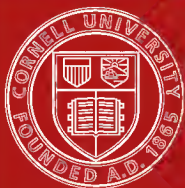


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NOVELS
OF
SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTON

Library Edition

HISTORICAL ROMANCES

^d
VOL. I.





“His countship,” said I, “will accept your invitation.”

Devereux, I. 80.

DEVEREUX.

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(*LORD LYTTON.*)

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

1896.

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COBNETT

NOTE TO THE EDITION OF 1852.

If this work possess any merit of a narrative order, it will perhaps be found in its fidelity to the characteristics of an autobiography. The reader must, indeed, comply with the condition exacted from his imagination and faith, — that is to say, he must take the hero of the story upon the terms for which Morton Devereux himself stipulates; and regard the supposed count as one who lived and wrote in the last century, but who, dimly conscious that the tone of his mind harmonized less with his own age than with that which was to come, left his biography as a legacy to the present. This assumption (which is not an unfair one), liberally conceded, and allowed to account for occasional anachronisms in sentiment, Morton Devereux will be found to write as a man who is not constructing a romance, but narrating a life. He gives to love, its joy and its sorrow, its due share in an eventful and passionate existence; but it is the share of biography, not of fiction. He selects from the crowd of personages with whom he is brought into contact, not only those who directly influence his personal destinies, but those of whom a sketch or an anecdote would appear to a biographer likely to have interest for posterity. Louis XIV., the Regent Orleans, Peter the Great, Lord

Bolingbroke, and others less eminent, but still of mark in their own day, if growing obscure to ours, are introduced, not for the purposes and agencies of fiction, but as an autobiographer's natural illustrations of the men and manners of his time.

And here be it pardoned if I add that so minute an attention has been paid to accuracy that even in petty details, and in relation to historical characters but slightly known to the ordinary reader, a critic deeply acquainted with the memoirs of the age will allow that the novelist is always merged in the narrator.

Unless the author has failed more in his design than, on revising the work of his early youth with the comparatively impartial eye of maturer judgment, he is disposed to concede, Morton Devereux will also be found with that marked individuality of character which distinguishes the man who has lived and labored from the hero of romance. He admits into his life but few passions, — those are tenacious and intense; conscious that none who are around him will sympathize with his deeper feelings, he veils them under the sneer of an irony which is often affected and never mirthful. Wherever we find him, after surviving the brief episode of love, we feel — though he does not tell us so — that he is alone in the world. He is represented as a keen observer and a successful actor in the busy theatre of mankind, precisely in proportion as no cloud from the heart obscures the cold clearness of the mind. In the scenes of pleasure there is no joy in his smile; in the contests of ambition there is no quicker beat of the pulse. Attaining in the prime of manhood such position and honor as would first content and then sate a man of this mould, he has nothing left

but to discover the vanities of this world, and to ponder on the hopes of the next; and his last passion dying out in the retribution that falls on his foe, he finally sits down in retirement to rebuild the ruined home of his youth, unconscious that to that solitude the Destinies have led him to repair the waste and ravages of his own melancholy soul.

But while outward dramatic harmonies between cause and effect, and the proportionate agencies which characters introduced in the drama bring to bear upon event and catastrophe, are carefully shunned,—as real life does for the most part shun them,—yet there is a latent coherence in all that, by influencing the mind, do, though indirectly, shape out the fate and guide the actions.

Dialogue and adventures which, considered dramatically, would be episodic, considered biographically, will be found essential to the formation, change, and development of the narrator's character. The grave conversations with Bolingbroke and Richard Cromwell, the light scenes in London and at Paris, the favor obtained with the Czar of Russia, are all essential to the creation of that mixture of wearied satiety and mournful thought which conducts the Probationer to the lonely spot in which he is destined to learn at once the mystery of his past life, and to clear his reason from the doubts that had obscured the future world.

Viewing the work in this more subtle and contemplative light, the reader will find not only the true test by which to judge of its design and nature, but he may also recognize sources of interest in the story which might otherwise have been lost to him; and if so, the author will not be without excuse for this criticism upon the

scope and intention of his own work. For it is not only the privilege of an artist, but it is also sometimes his duty to the principles of art, to place the spectator in that point of view wherein the light best falls upon the canvas. "Do not place yourself there," says the painter, "to judge of my composition; you must stand where I place you."

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHER'S INTRODUCTION.

MY life has been one of frequent adventure and constant excitement. It has been passed, to this present day, in a stirring age, and not without acquaintance of the most eminent and active spirits of the time. Men of all grades and of every character have been familiar to me. War, love, ambition, the scroll of sages, the festivals of wit, the intrigues of states,—all that agitate mankind, the hope and the fear, the labor and the pleasure,—the great drama of vanities, with the little interludes of wisdom,—these have been the occupations of my manhood; these will furnish forth the materials of that history which is now open to your survey. Whatever be the faults of the historian, he has no motive to palliate what he has committed, nor to conceal what he has felt.

Children of an after century, the very time in which these pages will greet you destroys enough of the connection between you and myself to render me indifferent alike to your censure and your applause. Exactly one hundred years from the day this record is completed will the seal I shall place on it be broken, and the secrets it contains be disclosed. I claim that congeniality with you which I have found not among my own coevals. *Their* thoughts, their feelings, their views, have nothing kindred to my own. I speak their language, but it is not as a native,—*they* know not a syllable of *mine!*

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With a future age my heart may have more in common, — to a future age my thoughts may be less unfamiliar, and my sentiments less strange; I trust these confessions to the trial.

Children of an after century, between you and the being who has traced the pages ye behold — that busy, versatile, restless being — there is but one step; but that step is a century! His *now* is separated from your *now* by an interval of three generations! While he writes, he is exulting in the vigor of health and manhood; while ye read, the very worms are starving upon his dust. This commune between the living and the dead — this intercourse between that which breathes and moves and *is*, and that which life animates not, nor mortality knows — annihilates falsehood, and chills even self-delusion into awe. Come, then, and look upon the picture of a past day and of a gone being, without apprehension of deceit; and as the shadows and lights of a checkered and wild existence flit before you, watch if in your own hearts there be aught which mirrors the reflection.

MORTON DEVEREUX.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

JOHN AULDJO, Esq., ETC.

AT NAPLES.

LONDON.

MY DEAR AULDJO,—Permit me, as a memento of the pleasant hours we passed together, and the intimacy we formed, by the winding shores and the rosy seas of the old Parthenope, to dedicate to you this romance. It was written in perhaps the happiest period of my literary life,—when success began to brighten upon my labors, and it seemed to me a fine thing to make a name.

“The Disowned” and “Devereux” were both completed in retirement, and in the midst of metaphysical studies and investigations, varied and miscellaneous enough, if not very deeply conned. At that time I was indeed engaged in preparing for the press a philosophical work, which I had afterwards the good sense to postpone to a riper age and a more sobered mind. But the effect of these studies is somewhat prejudicially visible in both the romances I have referred to; and the external and dramatic colorings which belong to fiction are too often forsaken for the inward and subtle analysis of motives, characters, and actions. The workman was not sufficiently master of his art to forbear the vanity of parading the wheels of the mechanism, and was too fond of call-

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ing attention to the minute and tedious operations by which the movements were to be performed, and the result obtained. I believe that an author is generally pleased with his work, less in proportion as it is good than in proportion as it fulfils the idea with which he commenced it. He is rarely, perhaps, an accurate judge how far the execution is in itself faulty or meritorious; but he judges with tolerable success how far it accomplishes the end and objects of the conception. He is pleased with his work, in short, according as he can say, "This has expressed what I meant it to convey." But the reader, who is not in the secret of the author's original design, usually views the work through a different medium,—and is perhaps, in this, the wiser critic of the two; for the book that wanders the most from the idea which originated it, may often be better than that which is rigidly limited to the unfolding and *dénouement* of a single conception. If we accept this solution, we may be enabled to understand why an author not unfrequently makes favorites of some of his productions most condemned by the public. For my own part, I remember that "Devereux" pleased me better than "Pelham" or "The Disowned," because the execution more exactly corresponded with the design. It expressed with tolerable fidelity what I meant it to express. That was a happy age, my dear Auldjo, when, on finishing a work, we could feel contented with our labor, and fancy we had done our best! Now, alas! I have learned enough of the wonders of the art to recognize all the deficiencies of the disciple; and to know that no author worth the reading can ever in one single work do half of which he is capable.

What man ever wrote anything really good, who did not feel that he had the ability to write something bet-

ter? Writing, after all, is a cold and a coarse interpreter of thought. How much of the imagination, how much of the intellect, evaporates and is lost while we seek to embody it in words! Man made language, and God the genius. Nothing short of an eternity could enable men who imagine, think, and feel, to express *all* they have imagined, thought, and felt. Immortality, the spiritual desire, is the intellectual *necessity*.

In "Devereux" I wished to portray a man flourishing in the last century, with the train of mind and sentiment peculiar to the present; describing a life, and not its dramatic epitome, the historical characters introduced are not closely woven with the main plot, like those in the fictions of Sir Walter Scott, but are rather, like the narrative romances of an earlier school, designed to relieve the predominant interest, and give a greater air of truth and actuality to the supposed memoir. It is a fiction which deals less with the picturesque than the real. Of the principal character thus introduced (Lord Bolingbroke), I still think that my sketch, upon the whole, is substantially just. We must not judge of the politicians of one age by the lights of another. Happily, we now demand in a statesman a desire for other aims than his own advancement; but at that period ambition was almost universally selfish, — the statesman was yet a courtier; a man whose very destiny it was to intrigue, to plot, to glitter, to deceive. It is in proportion as politics have ceased to be a secret science, in proportion as courts are less to be flattered and tools to be managed, that politicians have become useful and honest men; and the statesman now directs a people, where once he outwitted an antechamber. Compare Bolingbroke, not with the men and by the rules of this day, but with the men and by the rules of the last. He will lose nothing

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in comparison with a Walpole, with a Marlborough, on the one side, — with an Oxford or a Swift upon the other.

