, I appear before you in the position of Captain Grasy's creditor. I have been Captain Grasy's friend. I sympathize, believe me, heartily with you all. I acknowledge that you have been unfairly and cruelly treated; and I must add, that the captain's conduct has blotted him from my list of friends. Gentlemen, I and Captain Grasy are henceforth strangers. (Immense cheering.) It is perfectly natural, gentlemen, that you should view the career of Captain Grasy with indignation, and that you should determine to visit his treatment of you with the utmost penalty of the law; but ere you decide upon this course, I would have you listen to an appeal that will come home to you all, and soften, at least for a time, your plans with regard to your debtor. I believe that Captain Grasy has fled to the continent. This, however, I know: he has left a young wife—and oh! gentlemen, how worthy she is of all happiness!—to die alone, in poverty, and with a broken heart. Stretched on a bed, delirious, and in daily danger of death, her aching heart demands, has sacred calls upon your pity. A dying woman is at your mercy: spare her. She will not last long: and is it much I ask of you, pleading for the bare comforts of a dying Englishwoman before Englishmen? Do not send the wolf to teaze a dying lamb!"

This appeal, made energetically and earnestly, had its desired effect. The hearts of the clamorous creditors were softened, and they agreed unanimously, that they would not urge their claims for the space of one month.

Mr. Blowman—the man in possession—thoroughly enjoyed the downfall of the Grasys, and he did not conceal his gratification. His frequent jests upon the subject of the captain's flight were especially palatable to Mrs. Grasy's servants. They only remained to see if it was possible "to recover something from the wreck," as Mr. Blowman termed partial payments; and, to pass the time pleasantly, they and Mr. Blowman feasted themselves, regardless of expense. The man in

possession was not in possession of any very considerable amount of property. The abode of the Grasys was ready furnished—the only property of the tenants consisting of some feather-beds, arm-chairs, and other small luxuries, which the captain's sense of personal comfort had induced him to add to the hard couch and chairs provided by his landlord. But Mr. Blowman's equanimity was not disturbed by this discovery. The captain owed him nothing, and so *he* was quite safe. This agreeable philosophy did not suit the position in which the servants suddenly found themselves with regard to their employers—they were creditors, and would act as such. Blowman's legal acquirements and acute rhetoric were called into play, and he was about to communicate his advice: and to give the said advice extraordinary effect had dipped his hands into his trousers' pockets, when the emptiness of these receptacles reminded him of what was due to the dignity of his profession; whereupon he declared to the cook, housemaid, and footman, that he should be guilty of a gross violation of professional etiquette were he to give legal counsel gratuitously.

"Gratuitously! Why whatever does that mean? Does it mean gracious—free—for nothing?" asked the housemaid.

"Precisely so. It 's hard to take money of poor folks—but the etiquette of the profession must be attended to—must indeed. I 'm sorry for you, but I dare not advise you upon the subject. It 'd ruin my prospects for my life if the Chancery bar were to come to know on it; shouldn't be able to hold up my head in court agin."

"What *shall* we do!" exclaimed the cook.

"Do without the advice, to be sure," said Nathaniel; "without Mr. Blowman can let us have that commodity uncommon cheap. Givin' advice is like givin' a friend a shabby present—it 's always chucked away."

"I 'm not anxious to give opinions, Mr. Nathaniel, so don't think it. *My* opinions are the result of study. *My* advice an't so empty, and, if I may say it, so humbugging as some people's."

"Well, then, no flummery, how much for this here splendid bit of advice?" asked Nathaniel.

"My fee for a consultation is half a sovereign—not a farden less." And Mr. Blowman's cheeks swelled with the importance of his position.

"Goodness gracious, where 's the money to come from?" asked the frightened housemaid.

"I 'll subscribe my three-and-four-pence," said the cook.

"So 'll I," said Nathaniel.

"Well, I s'pose I must too."

The money was forthwith collected. The cook extracted some greasy and hot silver from her bosom; the housemaid dived among the ragged contents of a dresser drawer for her contribution; and Nathaniel flung his share of the subscription on the table, with the careless air of the mightiest banker.

Mr. Blowman collected the money, placed it securely in his trousers' pocket, and proceeded at once to deliver himself of his legal judgment upon the merits of the case. He said:—

"Mr. Nathaniel, Mary, and Susan,—I have an arduous dooty to perform—a dooty the importance of which I feel most acutely. During the whole course of my long professional experience I do not remember to have been engaged upon a case calling for a more profound and (if I may be allowed the expression) a more responsible opinion. My clients, you are a standin' between the Scylla of humbugging and the Charybdis of bein' humbugged. It remains for your own honest minds to decide whether you will be the humbuggers, or the humbuggees. If I may be allowed to guide you——"

"Allowed! Why what did you pocket the ten and six for?" asked Nathaniel, with hardened contempt for the majesty of a lawyer.

"Sir," continued Blowman, with added pomp, "I must not be interrupted in my capacity of legal adviser. I say again, that it remains with you to decide whether you will be the humbuggers, or the humbuggees. If I may be allowed to guide you, I should say decidedly that your most advantageous step would be to assume the part of humbuggers. If you agree with me, and adopt this course, then is the road clear as mid-day. I apprehend that you mistake the precise meaning which I am anxious to convey to you. In other words, then, I would advise you to remain in your present respective situations until your employers are finally disposed of. I would, moreover, counsel you to be vigilant and attentive; they may then pay you your full account, (for I believe there is some bit of an estate in Ireland belonging to the scarce cap-

tain,) while on the other hand, should you decide to throw up your respective engagements at once, certain am I that you will not receive sixpence in the pound." Here Mr. Blowman resumed his seat, amid the thanks of his delighted audience.

"How clever," said Mary.

"How full o' learning," said the cook.

"You 're up to a thing or two," said Nathaniel.

It was thus decided that they (the servants) should remain peaceably in their places, and do their work respectively, as became decent and well-behaved folks.

A loud double knock called Nathaniel to the street door. Mrs. De Gospitch had arrived, and was admitted. She waited in the drawing-room to know if her sister was in a state to receive her. Presently the nurse made her appearance, dropped a low curtsey, and said:

"Mrs. Grasy is in an exceeding critical state, ma'am—doctor's been, and says she 's to be kep' quiet. She 's asleep now, ma'am. I 've seen people worse."

"Oh!" said Mrs. De Gospitch.

"Oh! yes, ma'am. The last lady I attended—it was a hasmatic case—she drew her breath as if she was makin' steam on a window pane to draw on! well, she recovered in three weeks, and now is as hearty as can be."

"Indeed!"

"Another case was a fever one. The lady was exceeding violent at times, and wouldn't let her friends come anigh her, but with me she was as gentle as a lamb, bless her—*she* died. I laid her out in such a beautiful coffin—mahogany outside, and silver mountings and handles—quite a luxurious thing it was altogether. She was a beautiful lady, and a good lady too—she left me a very handsome sum for my services, which I can assure you, ma'am, I was uncommon glad of, seeing that I had scarce a farthin' to bless myself with at the time."

"Perhaps your mistress is awake now—go and see."

The woman obeyed, and perhaps thought that the meek sufferer above had a better heart than her haughty, unbending listener. The nurse remained away. Presently Nathaniel ushered a strange lady into the drawing-room giving her name—Mrs. Henry Gospitch!

Marian advanced to meet Mrs. De Gospitch. The latter rose from her seat, gave effect to her full height, gave a curl to her lip, and said slowly and frostily—

"To what circumstance am I, or is my sister, indebted for this visit, madam?"

"Mrs. Grasy does not need aid then: I heard that she had not a bed to lie on."

"Madam!"

"I am sorry—I did not come to—Madam you will permit me to retire." Marian bowed, and retreated precipitately. Mrs. De Gospitch was overwhelmed with indignation at the impertinence and presumption of Mrs. Henry Gospitch. She had already suffered sufficient annoyance on her sister's account, and now, to complete the disagreeableness of the case, a woman presumed to offer alms to her relation! To her relation! to her sister! She could have cursed the almsgiver from her soul. She saw the petty motives—the spirit of annoyance that in its utter badness sought its instrument of torture in a dying woman! Henry Gospitch—the foul blot on her husband's escutcheon—the pettifogging tradesman—would be the family's everlasting degradation. How could they hold up their head in "first rate society," while neighbours could point to kindred behind a counter! It was enough to know that the family had low relations, without having the horrible reality thrust before one in this degrading manner. So thought Mrs. De Gospitch. She ascended to her sister's bedroom, and found the patient calm and weak.

"Who do you think I have seen below?" said Susannah, addressing Mary. "Why Mrs. Henry Gospitch!"

Mary started, raised herself, and asked impatiently if Henry's wife was still below.

"My dear Mary, you could not think of receiving her. Just consider, dear, the society she moves in. I had a short conversation with her, and of all the vulgar people—well, it 's no use talking about the creature—she 's gone, and there 's an end of it. She won't come *here* again I take it—she had no very flattering reception from me."

Mary listened to her sister eagerly, caught each syllable with avidity, and said in answer, "Susannah—you have done wrong."

"Now that 's ungrateful, Mary—very ungrateful."

"How differently we think. I am not the same creature I was three months ago."

"Well, then, Mary, I 'll tell you at once—she came to offer you pecuniary assistance: she said she had heard that you had

not a bed to lie upon. There now, did you ever hear such insulting conduct in your life?"

"How kind! how good! See how I have altered, sister."

"Not for the better," murmured Susannah, almost inaudibly. However her sister's quick eye caught the whispered syllables; and the sufferer said cheerfully, (laying her burning hand upon the jewelled, cold, and pulpy fingers of Susannah's,) "Yes, my dear, good Susannah—for the better. You can't think how beautiful it is to die. Am I not a philosopher?"

Mary paused, but Susannah answered not.

"You know how we used to talk of death with horror—it was very wicked. But I was a vulgar-minded creature then—too earthly, too arrogant and sinful then—to talk of going to heaven. We were vulgar creatures——"

"Mary!"

"Yes we were—vulgar, sinful, wicked things. We used to talk ourselves to sleep, and tremble at our own hideous fears. We used to say that it was so dreadful to think that one day we should be screwed down in a box, and be put under ground, with pounds and pounds of earth over us; and we used to think how horrible it would be if we were to wake and find ourselves under ground, and see big worms pushing themselves through the crevices of the coffin, and feel them winding their cold, damp, soft bodies round us—wasn't this horrible, sister? you remember it."

"Yes." Mrs. De Gospitch trembled and was pale. The sufferer continued——

"And then we used to wonder how long we should live; and we used to hope; and then try to persuade each other that most people lived till they were seventy; and then we used to count how many years remained to each of us; and then—dear, dear Susannah!—how you cried when we found that you would die first. You are pale now. This is foolish—you see how wrong we were; for I am going to die directly, and you are well and happy, and have long *years* to live. Besides, there 's nothing horrible in death—nothing; it comes upon me like a rapturous dream—as something glorious, that is to make amends for all my troubles here."

"Do not talk so, Mary—I cannot bear it——"

"Bear it! Oh! sister, if you could feel as I do now—if you could lie awake and see ecstatic visions—if you could see a splendid world of universal harmony—a gorgeous picture of

happiness—all smiles, but no loud laughter—all happy, but none drunk with happiness. Stay sister—stay. I am not raving—indeed I am not. Nurse, stand back, and let me talk to my dear sister while I have time.—You know I am going away very shortly, and it 's a shame to waste my last moments. There—put my darling boy close—no—closer to me. There—now leave us for a time. And now, sister Susannah, don't be afraid of me—I am not delirious—feel my hand; it is as cold as marble (the hand was hot as fire)—come nearer—look how my boy sleeps. Well, you *will*, won't you? think of what I 've said. It is so wicked to talk and think as we did. We were so fond of earth—Susannah, how wicked we were! that—but He will forgive us—we forgot our God! How could we do so! But I 've prayed so for both of us—begged of God to turn our thoughts to him always. We haven't been good—we have both been led astray by the world. We have been too proud—too overbearing. But we will amend—we will do better. Where is he?"

"Who?—my dear child, you wander!"

"No—Henry. Where is he?"

"I 'm sure I don't know."