And now, my dear Auldjo, you have had enough of my egotisms. As our works grow up, like old parents, we grow garrulous, and love to recur to the happier days of their childhood: we talk over the pleasant pain they cost us in their rearing, and memory renews the season of dreams and hopes; we speak of their faults as of things past, of their merits as of things enduring; we are proud to see them still living, and, after many a harsh ordeal and rude assault, keeping a certain station in the world; we hoped, perhaps, something better for them in their cradle, but as it is we have good cause to be contented. You, a fellow-author, and one whose spirited and charming sketches embody so much of personal adventure, and therefore so much connect themselves with associations of real life as well as of the studious closet, — *you* know, and must feel, with me, that these our books are a part of us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! They treasure up the thoughts which stirred us, the affections which warmed us, years ago; they are the mirrors of how much of what we were! To the world they are but as a certain number of pages, — good or bad, tedious or diverting; but to ourselves, the authors, they are as marks in the wild maze of life by which we can retrace our steps, and be with our youth again. What would I not give to feel as I felt, to hope as I hoped, to believe as I believed, when this work was first launched upon the world! But time gives, while it takes away; and amongst its recompenses for many losses are the memories I referred to in commencing this letter, and gratefully revert to at its close. From the land of cloud and the life of toil I

turn to that golden clime and the happy indolence that so well accords with it, and hope once more, ere I die, with a companion whose knowledge can recall the past and whose gayety can enliven the present, to visit the Disburied City of Pompeii, and see the moonlight sparkle over the waves of Naples. Adieu, my dear Auldjo,

And believe me

Your obliged and attached friend,

E. B. LYTTON.

DEVEREUX.

BOOK I. — CHAPTER I.

Of the Hero's Birth and Parentage. Nothing can differ more from the End of Things than their Beginning.

My grandfather, Sir Arthur Devereux (peace be with his ashes!), was a noble old knight and cavalier, possessed of a property sufficiently large to have maintained in full dignity half-a-dozen peers, — such as peers have been since the days of the First James. Nevertheless, my grandfather loved the equestrian order better than the patrician, rejected all offers of advancement, and left his posterity no titles but those to his estate.

Sir Arthur had two children by wedlock, both sons. At his death my father, the younger, bade adieu to the old hall and his only brother, prayed to the grim portraits of his ancestors to inspire him, and set out — to join as a volunteer the armies of that Louis afterwards surnamed *le Grand*. Of him I shall say but little; the life of a soldier has only two events worth recording, — his first campaign and his last. My uncle did as his ancestors had done before him, and, cheap as the dignity had grown, went up to court to be knighted by Charles II. He was so delighted with what he saw of the metropolis that he forswore all intention of leaving it, took to

Sedley and Champagne, flirted with Nell Gwynne, lost double the value of his brother's portion at one sitting to the chivalrous Grammont, wrote a comedy corrected by Etherege, and took a wife recommended by Rochester. The wife brought him a child six months after marriage, and the infant was born on the same day the comedy was acted. Luckily for the honor of the house, my uncle shared the fate of Plimneus, King of Sicyon; and all the offspring he ever had (that is to say, the child and the play) "died as soon as they were born." My uncle was now only at a loss what to do with his wife, — that remaining treasure whose readiness to oblige him had been so miraculously evinced. She saved him the trouble of long cogitation, — an exercise of intellect to which he was never too ardently inclined. There was a gentleman of the court celebrated for his sedateness and solemnity; my aunt was piqued into emulating Orpheus, and six weeks after her confinement she put this rock into motion, — they eloped. . Poor gentleman! it must have been a severe trial of patience to a man never known before to transgress the very slowest of all possible walks, to have had two events of the most rapid nature happen to him in the same week: scarcely had he recovered the shock of being run away with by my aunt, before, terminating forever his vagrancies, he was run through by my uncle. The wits made an epigram upon the event; and my uncle, who was as bold as a lion at the point of a sword, was, to speak frankly, terribly disconcerted by the point of a jest. He retired to the country in a fit of disgust and gout. Here his natural goodness soon recovered the effects of the artificial atmosphere to which it had been exposed, and he solaced himself by righteously governing domains worthy of a prince, for the mortifications

he had experienced in the dishonorable career of a courtier.

Hitherto I have spoken somewhat slightly of my uncle, and in his dissipation he deserved it; for he was both too honest and too simple to shine in that galaxy of prostituted genius of which Charles II. was the centre. But in retirement he was no longer the same person; and I do not think that the elements of human nature could have furnished forth a more amiable character than Sir William Devereux presiding at Christmas over the merriment of his great hall.

Good old man! his very defects were what we loved best in him, — vanity was so mingled with good-nature that it became graceful, and we revered one the most, while we most smiled at the other.

One peculiarity had he, which the age he had lived in and his domestic history rendered natural enough, — namely, an exceeding distaste to the matrimonial state: early marriages were misery, imprudent marriages idiotism, and marriage, at the best, he was wont to say, with a kindling eye and a heightened color, — marriage, at the best, was the devil! Yet it must not be supposed that Sir William Devereux was an ungallant man. On the contrary, never did the *beau sexe* have a humbler or more devoted servant. As nothing, in his estimation, was less becoming to a wise man than matrimony, so nothing was more ornamental than flirtation.

He had the old man's weakness, garrulity; and he told the wittiest stories in the world, without omitting anything in them but the point. This omission did not arise from the want either of memory or of humor, but solely from a deficiency in the malice natural to all jesters. He could not persuade his lips to repeat a sarcasm hurting even the dead or the ungrateful; and

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when he came to the drop of gall which should have given zest to the story, the milk of human kindness broke its barrier, despite of himself, and washed it away. He was a fine wreck, a little prematurely broken by dissipation, but not perhaps the less interesting on that account; tall, and somewhat of the jovial old English girth, with a face where good-nature and good living mingled their smiles and glow. He wore the garb of twenty years back, and was curiously particular in the choice of his silk stockings. Between you and me, he was not a little vain of his leg, and a compliment on that score was always sure of a gracious reception.

The solitude of my uncle's household was broken by an invasion of three boys, — none of the quietest; and their mother, who, the gentlest and saddest of woman-kind, seemed to follow them, the emblem of that primeval Silence from which all noise was born. These three boys were my two brothers and myself. My father, who had conceived a strong personal attachment for Louis Quatorze, never quitted his service, and the great king repaid him by orders and favors without number; he died of wounds received in battle, — a count and a marshal, full of renown, and destitute of money. He had married twice: his first wife, who died without issue, was a daughter of the noble house of La Tremouille; his second, our mother, was of a younger branch of the English race of Howard. Brought up in her native country, and influenced by a primitive and retired education, she never loved that gay land which her husband had adopted as his own. Upon his death, she hastened her return to England, and, refusing with somewhat of honorable pride the magnificent pension which Louis wished to settle upon the widow

of his favorite, came to throw herself and her children upon those affections which she knew they were entitled to claim.

My uncle was unaffectedly rejoiced to receive us. To say nothing of his love for my father, and his pride at the honors the latter had won to their ancient house, the good gentleman was very well pleased with the idea of obtaining four new listeners, out of whom he might select an heir; and he soon grew as fond of us as we were of him. At the time of our new settlement I had attained the age of twelve; my second brother (we were twins) was born an hour after me; my third was about fifteen months younger. I had never been the favorite of the three. In the first place, my brothers (my youngest, especially) were uncommonly handsome, and at most I was but tolerably good-looking; in the second place, my mind was considered as much inferior to theirs as my body. I was idle and dull, sullen and haughty; the only wit I ever displayed was in sneering at my friends, and the only spirit in quarrelling with my twin brother,— so said or so thought all who saw us in our childhood; and it follows, therefore, that I was either very unamiable or very much misunderstood.

But, to the astonishment of myself and my relations, my fate was now to be reversed, and I was no sooner settled at Devereux Court than I became evidently the object of Sir William's pre eminent attachment. The fact was, that I really liked both the knight and his stories better than my brothers did; and the very first time I had seen my uncle, I had commented on the beauty of his stocking, and envied the constitution of his leg: from such trifles spring affection! In truth, our attachment to each other so increased that we grew to be constantly together; and while my childish antici-

pations of the world made me love to listen to stories of courts and courtiers, my uncle returned the compliment, by declaring of my wit, as the angler declared of the river Lea, that one would find enough in it if one would but angle sufficiently long.

Nor was this all: my uncle and myself were exceedingly like the waters of Alpheus and Arethusa,—nothing was thrown into the one without being seen very shortly afterwards floating upon the other. Every witticism or legend Sir William imparted to me (and some, to say truth, were a little tinged with the licentiousness of the times he had lived in), I took the first opportunity of retailing, whatever might be the audience; and few boys at the age of thirteen can boast of having so often as myself excited the laughter of the men and the blushes of the women. This circumstance, while it aggravated my own vanity, delighted my uncle's; and as I was always getting into scrapes on his account, so he was perpetually bound, by duty, to defend me from the charges of which he was the cause. No man defends another long without loving him the better for it; and, perhaps, Sir William Devereux and his eldest nephew were the only allies in the world who had no jealousy of each other.

CHAPTER II.

A Family Consultation. — A Priest, and an Era in Life.

"You are ruining the children, my dear Sir William," said my gentle mother one day, when I had been particularly witty; "and the Abbé Montreuil declares it absolutely necessary that they should go to school."

"To school!" said my uncle, who was caressing his right leg, as it lay over his left knee, — "to school, madam! you are joking. What for, pray?"

"Instruction, my dear Sir William," replied my mother.