"You will be reconciled—you will all love him for my sake. We have treated him shamefully, poor fellow. You must show him every kindness in your power, and try and repair the wrongs we have done him. He deserves to be happy. Susannah, you cannot—will never know or understand what I have suffered the last few days on his account. You know how we were engaged for months, and months, and months—how kind and good he was to me—how he humoured me—and you know too well how I—(I do not reproach you, dear)—how I, taught by you, wronged *him*. What a noble heart he has! How firm he is! How affectionate! And how devoted he was to me! Idiot that I was to fling away the noble passion of earth's noblest creation, like a feather——"

"You forget, my dear, that your family demanded the sacrifice——"

"*My* family did not demand it.—You, Mrs. De Gospitch, on the part of your husband, asked it, and obtained it. Not a word about *my* husband; I have forgiven him—it is enough—do not call me by his name—I sicken when I hear it. What was the satisfaction of my wicked pride weighed against two broken hearts?"

"You must not talk so vehemently; the doctor has forbidden it." And Mrs. De Gospitch rang for the nurse. "There dear, good-bye for the present; I have some calls to make. I'll see you again in the evening."

Mrs. De Gospitch threw herself into her carriage, and thought of her sister's "ravings." No—she had drawn out her plan, and she would adhere to it throughout. Her pride should be satisfied—Mary was not in her right senses, she was sure.

Marian returned home from her interview with Mrs. De Gospitch in a state of uncontrollable anger. It was not in her nature to "take things quietly." She had all the gentleness of her sex without its weakness; she was, as a lady writer says well, "feminine, but not effeminate." She knew perfectly well that the haughty woman who had awed her was her superior in the world's eye, and her inferior in all that makes a woman a holy and adorable creation. And Marian's heart was impressed with the grandeur of charity and with the pettiness of worldly pride. Yet she was angry—angry with herself. She had suffered herself to be browbeaten by a piece of pomp that should have excited her contempt at once, as it did now. She felt her weakness, and was ashamed of it. Dinah heartily sympathized with her sister, and was equally indignant with her. Dinah proposed to punish Mrs. De Gospitch by putting her in a novel—she would make an exquisite character; besides the incident itself was so very dramatic, as an actress once said upon hearing of poor Haydon's lamentable death. But this revenge was too severe in the opinion of Marian.

When Henry returned home in the evening he noticed Marian's sadness, and asked its reason.

"My pride has been wounded," said Marian.

"Wounded!"

"Yes; I have been to Mrs. Grasy's——"

"And she received you badly. On her death-bed too! Good God! how lost the woman is!"

"I did not see Mrs. Grasy; but I had an interview with her sister."

"Say no more, Marian—I can understand your mortification now. Heaven be thanked that it was not Mary."

"Mrs. De Gospitch behaved most rudely."

"When you say that you had an interview with Mrs. De

Gospitch, Marian, you fully explain your grievance. Now you must forget all about it."

Marian did not forget, but she ceased troubling.

* * * * * *

In the still hour of midnight, when restful sleep was upon the inmates of Carnation Cottage, and policemen held undisturbed possession of the road, a loud knock rang through the house, putting a full stop to the snoring of the maid servants, and to the peaceful dreams of the inmates generally. This knock was repeated at judicious intervals until Henry made his appearance at the door.

"It's life and death!" said the man.

"I'm not a doctor," said Henry.

"No—but you know Mrs. Grasy, sir, don't you? Your name's Gospitch, an't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, Mrs. Grasy's a dyin', and she wants to have a sight of you afore she does die; so, please sir, you'd better turn out at once, and see her."

"I'll be there directly." And Henry went to consult with his wife upon the subject. She urged him to obey the summons, and he did obey it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JOY'S GUEST.

"There is a lean fellow beats all conquerors."

"Oh! Joy, most of all, loves to see death at her festive board; for he is himself a joy, and the last rapture of earth. Only the vulgar can confound the heavenward soaring flight of humanity into the far land of the spring with the mock funereal phenomena on the earth; in the same manner as they take the hooting of the owls, on their departure for warmer climes, for the rattling of ghosts."—RICHTER.

A TRAVELLER who has passed the desert and thirsted, and who is upon the borders of a country of sweet springs and luxuriant pasturage, tastes but faintly the grand delight of a peaceful death. Paint not Death, O worldlings! (if ye have hope) with ghastly jaws and empty sockets; paint him rather with brow serene and features grand and comely, for he bringeth joy in his train to all who fear not his presence. The mind was vulgar that conceived Death in the form of a skeleton—as though decay were Death's mightiest handiwork. We call to mind the putrid clay he buries in the earth, too often forgetting that he saves the kernel ere he destroys the shell: Death—the Emancipator; not Death—the fell Destroyer. There are few who wish to rise from their death-bed—few who shudder at the touch of the monster they once dreaded. And Mary, dying calmly, thought not of the outer world with regret, nor wished to mingle with it again. She had sipped sufficiently of the draught of life; and the gall that had been mixed in it for her had done its work. Death makes us quaff to his better acquaintance in bitter cups. She felt that she was about to take leave of her earthly friends at the gates of heaven. Not one thought of earth tainted her complete preparation for her fate. How grand and solid the raft faith builds from the wreck of a life, to bear the soul to the glorious haven where passion is not, and where love knows no abating! She had prayed for her husband with her whole heart—prayed

that he might be spared, and become the just protector of her child. One appeal to the forgiveness of a man she had wronged, and she had done with life—a few short words, and Death might raise his scymitar.

A messenger disturbed the rest of Mrs. De Gospitch about the same time that the summons reached Henry; and she arose to visit her sister's couch.

Within the house, upon the threshold of which stood Death, all was quiet—all voices whispered. In the sick-chamber all was terribly gloomy. A long-wicked candle alone lighted the room, and the nurse was so engrossed with her patient that she heeded not the dimness of the flame. Pale as a withered rose, the youthful matron lay on the couch of death—not in agony, not in sleep, but in a state of utter prostration. Her quick and faint breathing told that life was all but spent—that the machine was nearly worn out; a few hours, and it would be broken up. Beside this heavenward-departing beauty a baby boy was nestled, pillowed on his dying mother's arm. Ruddy crimson health was daubed upon the infant's pulpy cheek, and its quiet rest and even respirations showed the fulness of the life that ran through all its veins. So ill and pitiable the creature appeared who gasped the close air which her child inhaled so freely, that, at first, the child's state seemed to be preferable to the mother's—one moment's thought, and the preference must be reversed.

The boy had perhaps years of suffering—of woe and wrong to contend with and conquer; the mother was on the brink of a glorious eternity—her battle was over, and her victory at hand.