"Ah, ah! I forgot that; true, true!" said my uncle, despondingly; and there was a pause. My mother counted her rosary, my uncle sank into a reverie, my twin brother pinched my leg under the table, to which I replied by a silent kick; and my youngest fixed his large, dark, speaking eyes upon a picture of the Holy Family, which hung opposite to him.

My uncle broke silence; he did it with a start.

"Od's fish, madam" (my uncle dressed his oaths, like himself, a little after the example of Charles II.), — "od's fish, madam, I have thought of a better plan than that; they shall have instruction without going to school for it."

"And how, Sir William?"

"I will instruct them myself, madam;" and Sir William slapped the calf of the leg he was caressing.

My mother smiled.

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"Ay, madam, you may smile, but I and my Lord Dorset were the best scholars of the age; you shall read my play."

"Do, mother," said I, "read the play. Shall I tell her some of the jests in it, uncle?"

My mother shook her head in anticipative horror, and raised her finger reprovingly. My uncle said nothing, but winked at me; I understood the signal, and was about to begin, when the door opened and the Abbé Montreuil entered. My uncle released his right leg, and my jest was cut off. Nobody ever inspired a more dim, religious awe than the Abbé Montreuil. The priest entered with a smile. My mother hailed the entrance of an ally.

"Father," said she, rising, "I have just represented to my good brother the necessity of sending my sons to school; he has proposed an alternative which I will leave you to discuss with him."

"And what is it?" said Montreuil, sliding into a chair, and patting Gerald's head with a benignant air.

"To educate them himself," answered my mother, with a sort of satirical gravity. My uncle moved uneasily in his seat, as if, for the first time, he saw something ridiculous in the proposal.

The smile, immediately fading from the thin lips of the priest, gave way to an expression of respectful approbation. "An admirable plan," said he, slowly, "but liable to some little exceptions, which Sir William will allow me to point out."

My mother called to us, and we left the room with her. The next time we saw my uncle, the priest's reasonings had prevailed. The following week we all three went to school. My father had been a Catholic, my mother was of the same creed, and consequently we

were brought up in that unpopular faith. But my uncle, whose religion had been sadly undermined at court, was a terrible caviller at the holy mysteries of Catholicism; and while his friends termed him a Protestant, his enemies hinted, falsely enough, that he was a sceptic. When Montreuil first followed us to Devereux Court, many and bitter were the little jests my worthy uncle had provided for his reception; and he would shake his head with a notable archness whenever he heard our reverential description of the expected guest. But, somehow or other, no sooner had he seen the priest, than all his purposed raileries deserted him. Not a single witticism came to his assistance, and the calm smooth face of the ecclesiastic seemed to operate upon the fierce resolves of the facetious knight in the same manner as the human eye is supposed to awe into impotence the malignant intentions of the ignobler animals. Yet nothing could be blander than the demeanor of the Abbé Montreuil, — nothing more worldly, in their urbanity, than his manner and address. His garb was as little clerical as possible, his conversation rather familiar than formal, and he invariably listened to every syllable the good knight uttered, with a countenance and mien of the most attentive respect.

What then was the charm by which this singular man never failed to obtain an ascendancy, in some measure allied with fear, over all in whose company he was thrown? That was a secret my uncle never could solve, and which only in later life I myself was able to discover. It was partly by the magic of an extraordinary and powerful mind, partly by an expression of manner, if I may use such a phrase, that seemed to sneer most when most it affected to respect; and partly

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by an air like that of a man never exactly at his ease: not that he was shy, or ungraceful, or even taciturn, — no! it was an indescribable embarrassment, resembling that of one playing a part, familiar to him, indeed, but somewhat distasteful. This embarrassment, however, was sufficient to be contagious, and to confuse that dignity in others which, strangely enough, never forsook himself.

He was of low origin, but his address and appearance did not betray his birth. Pride suited his mien better than familiarity; and his countenance, rigid, thoughtful, and cold, even through smiles, in expression was strikingly commanding. In person he was slightly above the middle standard; and had not the texture of his frame been remarkably hard, wiry, and muscular, the total absence of all superfluous flesh would have given the lean gauntness of his figure an appearance of almost spectral emaciation. In reality, his age did not exceed twenty-eight years; but his high, broad forehead was already so marked with line and furrow, his air was so staid and quiet, his figure so destitute of the roundness and elasticity of youth, that his appearance always impressed the beholder with the involuntary idea of a man considerably more advanced in life. Abstemious to habitual penance, and regular to mechanical exactness in his frequent and severe devotions, he was as little inwardly addicted to the pleasures and pursuits of youth as he was externally possessed of its freshness and its bloom.

Nor was gravity with him that unmeaning veil to imbecility which Rochefoucauld has so happily called "the mystery of the body." The variety and depth of his learning fully sustained the respect which his demeanor insensibly created. To say nothing of his

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lore in the dead tongues, he possessed a knowledge of the principal European languages besides his own, — namely, English, Italian, German, and Spanish, — not less accurate and little less fluent than that of a native; and he had not only gained the key to these various coffers of intellectual wealth, but he had also possessed himself of their treasures. He had been educated at St. Omer; and, young as he was, he had already acquired no inconsiderable reputation among his brethren of that illustrious and celebrated Order of Jesus which has produced some of the worst and some of the best men that the Christian world has ever known, — which has in its successful zeal for knowledge, and the circulation of mental light, bequeathed a vast debt of gratitude to posterity; but which, unhappily encouraging certain scholastic doctrines, that by a mind at once subtle and vicious can be easily perverted into the sanction of the most dangerous and systematized immorality, has already drawn upon its professors an almost universal odium.

So highly established was the good name of Montreuil, that when, three years prior to the time of which I now speak, he had been elected to the office he held in our family, it was scarcely deemed a less fortunate occurrence for us to gain so learned and so pious a preceptor than it was for him to acquire a situation of such trust and confidence in the household of a Marshal of France, and the especial favorite of Louis XIV.

It was pleasant enough to mark the gradual ascendancy he gained over my uncle, and the timorous dislike which the good knight entertained for him, yet struggled to conceal. Perhaps that was the only time in his life in which Sir William Devereux was a hypocrite.

Enough of the priest at present, — I return to his charge. To school we went. Our parting with our

uncle was quite pathetic, — mine in especial. “Hark ye, Sir Count,” whispered he (I bore my father’s title), — “hark ye, don’t mind what the old priest tells you; your real man of wit never wants the musty lessons of schools in order to make a figure in the world. Don’t cramp your genius, my boy; read over my play, and honest George Etherege’s ‘Man of Mode;’ they’ll keep your spirits alive, after dozing over those old pages which Homer (good soul!) dozed over before. God bless ^dyou, my child; write to me, — no one, not even your tha^ther, shall see your letters; and — and be sure, my ^{ful}, fellow, that you don’t fag too hard. The glass of ^{stri}k is the best book, and one’s natural wit the only ^{ab}mond that can write legibly on it.”

Such were my uncle’s parting admonitions; it must be confessed that, coupled with the dramatic gifts alluded to, they were likely to be of infinite service to the *débutant* for academical honors. In fact, Sir William Devereux was deeply impregnated with the notion of his time, that ability and inspiration were the same thing, and that, unless you were thoroughly idle, you could not be thoroughly a genius. I verily believe that he thought wisdom got its gems, as Abu Zeid al Hassan ¹ declares some Chinese philosophers thought oysters got their pearls, — namely, *by gaping!*

¹ In his Commentary on the Account of China by Two Travellers,

CHAPTER III.

A Change in Conduct and in Character. — Our evil Passions will sometimes produce good Effects; and, on the contrary, an Alteration for the better in Manners will, not unfrequently, have amongst its Causes a little Corruption of Mind; for the Feelings are so blended that, in suppressing those disagreeable to others, we often suppress those which are amiable in themselves.

My twin brother, Gerald, was a tall, strong, handsome boy, blessed with a great love for the orthodox academical studies, and extraordinary quickness of ability. Nevertheless, he was indolent by nature,—in things which were contrary to his taste,—fond of pleasure, and amidst all his personal courage ran a certain vein of irresolution, which rendered it easy for a cool and determined mind to awe or to persuade him. I cannot help thinking, too, that, clever as he was, there was something commonplace in the cleverness; and that his talent was of that mechanical yet quick nature which makes wonderful boys, but mediocre men. In any other family he would have been considered the beauty; in ours he was thought the genius.

My youngest brother, Aubrey, was of a very different disposition of mind and frame of body: thoughtful, gentle, susceptible, acute; with an uncertain bravery, like a woman's, and a taste for reading that varied with the caprice of every hour. He was the beauty of the three, and my mother's favorite. Never, indeed, have I seen the countenance of man so perfect, so glowingly yet delicately handsome, as that of Aubrey Devereux.

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Locks, soft, glossy, and twining into ringlets, fell in dark profusion over a brow whiter than marble; his eyes were black and tender, as a Georgian girl's; his lips, his teeth, the contour of his face, were all cast in the same feminine and faultless mould; his hands would have shamed those of Madame de la Tisseur, whose lover offered six thousand marks to any European who could wear her glove; and his figure would have made Titania give up her Henchman, and the King of the Fairies be anything but pleased with the exchange.

Such were my two brothers, — or, rather (so far as the internal qualities are concerned), such they seemed to me: for it is a singular fact that we never judge of our near kindred so well as we judge of others; and I appeal to any one, whether, of all people by whom he has been mistaken, he has not been most often mistaken by those with whom he was brought up.