When Mrs. De Gospitch arrived, Mary was in a swoon. The nurse held her forefinger to her lip, and motioned her patient's sister to be silent.

"I 'm afeared she 'll go off in one of these swoons," whispered the nurse.

"Has the doctor been?"

"He can do nothing. You must be prepared, ma'am; she can't live through the night."

Presently Mary's eyes unclosed, and a smile—very faint—broke upon her rigid features. She tried to extend her hand; but her arm trembled convulsively in the effort, and remained upon the bed. Susannah took the damp and heavy palm, and kissed it, and bathed it with scalding tears.

The nurse withdrew.

"My dear Susannah, do think of what I said this morning. I was quite myself when I told you how wicked we had been," murmured Mary, as she looked at her sister with eyes glittering like a thousand brilliants.

Susannah was dumb—she had nothing to say. She had come prepared to see her sister die—not to hear admonitions in such awful moments. There was no escape—she must listen now. The speaker raved not; the voice that told her her faults was eloquent with love, faith, and charity—not maddened with the heat of a raging fever.

"Susannah," continued the solemn speaker in a deeper voice; "do believe me—I have prayed with my whole soul for you—prayed that you may be spared the bitter vengeance outraged Providence has heaped upon me. I have deserved all I've suffered tenfold, for I've been very wicked. I would die at peace with all; and, above all, with him I have most wronged——"

"Mr. Henry Gospitch is come," whispered the nurse.

"Here he comes—I cannot support this."

Henry advanced to the bed-side, and, without noticing Mrs. De Gospitch, fixed his eyes upon the frail form—the phantom of his early passion. Her eyes met his; and oh, the eloquence of that mute meeting! The sympathy was too intense for the jarring of words; forgiveness and love—unutterable love—were in her mute looks, and both were satisfied. Mrs. De Gospitch retired from the bed-side. Mary motioned Henry to approach; she took his hand, tried to raise it to her lips, but failed—the effort was too great for her.

"Are you happy, Henry?" she sobbed almost inaudibly.

"I am, Mary."

"So am I now! Heaven! Heaven! this is merciful." A bright smile broke upon her face, like sunshine upon a gloomy landscape. She now had strength to raise his hand to her dry and burning lips; and she kissed the hand rapturously—then turned her large deep eyes, and looked as though she could read his soul's emotion in his face.

"I thought to meet you a fallen enemy," she said sweetly; "but you see I am vanquished." And almost laughing, and with an awful cheerfulness, she continued—"You ought to be proud of the victory, Henry. See how much you have done.

Your brother's position was given to him—you have won yours. You should be the prouder man."

The woman who sat apart—the woman who had "world" written upon her heart indelibly—frowned upon her dying sister as she spoke the latter words.

"Yes, you have done noble things, and we have treated you badly. Your wife——" Here Mary paused. His wife! It was she who should have borne that title.

"Your wife came like an angel to help me in my troubles. Kiss her for me—love her for her goodness to your old enemy. Now, Henry—the words choke me—do—do—you must forgive me."

"Forgive you!"

"Yes. Generous to the last. Oh, what a heart I flung from me! You know, Henry, that I have wronged you—cruelly, badly wronged you. Forgive me—do; but I must tell you all. I have prayed for strength to accomplish my bitter undertaking. When you embarked in trade—a step for which I honour you now—I was taught to despise you. There is a sneer on your lip—oh, Henry, in mercy hear me! You do not, shall not, know who taught me so bad a lesson; you shall not hear how I struggled with myself before I fell."

Henry started. "Fell!" Mrs. De Gospitch started. "Fell!"

"I know your thoughts, Henry. I *was married;* but when I swore to love a man I loved not—when I shared the bed of him whose heart I shared not—then, though my fault was sanctioned by worldly precept, I fell—fell as low as womankind can fall. Forgive me—do——"

"I have—long ago."

The mother held her child to her bosom, and wept, and wondered what would become of it when she was gone.

"The father of your child is away—may I replace him?"

"Now I am happy. Henry, my last breath shall be laden with a blessing for you." Mary fell back upon her pillow; Mrs. De Gospitch and the nurse advanced and watched her motionless form. The boy was still upon her arm, and she held his little hand in hers. Her breathing was inaudible. Half an hour was so passed, in terrible suspense—the witnesses of this solemn part of life were worn out. Presently the sufferer's lips quivered, her hand grasped the child's fingers till the little fellow cried with pain, and then her

entire form was almost imperceptibly agitated; and then all was calm and motionless for ever. The angels had gained a sister spirit, and the undertakers—a customer.

Death is but the last line of a chapter.

CONCLUSION.

"I *will* have feathers to the hearse," declared Mrs. De Gospitch. "The dignity of your family, De Gospitch, demands it."

"The dignity of *my* family is not at stake, Susannah."

"But the dignity of mine is. What would those De Bruns, who live a few doors off, say to see a bit of a hearse, with two ill-looking horses, drive to the door, and carry poor dear Mary away like a pauper? I tell you, De Gospitch, my sister *shall* be buried respectably. I'm ashamed to hear you talk of money at such a moment."

"Do as you will. Have a procession reaching from the house to the cemetery if you please; only don't bother me about it. I've other matters to think about."

"John, show Mr. Blackjack in."

Mr. Blackjack was worth knowing; his heart was in his profession. And when we say that he was a first-rate undertaker, we accord him no mean praise. It requires more than mediocre talent to become a good undertaker—to "perform" funerals well. The actor on the stage is applauded for his performance; but the modest undertaker, who, for the price of a walking funeral, assumes the part of a melancholy man, and, in consideration of the extra fees attendant upon a carriage burial, acts the part of a sobbing, irreconcilable mourner, is never crowned with laurels. This is palpably unjust. In what is the play actor the superior of the funeral performer? "Ay—in what?" echoes Mr. Blackjack. Mr. Blackjack appeared before Mrs. De Gospitch, looking the very picture of sorrow—a sorrow too deep for tears.

"I come to receive your orders, madam, on this very melancholy occasion. A carriage funeral, of course?"

"Certainly."

"And, if your deep sorrow, madam, will permit you to give attention to such a subject—what coffin shall I say—oak, I presume—and lead. Some prefer mahogany and velvet—mahogany is the most fashionable now."

"Mahogany then."

"Precisely so, madam. Four horses, of course?"

"Yes—four."

"And two coaches—also four horses?"

"Yes."

"Feathers?"