I had always loved Aubrey, but they had not suffered him to love *me*; and we had been so little together that we had in common none of those childish remembrances which serve, more powerfully than all else in later life, to cement and soften affection. In fact, I was the scapegoat of the family. What I must have been in early childhood, I cannot tell; but before I was ten years old, I was the object of all the despondency and evil forebodings of my relations. My father said I laughed at *la gloire et le grand monarque*, the very first time he attempted to explain to me the value of the one and the greatness of the other. The countess said I had neither my father's eye nor her own smile; that I was slow at my letters, and quick with my tongue; and throughout the whole house nothing was so favorite a topic as the extent of my rudeness, and the venom of my repartee. Montreuil, on his entrance into our

family, not only fell in with, but favored and fostered the reigning humor against me, — whether from that *divide et impera* system which was so grateful to his temper, or from the mere love of meddling and intrigue, which in him, as in Alberoni, attached itself equally to petty as to large circles, was not then clearly apparent; it was only certain that he fomented the dissensions and widened the breach between my brothers and myself. Alas! after all, I believe my sole crime was my candor. I had a spirit of frankness, which no fear could tame, and my vengeance for any infantine punishment was in speaking veraciously of my punishers. Never tell me of the pang of falsehood to the slandered; nothing is so agonizing to the fine skin of vanity as the application of a rough truth!

As I grew older, I saw my power, and indulged it; and, being scolded for sarcasm, I was flattered into believing I had wit; so I punned and jested, lampooned and satirized, till I was as much a torment to others as I was tormented myself. The secret of all this was that I was unhappy. Nobody loved me. I felt it to my heart of hearts. I was conscious of injustice, and the sense of it made me bitter. Our feelings, especially in youth, resemble that leaf which, in some old traveller, is described as expanding itself to warmth, but, when chilled, not only shrinking and closing, but presenting to the spectator thorns which had lain concealed upon the opposite side of it before.

With my brother Gerald I had a deadly and irreconcilable feud. He was much stouter, taller, and stronger than myself; and, far from conceding to me that respect which I imagined my priority of birth entitled me to claim, he took every opportunity to deride my pretensions, and to vindicate the cause of the superior strength

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and vigor which constituted his own. It would have done your heart good to have seen us cuff one another, we did it with such zeal. There is nothing in human passion like a good brotherly hatred! My mother said, with the most feeling earnestness, that she used to feel us fighting even before our birth; we certainly lost no time directly after it. Both my parents were secretly vexed that I had come into the world an hour sooner than my brother; and Gerald himself looked upon it as a sort of juggle, — a kind of jockeyship by which he had lost the prerogative of birthright. This very early rankled in his heart; and he was so much a greater favorite than myself, that, instead of rooting out so unfortunate a feeling on his part, my good parents made no scruple of openly lamenting my seniority. I believe the real cause of our being taken from the domestic instructions of the abbé (who was an admirable teacher) and sent to school, was solely to prevent my uncle deciding everything in my favor. Montreuil, however, accompanied us to our academy, and remained with us during the three years in which we were perfecting ourselves in the blessings of education.

At the end of the second year, a prize was instituted for the best proficient at a very severe examination; two months before it took place we went home for a few days. After dinner my uncle asked me to walk with him in the park. I did so: we strolled along to the margin of a rivulet which ornamented the grounds. There my uncle, for the first time, broke silence.

“Morton,” said he, looking down at his left leg, — “Morton, let me see, thou art now of a reasonable age, — fourteen at the least.”

“Fifteen, if it please you, sir,” said I, elevating my stature as much as I was able.

"Humph! my boy; and a pretty time of life it is, too. Your brother Gerald is taller than you by two inches."

"But I can beat him for all that, uncle," said I, coloring, and clinching my fist.

My uncle pulled down his right ruffle. "'Gad so, Morton, you 're a brave fellow," said he; "but I wish you were less of a hero and more of a scholar. I wish you could beat him in Greek as well as in boxing. I will tell you what Old Rowley said;" and my uncle occupied the next quarter of an hour with a story. The story opened the good old gentleman's heart, — my laughter opened it still more. "Hark ye, sirrah!" said he, pausing abruptly, and grasping my hand with a vigorous effort of love and muscle, — "hark ye, sirrah: I love you, — 'sdeath, I do. I love you better than both your brothers, and that crab of a priest into the bargain; but I am grieved to the heart to hear what I do of you. They tell me you are the idlest boy in the school, — that you are always beating your brother Gerald, and making a scurrilous jest of your mother or myself."

"Who says so? who dares say so?" said I, with an emphasis that would have startled a less hearty man than Sir William Devereux. "They lie, uncle; by my soul, they do. Idle I am, — quarrelsome with my brother I confess myself; but jesting at you or my mother, — never, never! No, no; *you*, too, who have been so kind to me, — the only one who ever was! No, no; do not think I could be such a wretch!" and as I said this the tears gushed from my eyes.

My good uncle was exceedingly affected. "Look ye, child," said he, "I do not believe them. 'Sdeath, not a word, — I would repeat to you a good jest now of

Sedley's, 'Gad, I would, but I am really too much moved just at present. I tell you what, my boy, — I tell you what you shall do: there is a trial coming on at school, eh? — well, the abbé tells me, Gerald is certain of being first, and you of being last. Now, Merton, you shall beat your brother, and shame the Jesuit. There, — my mind's spoken: dry your tears, my boy, and I'll tell you the jest Sedley made; it was in the Mulberry Garden one day — " And the knight told his story.

I dried my tears, pressed my uncle's hand, escaped from him as soon as I was able, hastened to my room, and surrendered myself to reflection.

When my uncle so good-naturedly proposed that I should conquer Gerald at the examination, nothing appeared to him more easy: he was pleased to think I had more talent than my brother; and talent, according to his creed, was the only master-key to unlock every science. A problem in Euclid or a phrase in Pindar, a secret in astronomy or a knotty passage in the fathers, were all riddles, with the solution of which application had nothing to do. One's mother-wit was a precious sort of necromancy, which could pierce every mystery at first sight; and all the gifts of knowledge, in his opinion, like reading and writing in that of the sage Dogberry, "came by nature." Alas! I was not under the same pleasurable delusion; I rather exaggerated than diminished the difficulty of my task, and thought, at the first glance, that nothing short of a miracle would enable me to excel my brother. Gerald, a boy of natural talent, and as I said before of great assiduity in the orthodox studies, — especially favored too by the instruction of Montreuil, — had long been esteemed the first scholar of our little world; and

though I knew that with some branches of learning I was more conversant than himself, yet, as my emulation had been hitherto solely directed to bodily contention, I had never thought of contesting with him a reputation for which I cared little, and on a point in which I had been early taught that I could never hope to enter into any advantageous comparison with the "genius" of the Devereuxs.

A new spirit now passed into me. I examined myself with a jealous and impartial scrutiny; I weighed my acquisitions against those of my brother; I called forth from their secret recesses the unexercised and almost unknown stores I had from time to time laid up in my mental armory to moulder and to rust. I surveyed them with a feeling that they might yet be polished into use; and, excited alike by the stimulus of affection on one side and hatred on the other, my mind worked itself from despondency into doubt, and from doubt into the sanguineness of hope. I told none of my design; I exacted from my uncle a promise not to betray it; I shut myself in my room; I gave out that I was ill; I saw no one, not even the abbé; I rejected his instructions, for I looked upon him as an enemy; and, for the two months before my trial, I spent night and day in an unrelaxing application, of which till then I had not imagined myself capable.

Though inattentive to the school exercises, I had never been wholly idle. I was a lover of abstruser researches than the hackneyed subjects of the school, and we had really received such extensive and judicious instructions from the abbé during our early years that it would have been scarcely possible for any of us to have fallen into a thorough distaste for intellectual pursuits. In the examination I foresaw that much

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which I had previously acquired might be profitably displayed, — much secret and recondite knowledge of the customs and manners of the ancients, as well as their literature, which curiosity had led me to obtain, and which I knew had never entered into the heads of those who, contented with their reputation in the customary academical routine, had rarely dreamed of wandering into less beaten paths of learning. Fortunately, too, for me, Gerald was so certain of success that latterly he omitted all precaution to obtain it; and as none of our schoolfellows had the vanity to think of contesting with him, even the abbé seemed to imagine him justified in his supineness.

The day arrived. Sir William, my mother, the whole aristocracy of the neighborhood, were present at the trial. The abbé came to my room a few hours before it commenced; he found the door locked.

“Ungracious boy,” said he, “admit me, — I come at the earnest request of your brother Aubrey, to give you some hints preparatory to the examination.”

“He has indeed come at my wish,” said the soft and silver voice of Aubrey, in a supplicating tone; “do admit him, dear Morton, for my sake!”

“Go,” said I, bitterly, from within, “go, — ye are both my foes and slanderers; you come to insult my disgrace beforehand: but perhaps you will yet be disappointed.”

“You will not open the door?” said the priest.

“I will not, — begone!”

“He will indeed disgrace his family,” said Montreuil, moving away.

“He will disgrace himself,” said Aubrey, dejectedly.

I laughed scornfully. If ever the consciousness of strength is pleasant, it is when we are thought most weak.

The greater part of our examination consisted in the answering of certain questions in writing, given to us in the three days immediately previous to the grand and final one; for this last day was reserved the paper of composition (as it was termed) in verse and prose, and the personal examination in a few showy but generally understood subjects. When Gerald gave in his paper, and answered the verbal questions, a buzz of admiration and anxiety went round the room. His person was so handsome, his address so graceful, his voice so assured and clear, that a strong and universal sympathy was excited in his favor. The head-master publicly complimented him. He regretted only the deficiency of his pupil in certain minor but important matters.

I came next, for I stood next to Gerald in our class. As I walked up the hall, I raised my eyes to the gallery in which my uncle and his party sat. I saw that my mother was listening to the abbé, whose eye, severe, cold, and contemptuous, was bent upon me. But my uncle leaned over the railing of the gallery, with his plumed hat in his hand, which, when he caught my look, he waved gently, as if in token of encouragement, and with an air so kind and cheering that I felt my step grow prouder as I approached the conclave of the masters.