"Yes—feathers."

"And feather-bearers. In fact, a funeral becoming the station of the deceased lady. Shall we put name and age on the plate?"

"Certainly."

"The hour and day, if you please, madam!"

"On Saturday, at twelve."

"Very well, madam, your orders shall be punctually attended to. Good morning, madam—good morning, sir.—I beg your pardon, madam—mutes, I presume."

"Yes."

"Thank you, madam—your humble servant."

And so the all-absorbing pride of Mrs. De Gospitch outlived her dying sister's repentant admonitions. Susannah professed to regard Mary's last words as the delirious mumbling of one insane with fever; and to the world—that is to say, to her world—she told a very pathetic history of the deceased's resignation and peace, and regretted to that world that it had fallen to her sister's lot to be so miserably abandoned. Yet, in the relation of the captain's short-comings, did Mrs. De Gospitch condescend to draw upon her imagination for her facts—making her wishes realities. She told her world that the captain's difficulties were unforeseen—occasioned by some imprudent expenditure, and a distressing tightness in the money market—and that the valiant soldier had retired to France in a state of utter dejection. He was man enough to bear his pecuniary embarrassments; but his sympathetic nature bled when he found that it was absolutely necessary to leave his charming little wife behind him. She trembled

(before her world) when she thought of the captain; for she felt assured that he would do something desperate when he was made aware of the eternal desolation of his hearth—he would never survive it.

Men are wonderfully adaptable—they can bend themselves to any fate; they are as willow trees, pliant before the storm; the storm once over, and they are erect again. Mrs. De Gospitch's version of her sister's household difficulties and death fell from her lips smoothly as oil; and her hearers departed with physiognomies expressive of profoundest pity. "Poor thing! Only been married eighteen months! How shocking!"

Perhaps the story was really shocking to some of Mrs. De Gospitch's acquaintance; but it must be put forth as evidence of the pliability of noble man's nature, that Captain Grasy did survive the loss of his partner. So heroic was his fortitude under this severe calamity, that he was seen to smile, and smoke, and drink, and distinguish hearts from spades, only two days after the news had reached him. Valiant soldier that he was, he laughed—some said, at the misfortune—and called upon the Fates to do their worst.

The captain left many friends in London who would have been delighted to hear of his whereabouts; but the soldier was a modest, retiring individual, and though, he felt extremely flattered by the anxiety of certain Londoners, he did not care to satisfy their very warm and earnest curiosity. Strange as this delicate forbearance may appear in a rough soldier, it was nevertheless in perfect harmony with the characteristics of the captain's nature. The captain, probably, had very good reasons for his determination—some friends whispered to him that there was a possibility of exchanging certain English bills with foreign brokers; whereupon Grasy emphatically declared, in a true spirit of Christian charity, that he would not be the means of ruining a respectable foreigner by allowing a close-fisted Jew to do him, as he assuredly would, if he persuaded the poor fellow to buy paper that never would be of any value whatever to its owner. We may trace in this heroic determination the glorious magnanimity of the captain's conduct generally. If he did any body, he knew who to do, and, it must be added, how to do them. He did not go to work in a sneaking manner—he patronised royalty's tradesmen at once; and it was hard, he

said—extremely hard—if, with some thousand tailors in London, a man with mustachios, whatever his income might be, could not continue to dress well. He hated monopoly in any shape; and, to prove that he was an anti-monopolist in practice as well as in theory, he was proud in being able to say, upon his honour, as a gentleman and a soldier, that he, Captain Grasy, had patronised no less than eight tailors within the year—a profusion of patronage that must awaken the best sentiments of gratitude in the bosoms of the very braid of the worshipful Merchant Tailors' Company.

* * * * * *

Marian lived to feel a mother's happiness; she also lived to see Mary Grasy's boy grow fond of herself and husband.

Miss Dinah Jackson has fulfilled her threat—she has given her love adventures and trials to the world; but the harsh, ungrateful world has not ordered many copies of her production, though the critic of the "Devil's Dyke Gazette" did his utmost in the way of puffing. The said critic vowed with a critic's eloquence that *A Lover's Faithlessness* should be in every lady's boudoir; and that he could only say that he hoped every body would peruse the work with as much interest, and as much gratitude to the fair authoress, as he had gathered from its delightful pages.

Miss Dinah Jackson treasured one firm conviction in her tender bosom—it was this: that the above-quoted critic was a man of sound and impartial judgment. The young authoress was a philosopher, inasmuch as she did not mourn the ill success of her three volumes; and she found delight in reading passages therefrom to the select and agreeable circle in which she moved. That this circle was amused with these readings, we cannot venture to affirm; but it is certain that the guests at Carnation Cottage often left at an extremely early hour: whether this early retirement was necessitated by over-excitement or a soporific propensity, the reader shall determine for himself. Laudanum is effective in certain cases; but it is not half so potent as a good heavy pamphlet on the Banking Question, read by a thorough bass voice. We should certainly recommend doctors to prescribe certain books when they want to send their patients to sleep. For instance, in a mild case of hysteria, why not, instead of so many ounces of laudanum, prescribe a certain number of pages to be read to the patient from the heaviest political pamphlet—or, if the

patient be in a very critical state and a strong soporific is required, why not administer a leader from the "Morning Herald" in the morning, and one from the "Standard" in the evening?

* * * * * *

If the reader will follow us—will without trembling accompany us into one of those localities known to ladies as "horrid nasty places, where a set of men sit together and drink till nobody knows what hour," and listen with us to the settlement of a profound argument between Mr. Blandly Reeks and Mr. Shakspeare Sheridan Jackson, we shall have much pleasure in enabling him to hear the eloquence of these gentlemen. Persons who dislike arguments will not derive any amusement from the following pages; and so we warn them that they had better close the book at this point.

The two authors sat together in close conference on the evening in question. Coarse laughter and ribald jesting was going on around them; but they were so wrapt up in their argument, that they heeded not nor heard the licentiousness of their neighbours. Before them stood two tumblers of grog, which they sipped at intervals to clear their throats, so often dry with talking. Blandly Reeks was a very young man—so young, in fact, that the old gentlemen of his club would cast their eyes heavenwards when he called for spirits. Blandly Reeks was often told by elderly friends that he ought to "rough it"—that it was the vocation of a young man to bear the brunt of monetary distresses, and feel the difference between comfort and discomfort. The said elderly gentlemen would observe, when Mr. Reeks had the temerity to order a second course, that they were glad to see young fellows could do it; and that all they knew was, that when they were his age they were glad to get a mutton-chop every day, they could tell him. And, though these elderly individuals were experienced men in their several capacities, they did not show their sense or their logical profundity in this matter. Perhaps it is very proper and very useful that young men should "rough it;" but it will take a long time to persuade them to undergo the annoyances of roughing it while they have means at hand to smooth it. It has been shrewdly doubted whether early unhappiness and penury teach a man benevolent aspirations or show to him the better part of life. To return however to the logicians whose conversation we have undertaken to report. The argument began in this way:—

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. Have you heard the sad news about the Grasys? The captain's off, and his wife's dead and buried. The captain is terrifically involved; and when Mrs. Grasy died there was a man in possession.

Mr. Blandly Reeks. Terrible! terrible! And what does Mrs. De Gospitch say to this? Does she bear the misfortune well?

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. She bears it like a lady. Mrs. De Gospitch is a noble woman. She had a splendid funeral for her sister, no end of feathers—in fact, a perfect thing in its way.

Mr. Blandly Reeks. What has become of the boy? There was a young boy, was there not?

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. Oh, yes. A squalling young buffer, miserably like his father. I don't know what's become of him. I suppose they've packed him off into the country to feed upon pork and porridge.

Mr. Blandly Reeks. Kind—extremely affectionate—the result, Shakspeare, of worldly wisdom. Give me the wisdom of the heart.

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. Oh, nonsense! The wisdom of the heart is a capital thing in theory, and if one gets a good plot, works it up into a good marketable novel, as a moral; but in every-day life it doesn't do. I suppose you would have let the girl marry De Gospitch's scampish brother—a grocer! Pretty she would have looked serving moist and good cheap sixes to plebeian purchasers. The thing, as a wind up for a story, would be capitally romantic, but very disagreeable when it comes to the rub. I shouldn't mind marrying a sister to a retail tradesman, *in a book*, but I should be disgusted to hear of Arabella's marriage with any body who was not a gentleman by birth and in a good position. And you know very well—as well as I do—that you wouldn't like a connection of yours to stand behind a retail counter.

Mr. Blandly Reeks. We know very little of each other, Jackson—very little. You mistake me. My principles are in my heart, yours are in your mouth—a wide difference, depend upon it. You say that I should blush to own a small tradesman for my kindred: do I blush?

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. Certainly not.

Mr. Blandly Reeks. You see, then, how wrong you are. I am the brother of a linen-draper—the brother of a man

whom I respect and love. And now, Jackson, let me beg of you to throw aside the foolish pride allowable in purse-exalted women, but beneath the dignity of a man. I can understand the blindness of a woman in such matters ; but it puzzles me to comprehend how a man can forget all in his pride. Forgive me for quoting myself, but I wrote a great truth when I wrote—

> But high-born womanhood oft will, with pride,
> Beckon the craving mendicant aside.
> Woman will pity all those scourged by fate :
> She seldom stoops to love below her state.

I have studied the characters of the De Gospitches ; and, if you have patience to hear me out, I will explain the result of my observations.

I now tell you in confidence that I was once ashamed of my brother—once, in my ignorance of the relative duties of man, conceived that there was an indelible brand in the latter that separated the man with a profession from the man with retail trading for his means of living. Mark the extreme narrowness of my views. I did not object to wholesale commerce, I should not have been afraid to own a city man for a relation ; but it was the retail commerce—the small dealing—that was the blot upon the man, in my eyes. And so I have kept the fact of my brother's trade a secret. I am alive to new impressions—I notice every thing—little that comes before me escapes my attention. And when I mixed with men, and saw their petty distinctions, I was almost ashamed of my fellow-creatures. I saw that the man who sold a hogshead of sugar was an invited guest at the tables of fashionable people, while the man who sold pounds of the same commodity was a proscribed person. I reasoned with myself upon the point calmly, and, I think, impartially. At first I saw some show of reason in the distinction. I thought that it might be a fair conclusion to suppose that a man engaged in large and intricate speculations, and with adequate means within his power to perfect himself in the accomplishments of a gentleman, was more likely to be entitled to the position of a conventional gentleman than the small trader, whose business was confined to his counter and whose means were generally sufficiently limited. I thought, too, that it was necessary to draw the line somewhere, and then I began to consider whether society had not drawn it very

fairly. Now listen—De Gospitch's grandfather was a small tradesman—a man shut out by society from its more intellectual circles; judge whether he deserved this exclusion. Josiah Gospitch (the De is a recent addition to the patronymic) was the son of a very wealthy and accomplished squire, who owned considerable property in North Wales; but, like many squires, he was prodigal, ruined his property, and died, leaving his son, Josiah, an accomplished beggar. Josiah, though he did not shine as a scholar, was what society calls a well-educated man. He could write, read, draw, and understood music as well as most gentlemen, and he could speak French tolerably. It was no fault of his that his intellect was neither vigorous nor comprehensive. He was not competent to earn an immediate livelihood by a profession—none of his friends had interest in town, and so he was compelled to take a shop in Chester, where he struggled for many years. In this lowly abode—in this retail trading-house—De Gospitch's father first saw the light. Meanwhile old Josiah worked hard—fought hard—fought as a desperate man fights—till he became a very wealthy and influential man. He died in the zenith of his commercial successes, leaving the bulk of his property to De Gospitch's father. I dare say you have heard all about old Gospitch.

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. He was an absurd character, I believe.