“Morton Devereux,” said the president of the school, in a calm, loud, austere voice, that filled the whole hall, “we have looked over your papers on the three previous days, and they have given us no less surprise than pleasure. Take heed and time how you answer us now.”

At this speech a loud murmur was heard in my uncle's party, which gradually spread round the hall. I again looked up,—my mother's face was averted; that of the

abbé was impenetrable; but I saw my uncle wiping his eyes, and felt a strange emotion creeping into my own. I turned hastily away, and presented my paper; the head-master received it, and, putting it aside, proceeded to the verbal examination.

Conscious of the parts in which Gerald was likely to fail, I had paid especial attention to the minutiae of scholarship, and my forethought stood me in good stead at the present moment. My trial ceased,—my last paper was read. I bowed, and retired to the other end of the hall. I was not so popular as Gerald,—a crowd was assembled round him, but I stood alone. As I leaned against a column, with folded arms, and a countenance which I felt betrayed little of my internal emotions, my eye caught Gerald's. He was very pale, and I could see that his hand trembled. Despite of our enmity, I felt for him. The worst passions are softened by triumph, and I foresaw that mine was at hand.

The whole examination was over. Every boy had passed it. The masters retired for a moment,—they reappeared and reseated themselves. The first sound I heard was that of my own name. I was the victor of the day: I was more,—I was one hundred marks before my brother. My head swam round,—my breath forsook me. Since then I have been placed in many trials of life, and had many triumphs; but never was I so overcome as at that moment. I left the hall,—I scarcely listened to the applauses with which it rang. I hurried to my own chamber, and threw myself on the bed in a delirium of intoxicated feeling, which had in it more of rapture than anything but the gratification of first love or first vanity can bestow.

Ah! it would be worth stimulating our passions if it were only for the pleasure of remembering their effect;

and all violent excitement should be indulged less for present joy than for future retrospection.

My uncle's step was the first thing which intruded on my solitude.

"Od's fish, my boy," said he, crying like a child, "this is fine work,—'Gad, so it is. I almost wish I were a boy myself to have a match with you, faith I do: see what it is to learn a little of life. If you had never read my play, do you think you would have done half so well?—no, my boy; I sharpened your wits for you. Honest George Etherege and I,—we were the making of you; and when you come to be a great man, and are asked what made you so, you shall say, 'My uncle's play,'—'Gad, you shall. Faith, boy,—never smile!—Od's fish,—I'll tell you a story as *apropos* to the present occasion as if it had been made on purpose. Rochester and I and Sedley were walking one day,—and, *entre nous*, awaiting certain appointments,—hem!—for my part, I was a little melancholy or so, thinking of my catastrophe,—that is, of my play's catastrophe; 'And so,' said Sedley, winking at Rochester, 'our friend is sorrowful.' 'Truly,' said I, seeing they were about to banter me,—for you know they were arch fellows,—'Truly, little Sid' (we called Sedley Sid), 'you are greatly mistaken;—you see, Morton, I was thus sharp upon him, because, when you go to court, you will discover that it does not do to take without giving. And then Rochester said, looking roguishly towards me, the wittiest thing against Sedley that ever I heard: it was the most celebrated *bon-mot* at court for three weeks,—he said—no, boy, od's fish, it was so stinging I can't tell it thee; faith, I can't. Poor Sid! he was a good fellow, though malicious,—and he's dead now.—I'm sorry I said a word about it. Nay, never look so dis-

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appointed, boy. You have all the cream of the story as it is. And now put on your hat, and come with me. I've got leave for you to take a walk with your old uncle."

That night, as I was undressing, I heard a gentle rap at the door, and Aubrey entered. He approached me timidly, and then, throwing his arms round my neck, kissed me in silence. I had not for years experienced such tenderness from him; and I sat now mute and surprised. At last I said, with the sneer which I must confess I usually assumed towards those persons whom I imagined I had a right to think ill of,—

"Pardon me, my gentle brother, there is something portentous in this sudden change. Look well round the room, and tell me at your earliest leisure what treasure it is that you are desirous should pass from my possession into your own."

"Your love, Morton," said Aubrey, drawing back, but apparently in pride, not anger,— "your love; I ask nothing more."

"Of a surety, kind Aubrey," said I, "the favor seems somewhat slight to have caused your modesty such delay in requesting it. I think you have been now some years nerving your mind to the exertion."

"Listen to me, Morton," said Aubrey, suppressing his emotion; "you have always been my favorite brother. From our first childhood, my heart yearned to you. Do you remember the time when an enraged bull pursued me, and you, then only ten years old, placed yourself before it and defended me at the risk of your own life? Do you think I could ever forget that, child as I was? Never, Morton, never!"

Before I could answer, the door was thrown open, and the abbé entered. "Children," said he, and the single

light of the room shone full upon his unmoved, rigid, commanding features,—“ children, be as Heaven intended you,—friends and brothers. Morton, I have wronged you, I own it,—here is my hand; Aubrey, let all but early love, and the present promise of excellence which your brother displays, be forgotten.”

With these words, the priest joined our hands. I looked on my brother, and my heart melted. I flung myself into his arms and wept.

“ This is well,” said Montreuil, surveying us with a kind of grim complacency, and, taking my brother’s arm, he blessed us both, and led Aubrey away.

That day was a new era in my boyish life. I grew henceforth both better and worse. Application and I, having once shaken hands, became very good acquaintance. I had hitherto valued myself upon supplying the frailties of a delicate frame by an uncommon agility in all bodily exercises. I now strove rather to improve the deficiencies of my mind, and became orderly, industrious, and devoted to study. So far so well; but as I grew wiser, I grew also more wary. Candor no longer seemed to me the finest of virtues. I thought before I spoke, and second thought sometimes quite changed the nature of the intended speech; in short, gentlemen of the next century, to tell you the exact truth, the little Count Devereux became somewhat of a hypocrite!

CHAPTER IV.

A Contest of Art, and a League of Friendship. — Two Characters in mutual Ignorance of each other, and the Reader no wiser than either of them.

THE abbé was now particularly courteous to me. He made Gerald and myself breakfast with him, and told us nothing was so amiable as friendship among brothers. We agreed to the sentiment, and, like all philosophers, did not agree a bit the better for acknowledging the same first principles. Perhaps, notwithstanding his fine speeches, the abbé was the real cause of our continued want of cordiality. However, we did not fight any more, — we avoided each other, and at last became as civil and as distant as those mathematical lines which appear to be taking all possible pains to approach one another, and never get a jot the nearer for it. Oh, your civility is the prettiest invention possible for dislike! Aubrey and I were inseparable, and we both gained by the intercourse. I grew more gentle, and he more masculine; and, for my part, the kindness of his temper so softened the satire of mine that I learned at last to smile full as often as to sneer.

The abbé had obtained a wonderful hold over Aubrey; he had made the poor boy think so much of the next world that he had lost all relish for this. He lived in a perpetual fear of offence; he was like a chemist of conscience, and weighed minutiae by scruples. To play, to ride, to run, to laugh at a jest, or to banquet on a melon, were all sins to be atoned for; and I have found

(as a penance for eating twenty-three cherries instead of eighteen) the penitent of fourteen standing, barefooted, in the coldest nights of winter, upon the hearthstones, almost utterly naked, and shivering like a leaf, beneath the mingled effect of frost and devotion. At first I attempted to wrestle with this exceeding holiness; but finding my admonitions received with great distaste and some horror, I suffered my brother to be happy in his own way. I only looked with a very evil and jealous eye upon the good abbé, and examined, while I encouraged them, the motives of his advances to myself. What doubled my suspicions of the purity of the priest was my perceiving that he appeared to hold out different inducements for trusting him to each of us, according to his notions of our respective characters. My brother Gerald he alternately awed and persuaded, by the sole effect of superior intellect. With Aubrey, he used the mechanism of superstition. To me, he on the one hand never spoke of religion, nor on the other ever used threats or persuasion to induce me to follow any plan suggested to my adoption; everything seemed to be left to my reason and my ambition. He would converse with me for hours upon the world and its affairs; speak of courts and kings in an easy and unpedantic strain; point out the advantage of intellect in acquiring power and controlling one's species; and whenever I was disposed to be sarcastic upon the human nature I had read of, he supported my sarcasm by illustrations of the human nature he had seen. We were both, I think (for myself I can answer), endeavoring to pierce the real nature of the other; and perhaps the talent of diplomacy for which, years afterwards, I obtained some applause, was first learned in my skirmishing warfare with the Abbé Montreuil.

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At last the evening before we quitted school for good arrived. Aubrey had just left me for solitary prayers, and I was sitting alone by my fire, when Montreuil entered gently. He sat himself down by me, and, after giving me the salutation of the evening, sank into a silence which I was the first to break.

"Pray, Abbé," said I, "have one's years anything to do with one's age?"

The priest was accustomed to the peculiar tone of my sagacious remarks, and answered dryly, —

"Mankind in general imagine that they have."

"Faith, then," said I, "mankind know very little about the matter. To-day I am at school and a boy; to-morrow I leave school, — if I hasten to town, I am presented at court; and lo! I am a man; and this change within half-a-dozen changes of the sun! therefore, most reverend father, I humbly opine that age is measured by events, not years."

"And are you not happy at the idea of passing the age of thralldom, and seeing arrayed before you the numberless and dazzling pomps and pleasures of the great world?" said Montreuil, abruptly, fixing his dark and keen eye upon me.

"I have not yet fully made up my mind, whether to be happy or not," said I, carelessly.

"It is a strange answer," said the priest; "but" (after a pause) "you are a strange youth, — a character that resembles a riddle is at your age uncommon, and, pardon me, unamiable. Age, naturally repulsive, requires a mask, and in every wrinkle you may behold the ambush of a scheme; but the heart of youth should be open as its countenance! However, I will not weary you with homilies. Let us change the topic. Tell me, Morton, do you repent having turned your attention

of late to those graver and more systematic studies which can alone hereafter obtain you distinction?"

"No, father," said I, with a courtly bow; "for the change has gained me your good opinion."

A smile, of peculiar and undefinable expression, crossed the thin lips of the priest; he rose, walked to the door, and saw that it was carefully closed. I expected some important communication, but in vain. Pacing the small room to and fro, as if in a musing mood, the abbé remained silent, till, pausing opposite some fencing-foils, which, among various matters (books, papers, quoits, etc.), were thrown idly in one corner of the room, he said, —

"They tell me that you are the best fencer in the school. Is it so?"

"I hope not, for fencing is an accomplishment in which Gerald is very nearly my equal," I replied.

"You run, ride, leap, too, better than any one else, according to the votes of your comrades."

"It is a noble reputation," said I, "in which I believe I am only excelled by our huntsman's eldest son."

"You are a strange youth," repeated the priest; "no pursuit seems to give you pleasure, and no success to gratify your vanity. Can you not think of *any* triumph which would elate you?"

I was silent.

"Yes," cried Montreuil, approaching me, — "yes," cried he, "I read your heart, and I respect it; these are petty competitions and worthless honors. You require a nobler goal and a more glorious reward. He who feels in his soul that Fate has reserved for him a great and exalted part in this world's drama, may reasonably look with indifference on these paltry rehearsals of common characters."

I raised my eye, and as it met that of the priest, I was irresistibly struck with the proud and luminous expression which Montreuil's look had assumed. Perhaps something kindred to its nature was perceptible in my own; for, after surveying me with an air of more approbation than he had ever honored me with before, he grasped my arm firmly, and said: "Morton, you know me not; for many years I have not known you, — that time is past. No sooner did your talents develop themselves than I was the first to do homage to their power. Let us henceforth be more to each other than we have been: let us not be pupil and teacher; let us be friends. Do not think that I invite you to an unequal exchange of good offices: you may be the heir to wealth and a distinguished name, I may seem to you but an unknown and undignified priest; but the authority of the Almighty can raise up, from the sheepfold and the cotter's shed, a power which, as the organ of His own, can trample upon sceptres, and dictate to the supremacy of kings. And *I—I—*" The priest abruptly paused, checked the warmth of his manner, as if he thought it about to encroach on indiscretion, and, sinking into a calmer tone, continued: "Yes, I, Morton, insignificant as I appear to you, can, in *every* path through this intricate labyrinth of life, be more useful to your desires than you can ever be to mine. I offer to you in my friendship a fervor of zeal and energy of power which in none of your equals, in age and station, you can hope to find. Do you accept my offer?"

"Can you doubt," said I, with eagerness, "that I would avail myself of the services of any man, however displeasing to me and worthless in himself? How, then, can I avoid embracing the friendship of one so

extraordinary in knowledge and intellect as yourself? I do embrace it, and with rapture."

The priest pressed my hand. "But," continued he, fixing his eyes upon mine, "all alliances have their conditions. I require implicit confidence; and for some years, till time gives you experience, regard for your interests induces me also to require obedience. Name any wish you may form for worldly advancement, opulence, honor, the smile of kings, the gifts of states, and — I — I will pledge myself to carry that wish into effect. Never had Eastern prince so faithful a servant among the Dives and Genii as Morton Devereux shall find in me; but question me not of the sources of my power, be satisfied when their channel wafts you the success you covet. And more, when I in my turn (and this shall be but rarely) request a favor of you, ask me not for what end, nor hesitate to adopt the means I shall propose. You seem startled. Are you content at this understanding between us, or will you retract the bond?"

"My father," said I, "there is enough to startle me in your proposal; it greatly resembles that made by the Old Man of the Mountains to his vassals; and it would not exactly suit my inclinations to be called upon some morning to act the part of a private executioner."

The priest smiled. "My young friend," said he, "those days have passed; neither religion nor friendship requires of her votaries sacrifices of blood. But make yourself easy; whenever I ask of you what offends your conscience, even in a punctilio, refuse my request. With this exception, what say you?"

"That I think I will agree to the bond; but, father, I am an irresolute person. I must have time to consider."

“Be it so. To-morrow, having surrendered my charge to your uncle, I depart for France.”

“For France!” said I; “and how? Surely the war will prevent your passage.”

The priest smiled. Nothing ever displeased me more than that priest’s smile. “The ecclesiastics,” said he, “are the ambassadors of Heaven, and have nothing to do with the wars of earth. I shall find no difficulty in crossing the Channel. I shall not return for several months, perhaps not till the expiration of a year. I leave you till then to decide upon the terms I have proposed to you. Meanwhile gratify my vanity by employing my power. Name some commission in France which you wish me to execute.”

“I can think of none; yet stay,” — and I felt some curiosity to try the power of which he boasted, — “I have read that kings are blessed with a most accommodating memory, and perfectly forget their favorites when they can be no longer useful. You will see, perhaps, if my father’s name has become a Gothic and unknown sound at the court of the Great King. I confess myself curious to learn this, though I can have no personal interest in it.”

“Enough, the commission shall be done. And now, my child, Heaven bless you, and send you many such friends as the humble priest, who, whatever be his failings, has at least the merit of wishing to serve those whom he loves.”

So saying, the priest closed the door. Sinking into a reverie, as his footsteps died upon my ear, I muttered to myself, “Well, well, my sage ecclesiastic, the game is not over yet; let us see if, at sixteen, we cannot shuffle cards and play tricks with the gamester of thirty. Yet he may be in earnest, and, faith, I believe he is;

but I must look well before I leap, or consign my actions into such spiritual keeping. However, if the worst come to the worst, — if I do make this compact, and am deceived; if, above all, I am ever seduced or led blindfold into one of those snares which priestcraft sometimes lays to the cost of honor, — why, I shall have a sword, which I shall never be at a loss to use, and it can find its way through a priest's gown as well as a soldier's corselet."

Confess that a youth who could think so promptly of his sword was well fitted to wear one.

CHAPTER V.

Rural Hospitality, an extraordinary Guest. — A fine Gentleman is not necessarily a Fool.

WE were all three (my brothers and myself) precocious geniuses. Our early instructions, under a man like the abbé at once learned and worldly, and the society into which we had been initiated from our childhood, made us premature adepts in the manners of the world; and I, in especial, flattered myself that a quick habit of observation rendered me no despicable profiter by my experience. Our academy, too, had been more like a college than a school; and we had enjoyed a license that seemed, to the superficial, more likely to benefit our manners than to strengthen our morals. I do not think, however, that the latter suffered by our freedom from restraint. On the contrary, we the earlier learned that vice, but for the piquancy of its unlawfulness, would never be so captivating a goddess; and our errors and crimes in after life had certainly not their origin in our wanderings out of academical bounds.

It is right that I should mention our prematurity of intellect, because otherwise much of my language and reflections, as detailed in the first book of this history, might seem ill-suited to the tender age at which they occurred. However, they approach, as nearly as possible, to my state of mind at that period; and I have, indeed, often mortified my vanity, in later life, by thinking how little the march of time has ripened my

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abilities, and how petty would have been the intellectual acquisitions of manhood, — if they had not brought me something like content!

My uncle had always, during his retirement, seen as many people as he could assemble out of the “mob of gentlemen who *live at ease*.” But on our quitting school, and becoming men, he resolved to set no bounds to his hospitality. His doors were literally thrown open; and as he was by far the greatest person in the district, — to say nothing of his wines and his French cook, — many of the good people of London did not think it too great an honor to confer upon the wealthy representative of the Devereuxs the distinction of their company and compliments. Heavens! what notable samples of court breeding and furbelows did the crane-neck coaches, which made our own family vehicle look like a gilt tortoise, pour forth by couples and leashes into the great hall; while my gallant uncle, in a new periwig, and a pair of silver-clocked stockings (a present from a *ci-devant* fine lady), stood at the far end of the picture-gallery to receive his visitors with all the graces of the last age. My mother, who had preserved her beauty wonderfully, sat in a chair of green velvet, and astonished the courtiers by the fashion of a dress only just imported. The worthy countess (she had dropped in England the loftier distinction of *Madame la Maréchale*) was, however, quite innocent of any intentional affectation of the mode; for the new stomacher, so admired in London, had been the last alteration in female garniture at Paris, a month before my father died. Is not this “fashion” a noble divinity to possess such zealous adherents? — a pitiful, lackey-like creature, which struts through one country with the cast-off finery of another!

As for Aubrey and Gerald, they produced quite an effect; and I should most certainly have been thrown irrevocably into the background, had I not been born to the good fortune of an eldest son. This was far more than sufficient to atone for the comparative plainness of my person; and when it was discovered that I was also Sir William's favorite, it is quite astonishing what a beauty I became! Aubrey was declared too effeminate; Gerald too tall. And the Duchess of Lackland one day, when she had placed a lean, sallow ghost of a daughter on either side of me, whispered my uncle in a voice, like the *aside* of a player, intended for none but the whole audience, that the young count had the most imposing air and the finest eyes she had ever seen. All this inspired me with courage, as well as contempt; and not liking to be beholden solely to my priority of birth for my priority of distinction, I resolved to become as agreeable as possible. If I had not in the vanity of my heart resolved also to be "myself alone," Fate would have furnished me at the happiest age for successful imitation with an admirable model.

Time rolled on, — two years were flown since I had left school, and Montreuil was not yet returned. I had passed the age of eighteen, when the whole house, which, as it was summer, when none but cats and physicians were supposed gifted by Providence with the power to exist in town, was uncommonly full, — the whole house, I say, was thrown into a positive fever of expectation. The visit of a guest, if not of greater consequence, at least of greater interest, than any who had hitherto honored my uncle, was announced. Even the young count, with the most imposing air in the world and the finest eyes, was forgotten by everybody

but the Duchess of Lackland and her daughters, who had just returned to Devereux Court, to observe how amazingly the count had grown! Oh, what a prodigy wisdom would be, if it were but blessed with a memory as keen and constant as that of interest!