Mr. Blandly Reeks. He wasn't a genius, by all accounts. He was a proud fellow—was engrossed in the formation of plans that were to make his family prominent in the country. You know very well that I am perhaps the last person in the world to quarrel with a man's ambition; and yet I do believe that ambition, blindly worked out, is a positive sin. That there are linked with ambition all the bitter yearnings of our nature, I thoroughly and at once admit; but you must allow that ambition, like all other passions, may carry a man to dangerous excesses. Old Gospitch was madly ambitious on this point. To effect the conventional advancement of his family was the sole aim—the one exclusive purpose of his life; and any means were welcome that advanced his point. Well, he taught his child this maxim, so full of hazard,—"Rise, never mind how—rise!" and De Gospitch, schooled to follow this dangerous path, has obeyed his tutor's instructions to the letter. The old man forgot that, in inculcating a reck-

lessness of means, he made expediency the one grand virtue of life. Now, the point to which I wish to draw your attention particularly is this—did not old Josiah Gospitch deserve to be ranked as a gentleman? You will say, perhaps, that I found a rule upon a single example; but, if you will take the trouble to examine more nearly the construction of society, you will see that I am contending for a very large class of the community. The great majority of tradesmen are well educated men—fully equal in the grand essentials of education to professional men, and as fully entitled to an honourable position in society. How many Josiah Gospitches are now looked down upon because they have descended to the indignities of retail trading! Mark, for instance, the conduct pursued by De Gospitch with regard to his brother Henry. Do you call it considerate, generous, or even manly? I make every allowance for his wife's influence and innate haughtiness; but I really think, nevertheless, that no liberal person can commend his behaviour in the matter. And the fate of Mrs. Grasy will, I hope, have a beneficial influence over her sister and De Gospitch. I always pitied her as Miss Maturin; she was ill at ease in her sister's house. I could see that she was not happy—that a troubled conscience was making rapid inroads upon that fragile frame. I watched her more narrowly than you may have supposed, and I saw plainly that she did not give her heart to her husband. She was conning her sister's task of pride, and she was rapidly learning her governess's maxims. She was determined to get the black into the nine (as a friend has forcibly expressed it) as soon as possible. But, Jackson, if you had watched the hourly torture of this weak spirit, if you had taken the trouble to analyse her heart's misgivings, and the wretched pride that racked her inmost being, you would now say with me that those petty, those paltry and absurd distinctions are ridiculous and barbarous in a country that pretends to extraordinary refinement. Upon my word, I believe we *are* a nation of shopkeepers; and many of our worthy citizens nail their intellects to their counters like valueless coinage. We boast of our commerce, and despise our smaller trades. We rejoice in our enormous trade, yet turn our noses up at the humble men connected with trade. Our commercial relations are our prop; yet we despise the splinters of that prop. I can understand pride of birth—I might myself be proud of a lineage reaching to the Con-

quest; but this pride is only good so long as it is an incentive to noble deeds. I know no more contemptible being than the hollow-skulled descendant of a house of heroes; but I know no more gratifying position than that of enjoying the renown for personal brilliancy that has descended through many generations. I should like to have a link in a chain of heroes; but I must confess that I should prefer obscurity and humble birth to a glory wholly borrowed from ancestry. Isn't it a pitiful state of things to see such a girl as Mary Maturin flung to misery, to satisfy the paltry pride of an auctioneer's daughter? Or when you think over the matter seriously—when you put the woman's heart in the balance—what an utterly ridiculous proceeding it appears altogether! Worldly prudence is a virtue; but, when the heart is at war with this virtue, better sacrifice the virtue than yield up the heart. Where the heart is not fed, the daintiest food palls upon the palate. How ridiculous, too, to make this sacrifice for Captain Grasy—a gambler, without money to pay his debts, or a heart to feel for his victims!

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson. Yes; I must confess I always thought they made too much of him. I had a letter from the fellow the other day, brought over by a friend and put into the post in London. By the by, I think I have it in my pocket: yes; I 'll read it:—

"Dear Shakspeare,—I have no doubt my sudden departure surprised you and the fellows at the club; but there was no help for it: I was obliged to bolt. I have just heard that my wife 's dead: poor thing! She was only three-and-twenty; but I never thought she 'd live long. If I may be permitted a bit of facetiousness on so solemn a subject—I thought that her vital spark would soon have an extinguisher. You see I was right. I hear that Mr. Henry Gospitch has taken charge of the baby: I 'm glad to hear it, for, by what I 've seen of him, I should think he must be a decent sort of fellow, and will do the best he can for the young one. If you should come across him by any chance, perhaps you would not mind telling him from me, that if it should ever be in my power to reward his attention to the child, he may rely, upon my honour as a soldier and a gentleman, that I shall not fail to do so. I 've had some fun since I 've been away: nothing wonderfully great, but pleasant, on the whole. I 've met

Lieutenant Rattat. What a jolly fellow he is! We went to the Boulogne races together. They 'd some very decent horse-flesh there—but a great deal of cat's-meat. I think foreign races are always failures. However, all the jockeys were Englishmen, and all the English horses won—two facts that made me still prouder of Old England. I did not back for much—but I betted well, and won in each case. It 's a pity I did not go in for larger sums, but it 's no use regretting my stupid prudence now.

" I 've been to Paris again. Little was doing there, so I left in disgust. By the by, Rattat has grown a tremendous pair of whiskers—and mustachios to match—a prodigality in hair quite fearful to contemplate. It must cost him a considerable item to provide these bushy appendages with the requisite grease. He seems to be flourishing: he talks largely —spends largely—and grows largely. He is as fat as a porpoise.

" Who do you think I saw outside the Académie Royale? Clara Crummy. You recollect Clara? She is the pretty ballet-girl who had a lobster-salad with us one night at Lynn's, when she would persist in having half-and-half, though we all wanted her to take bottled stout in preference. She is doing the exceedingly-grand at Paris—she aspires to the dignities of first-fiddle playing, and no mistake. No second-rate business for her now. She has got an ogress of a mother with her, and goes in for the première danseuse and propriety. Whether she will maintain these assumptions long is a matter of speculation. All I know is, Lord Foppus is at the theatre whenever she performs; and I have noticed that the instant she appears on the stage his glass is applied to his eyes.

" Tantaut, the celebrated billiard-player, is dead. I was much grieved to hear of his death—exceedingly grieved. He was a very good fellow, and looked over me at the table. He has pocketed a pretty sixpence or two of mine in his time; and so you will perceive that my report is unalloyed with selfishness. I am free to confess that he thrashed me regularly at billiards; but I was his superior at cards, and he knew it, for he professed, in my presence, to eschew card-playing as an effeminate game.

" That Dumas has been cutting an extraordinary figure in Paris. The grand object of his eccentric life seems to be to

do every thing unlike every body else: and, if this be so, he succeeds *à merveille.*

"I hear they are papering and painting the club: one comfort—I 'm away. If there 's one thing I detest more than another in this world, it 's the smell of paint. Really there ought to be a measure introduced into the House to compel painters to mix their colours with Eau de Cologne, or even lavender water would be an improvement upon the present detestable compound. The measure might be called the Anti-Nausea Bill. Make a present of this suggestion to the Hon. George Grows, M.P., or, if you particularly wish to keep it for your own use, you might introduce it into one of your leaders.