Struck with the universal excitement, I went to my uncle to inquire the name of the expected guest. My uncle was occupied in fanning the Lady Hasselton, a daughter of one of King Charles's beauties. He had only time to answer me literally and without comment; the guest's name was Mr. St. John.

I had never conned the "Flying Post," and I knew nothing about politics. "Who is Mr. St. John?" said I, — my uncle had renewed the office of a zephyr. The daughter of the beauty heard and answered, "The most charming person in England." I bowed and turned away. "How vastly explanatory!" said I. I met a furious politician. "Who is Mr. St. John?" I asked.

"The cleverest man in England," answered the politician, hurrying off with a pamphlet in his hand.

"Nothing can be more satisfactory," thought I. Stopping a coxcomb of the first water, "Who is Mr. St. John?" I asked.

"The finest gentleman in England," answered the coxcomb, settling his cravat.

"Perfectly intelligible!" was my reflection on this reply; and I forthwith arrested a Whig parson, — "Who is Mr. St. John?" said I.

"The greatest reprobate in England!" answered the Whig parson, and I was too stunned to inquire more.

Five minutes afterwards the sound of carriage-wheels was heard in the court-yard, then a slight bustle in the hall, and the door of the ante-room being thrown open, Mr. St. John entered.

He was in the very prime of life, about the middle height, and of a mien and air so strikingly noble that it was some time before you recovered the general effect of his person sufficiently to examine its peculiar claims to admiration. However, he lost nothing by a further survey: he possessed not only an eminently handsome, but a very extraordinary countenance. Through an air of nonchalance, and even something of lassitude; through an ease of manners sometimes sinking into effeminate softness, sometimes bordering upon licentious effrontery, — his eye, thoughtful yet wandering, seemed to announce that the mind partook but little of the whim of the moment, or of those levities of ordinary life over which the grace of his manner threw so peculiar a charm. His brow was, perhaps, rather too large and prominent for the exactness of perfect symmetry; but it had an expression of great mental power and determination. His features were high, yet delicate; and his mouth, which, when closed, assumed a firm and rather severe expression, softened, when speaking, into a smile of almost magical enchantment. Richly but not extravagantly dressed, he appeared to cultivate rather than disdain the ornaments of outward appearance; and whatever can fascinate or attract was so inherent in this singular man that all which in others would have been most artificial was in him most natural; so that it is no exaggeration to add that to be well dressed seemed to the elegance of his person not so much the result of art as of a property innate and peculiar to himself.

Such was the outward appearance of Henry St. John; one well suited to the qualities of a mind at once more vigorous and more accomplished than that of any other person with whom the vicissitudes of my life have ever brought me into contact.

I kept my eye on the new guest throughout the whole day; I observed the mingled liveliness and softness which pervaded his attentions to women, the intellectual yet unpedantic superiority he possessed in his conversations with men; his respectful demeanor to age, his careless yet not over-familiar ease with the young; and, what interested me more than all, the occasional cloud which passed over his countenance at moments when he seemed sunk into a reverie that had for its objects nothing in common with those around him.

Just before dinner St. John was talking to a little group, among whom curiosity seemed to have drawn the Whig parson whom I have before mentioned. He stood at a little distance, shy and uneasy; one of the company took advantage of so favorable a butt for jests, and alluded to the bystander in a witticism which drew laughter from all but St. John, who, turning suddenly towards the parson, addressed an observation to him in the most respectful tone. Nor did he cease talking with him (fatiguing as the conference must have been, for never was there a duller ecclesiastic than the gentleman conversed with) until we descended to dinner. Then, for the first time, I learned that nothing can constitute good breeding that has not good-nature for its foundation; and then, too, as I was leading Lady Barbara Lackland to the great hall by the tip of her forefinger, I made another observation. Passing the priest, I heard him say to a fellow-clerk, —

“Certainly, he is the greatest man in England;” and I mentally remarked, “There is no policy like politeness; and a good manner is the best thing in the world, either to get one a good name or to supply the want of it.”

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CHAPTER VI.

A Dialogue, which might be dull if it were longer.

THREE days after the arrival of St. John, I escaped from the crowd of impertinents, seized a volume of Cowley, and, in a fit of mingled poetry and melancholy, strolled idly into the park. I came to the margin of the stream, and to the very spot on which I had stood with my uncle on the evening when he had first excited my emulation to scholastic rather than manual contention with my brother. I seated myself by the water-side, and, feeling indisposed to read, leaned my cheek upon my hand, and surrendered my thoughts as prisoners to the reflections which I could not resist.

I continued, I know not how long, in my meditation, till I was roused by a gentle touch upon my shoulder; I looked up, and saw St. John.

"Pardon me, Count," said he, smiling, "I should not have disturbed your reflections had not your neglect of an old friend emboldened me to address you upon his behalf." And St. John pointed to the volume of Cowley which he had taken up without my perceiving it.

"Well," added he, seating himself on the turf beside me, "in my younger days poetry and I were better friends than we are now; and if I had had Cowley as a companion, I should not have parted with him as you have done, even for my own reflections."

"You admire him then?" said I.

"Why, that is too general a question. I admire what is fine in him, as in every one else, but I do not

love him the better for his points and his conceits. He reminds me of what Cardinal Pallavicino said of Seneca, that he 'perfumes his conceits with civet and ambergris.' However, Count, I have opened upon a beautiful motto for you: —

' Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
Hear the soft winds above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs dispute,
And the more tuneful birds to both replying ;
Nor be myself too mute.'

What say you to that wish? If you have a germ of poetry in you, such verse ought to bring it into flower."

"Ay," answered I, though not exactly in accordance with the truth; "but I have not the germ. I destroyed it four years ago. Reading the dedications of poets cured me of the love for poetry. What a pity that the Divine Inspiration should have for its oracles such mean souls!"

"Yes, and how industrious the good gentlemen are in debasing themselves! Their ingenuity is never half so much shown in a simile as in a compliment; I know nothing in Nature more melancholy than the discovery of any meanness in a great man. There is so little to redeem the dry mass of follies and errors from which the materials of this life are composed, that anything to love or to reverence becomes, as it were, the sabbath for the mind. It is bitter to feel, as we grow older, how the respite is abridged, and how the few objects left to our admiration are abased. What a foe not only to life, but to all that dignifies and ennobles it, is Time! Our affections and our pleasures resemble those fabulous trees described by St. Odeoric, — the fruits

which they bring forth are no sooner ripened into maturity than they are transformed into birds and fly away. But these reflections cannot yet be familiar to you. Let us return to Cowley. Do you feel any sympathy with his prose writings? For some minds they have a great attraction."

"They have for mine," answered I; "but then I am naturally a dreamer, and a contemplative egotist is always to me a mirror in which I behold myself."

"The world," answered St. John, with a melancholy smile, "will soon dissolve, or forever confirm, your humor for dreaming; in either case, Cowley will not be less a favorite. But you must, like me, have long toiled in the heat and travail of business, or of pleasure, which is more wearisome still, in order fully to sympathize with those beautiful panegyrics upon solitude which make, perhaps, the finest passages in Cowley. I have often thought that he whom God hath gifted with a love of retirement possesses, as it were, an extra sense. And among what our poet so eloquently calls 'the vast and noble scenes of Nature,' we find the balm for the wounds we have sustained among the 'pitiful shifts of policy;' for the attachment to solitude is the surest preservative from the ills of life: and I know not if the Romans ever instilled, under allegory, a sublimer truth than when they inculcated the belief that those inspired by Feronia, the goddess of woods and forests, could walk barefoot and uninjured over burning coals."

At this part of our conference the bell, swinging hoarsely through the long avenues and over the silent water, summoned us to the grand occupation of civilized life; we rose and walked slowly towards the house.

"Does not," said I, "this regular routine of petty

occurrences, this periodical solemnity of trifles, weary and disgust you? For my part, I almost long for the old days of knight-errantry, and would rather be knocked on the head by a giant, or carried through the air by a flying griffin, than live in this circle of dull regularities, — the brute at the mill.”

“You may live even in these days,” answered St. John, “without too tame a regularity. Women and politics furnish ample food for adventure, and you must not judge of all life by country life.”

“Nor of all conversation,” said I, with a look which implied a compliment, “by the insipid idlers who fill our saloons. Behold them now, gathered by the oriel window, yonder; precious distillers of talk, — sentinels of society with certain set phrases as watchwords, which they never exceed; sages, who follow Face’s advice to Dapper, —

‘Hum thrice, and buzz as often.’”

CHAPTER VII.

A change of prospects. — A new insight into the character of the Hero. — A conference between two brothers.

A DAY or two after the conversation recorded in my last chapter, St. John, to my inexpressible regret, left us for London; however, we had enjoyed several conferences together during his stay, and when we parted, it was with a pressing invitation on his side to visit him in London, and a most faithful promise on mine to avail myself of the request.

No sooner was he fairly gone than I went to seek my uncle; I found him reading one of Farquhar's comedies. Despite my sorrow at interrupting him in so venerable a study, I was too full of my new plot to heed breaking off that in the comedy. In very few words I made the good knight understand that his descriptions had infected me, and that I was dying to ascertain their truth; in a word, that his hopeful nephew was fully bent on going to town. My uncle first stared, then swore, then paused, then looked at his leg, drew up his stocking, frowned, whistled, and told me at last to talk to him about it another time. Now, for my part, I think there are only two classes of people in the world authorized to put one off to "another time," — prime ministers and creditors; accordingly, I would not take my uncle's dismissal. I had not read plays, studied philosophy, and laid snares for the Abbé Montreuil, without deriving some little wisdom from my experience; so I took to teasing, and a notable plan it is too! Whoever has

pursued it may guess the result! My uncle yielded, and that day fortnight was fixed for my departure.