"I don't know that, I 've any thing more to say—yes—I had almost forgotten it—can you oblige me with the loan of £20? You shall be repaid punctually in the course of a few months, when my next quarter's rents come in. The deuce take it that my estates are in Ireland! If they were in England, I might get my rent without running the risk of being shot for my audacity in asking for it. If you can so oblige me, you can direct to me at the Poste Restante, Paris. They will forward any thing to me all right.

"Your old friend,

"Grasy.

"To Shakspeare Sheridan Jackson."

I haven't sent him any money, and I 've peculiar and very substantial reasons for not doing so—I haven't a sixpence to spare. I can't make out why he married Miss Maturin: she hadn't any money—not a farthing, to my certain knowledge, and she was not wonderfully handsome.

Mr. Blandly Reeks.—That is exactly the point I 've lately mastered. He married her, thinking she had money. He knew that she was not an heiress in her own right, but he also knew that her brother-in-law was an extremely rich man—fond of making an appearance in the world; and so he shrewdly calculated that De Gospitch would give Miss Maturin something in the shape of dowry. But in this he was disappointed; his wife did not bring him a sixpence. I never thought very highly of the captain, but I did not suspect that he was capable of the brutality with which he has sent his miserable wife to an early grave. The De Gospitches are

aristocrats run mad. I could excuse or applaud political ambition, fairly fought for; but it seems to me such a small grasping to aim at family distinction, with money only for the arrow.

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson.—Now for a quotation, Reeks. You know what you said about ambition in the opening passages of your satirical poem?—

> "Ambition! mightiest of human springs;
> By statesmen courted, and caressed by kings—
> The poet's fire, and the patriot's prop—
> The cant of fools—the plaything of the fop—
> Spirit of all the nobler flights that move
> Man to treat manhood with a brother's love.
> Ambition stalks uncheck'd throughout the land—
> The insane leader of a desp'rate band
> Of preachers, patriots, and lynx-eyed fools
> Who spit their venom on the man that rules;
> Envy their principle, and dull cant their gain,
> False priests in philanthropy's holy train."

That's touching them off rather severely; but the fellows deserve it.

Mr. Blandly Reeks.—Deserve it—ay, they deserve any treatment. I honour earnest men, be their creed Mahommedanism, and their opinions despotic; but I hate canters, be their professed religion the most enlightened, and their political creed universal brotherhood. You know very well that I am not for reducing society to a dead level; I know that, so long as human passions last, superiority and inferiority will be felt and known; but I should certainly wish to see distinctions more sensibly made, and classes more equitably moulded. I sigh not for Utopian regulations; I ask nothing preposterous; I ask for a fair recognition of every man's capabilities, be they small or grand. I ask that a man may be judged by his intellect, not by the weight of his purse—by his gentleness, refinement, and acquirements—not by the extent of his warehouses.

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson.—We shall never agree; it's no use arguing the question. I acknowledge the aristocratic tendency of my principles. I shouldn't like to be persuaded that I was no better than my shoe-maker. It's very pleasing to believe that one is a somebody—removed above the vulgar crowd. I look upon society as one vast crockery shop,

and you innovators as mad bulls frisking about in the shop, now breaking an old pattern to pieces, now trampling upon an antique vase. Well, to carry out the simile, I look upon myself as one of the choice specimens of Dresden skill, put high above the vulgar porcelain, in a cozy nook, where no harm can come to me. By the by, have you seen the new piece at the Haymarket?

Mr. Blandly Reeks.—No—is it worth any thing?

Mr. Shakspeare Jackson.—I believe you. Let us put the British constitution in our pockets, and be off to see it: it 's the second piece. Waiter, what have we to pay?

THE END.

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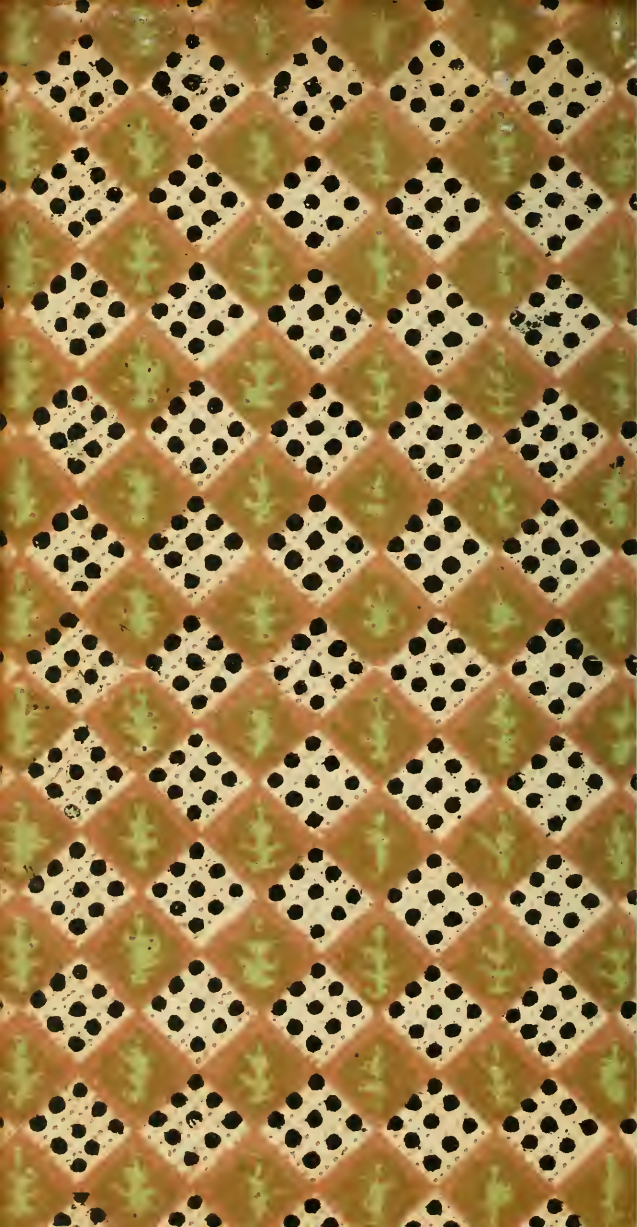

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