Oh, with what transport did I look forward to the completion of my wishes, the goal of my ambition! I hastened forth; I hurried into the woods; I sang out in the gladness of my heart, like a bird released; I drank in the air with a rapturous sympathy in its freedom; my step scarcely touched the earth, and my whole frame seemed ethereal — elated, exalted — by the vivifying inspiration of my hopes. I paused by a little streamlet, which, brawling over stones and through unpenetrated thicknesses of wood, seemed, like confined ambition, not the less restless for its obscurity.

“ Wild brooklet,” I cried, as my thoughts rushed into words, “ fret on, our lot is no longer the same: your wanderings and your murmurs are wasted in solitude and shade; your voice dies and re-awakes, but without an echo; your waves spread around their path neither fertility nor terror; their anger is idle, and their freshness is lavished on a sterile soil; the sun shines in vain for you, through these unvarying wastes of silence and gloom; Fortune freights not your channel with her hoarded stores, and Pleasure ventures not her silken sails upon your tide; not even the solitary idler roves beside you, to consecrate with human fellowship your melancholy course; no shape of beauty bends over your turbid waters, or mirrors in your breast the loveliness that hallows earth. Lonely and sullen, through storm or sunshine, you repine along your desolate way, and only catch, through the matted boughs that darken over you, the beams of the wan stars, which, like human hopes, tremble upon your breast, and are broken, even before they fade, by the very turbulence of the surface on which they fall. Rove, repine, murmur on!

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Such was my fate, but the resemblance is no more. I shall no longer be a lonely and regretful being; my affections will no longer waste themselves upon barrenness and stone. I go among the living and warm world of mortal energies and desires; my existence shall glide alternately through crested cities, and bowers in which Poetry worships Love; and the clear depths of my heart shall reflect whatever its young dreams have shadowed forth, — the visioned form, the gentle and fairy spirit, the Eve of my soul's imagined and foreboded paradise."

Venting, in this incoherent strain, the exultation which filled my thoughts, I wandered on, throughout the whole day, till my spirits had exhausted themselves by indulgence; and, wearied alike by mental excitement and bodily exertion, I turned with slow steps towards the house. As I ascended the gentle acclivity on which it stood, I saw a figure approaching towards me; the increasing shades of the evening did not allow me to recognize the shape until it was almost by my side, — it was Aubrey.

Of late I had seen very little of him. His devotional studies and habits seemed to draw him from the idle pursuits of myself and my uncle's guests; and Aubrey was one peculiarly susceptible of neglect, and sore, to morbidity, at the semblance of unkindness; so that he required to be sought, and rarely troubled others with advances: that night, however, his greeting was unusually warm.

"I was uneasy about you, Morton," said he, drawing my arm in his; "you have not been seen since morning; and, oh! Morton, my uncle told me, with tears in his eyes, that you were going to leave us. Is it so?"

"Had he tears in his eyes? Kind old man! And you, Aubrey, shall you, too, grieve for my departure?"

“Can you ask it, Morton? But why will you leave us? Are we not all happy here now? *Now* that there is no longer any barrier or difference between us, — *now* that I may look upon you, and listen to you, and love you, and *own* that I love you? Why will you leave us now? And,” continued Aubrey, as if fearful of giving me time to answer, — “and every one praises you so here; and my uncle and all of us are so proud of you. Why should you desert our affections merely because they are not new? Why plunge into that hollow and cold world which all who have tried it picture in such fearful hues? Can you find anything there to repay you for the love you leave behind?”

“My brother,” said I, mournfully, and in a tone which startled him, it was so different from that which I usually assumed, — “my brother, hear, before you reproach me. Let us sit down upon this bank, and I will suffer you to see more of my restless and secret heart than any hitherto have beheld.”

We sat down upon a little mound, — how well I remember the spot! I can see the tree which shadows it, from my window at this moment. How many seasons have the sweet herb and the emerald grass been withered there and renewed! Ah, what is this revival of all things fresh and youthful in external Nature, but a mockery of the wintry spot which lies perished and *irrenewable* within!

We drew near to each other, and as my arm wound around him, I said: “Aubrey, your love has been to me a more precious gift than any who have not, like me, thirsted and longed even for the love of a dog, can conceive. Never let me lose that affection! And do not think of me hereafter as of one whose heart echoed all that his lip uttered. Do not believe that irony, and

sarcasm, and bitterness of tongue flowed from a malignant or evil source. That disposition which seems to you alternately so light and gloomy had, perhaps, its origin in a mind too intense in its affections, and too exacting in having them returned. Till you sought my friendship, three short years ago, none but my uncle, with whom I could have nothing in common but attachment, seemed to care for my very existence. I blame them not, — they were deceived in my nature; but blame *me* not too severely if my temper suffered from their mistake. Your friendship came to me, not too late to save me from a premature misanthropy, but too late to eradicate every morbidity of mind. Something of sternness on the one hand, and of satire on the other, has mingled so long with my better feelings that the taint and the stream have become inseparable. Do not sigh, Aubrey. To be unamiable is not to be ungrateful; and I shall not love you the less if I have but a few objects to love. You ask me my inducement to leave you. ‘The World’ will be sufficient answer. I cannot share your contempt of it, nor your fear. I am, and have been of late, consumed with a thirst, — eager and burning and unquenchable — it is ambition!”

“Oh, Morton!” said Aubrey, with a second sigh, longer and deeper than the first, — “that evil passion! the passion which lost an angel heaven.”

“Let us not now dispute, my brother, whether it be sinful in itself or whether if its object be virtuous, it is not a virtue. In baring my soul before you, I only speak of my motives, and seek not to excuse them. Perhaps on this earth there is no good without a little evil. When my mind was once turned to the acquisition of mental superiority, every petty acquisition I made increased my desire to attain more, and partial

emulation soon widened into universal ambition. We three, Gerald and ourselves, are the keepers of a treasure more valuable than gold, — the treasure of a not ignoble nor sullied name. For my part, I confess that I am impatient to increase the store of honor which our father bequeathed to us. Nor is this all; despite our birth, we are poor in the gifts of fortune. We are all dependants on my uncle's favor; and, however we may deserve it, there would be something better in earning an independence for ourselves."

"That," said Aubrey, "may be an argument for mine and Gerald's exertions, but not for yours. You are the eldest, and my uncle's favorite. Nature and affection both point to you as his heir."

"If so, Aubrey, may many years pass before that inheritance be mine! Why should those years, that might produce so much, lie fallow? But though I would not affect an unreal delicacy, and disown my chance of future fortune, yet you must remember that it is a matter possible, not certain. My birthright gives me no claim over my uncle, whose estates are in his own gift; and favor, even in the good, is a wind which varies without power on our side to calculate the season or the cause. However this be, — and I love the person on whom fortune depends so much that I cannot, without pain, speak of the mere chance of its passing from his possession into mine, — you will own at least that I shall not hereafter deserve wealth the less for the advantages of experience."

"Alas!" said Aubrey, raising his eyes, "the worship of our Father in Heaven finds us ample cause for occupation, even in retirement: and the more we mix with His creatures, the more, I fear, we may forget the Creator. But if it must be so, I will pray for you,

Morton; and you will remember that the powerless and poor Aubrey can still lift up his voice in your behalf."

As Aubrey thus spoke, I looked with mingled envy and admiration upon the countenance beside me, which the beauty of a spirit seemed at once to soften and to exalt.

Since our conference had begun, the dusk of twilight had melted away; and the moon had called into lustre — living, indeed, but unlike the common and unhal- lowing life of day, — the wood and herbage, and silent variations of hill and valley, which slept around us; and as the still and shadowy light fell over the upward face of my brother, it gave to his features an additional and not wholly earth-born solemnity of expression. There was indeed in his face and air that from which the painter of a seraph might not have disdained to copy, — something resembling the vision of an angel in the dark eyes that swam with tears, in which emotion had so little of mortal dross; in the youthful and soft cheeks, which the earnestness of divine thought had refined by a pale but transparent hue; in the high and unclouded forehead, over which the hair, parted in the centre, fell in long and wavelike curls; and in the lips, silent, yet moving with internal prayer, which seemed the more fervent because unheard.

I did not interrupt him in the prayer, which my soul felt, though my ear caught it not, was for me. But when he had ceased, and turned towards me, I clasped him to my breast. "My brother," I said, "we shall part, it is true, but not till our hearts have annihilated the space that was between them; not till we have felt that the love of brotherhood can pass the love of woman. Whatever await you, your devoted and holy mind will be, if not your shield from affliction, at least your

balm for its wounds. Remain here. The quiet which breathes around you well becomes your tranquillity within; and sometimes bless me in your devotions, as you have done now. For me, I shall not regret those harder and harsher qualities which you blame in me, if hereafter their very sternness can afford me an opportunity of protecting your gentleness from evil, or redressing the wrongs from which your nature may be too innocent to preserve you. And now let us return home, in the conviction that we have in our friendship one treasure beyond the reach of fate."

Aubrey did not answer; but he kissed my forehead, and I felt his tears upon my cheek. We rose, and with arms still embracing each other as we walked, bent our steps to the house.

Ah, earth! what hast thou more beautiful than the love of those whose ties are knit by nature, and whose union seems ordained to begin from the very moment of their birth?

CHAPTER VIII.

First Love.

WE are under very changeful influences in this world! The night on which occurred the interview with Aubrey that I have just narrated, I was burning to leave Devereux Court. Within one little week from that time my eagerness was wonderfully abated. The sagacious reader will readily discover the cause of this alteration. About eight miles from my uncle's house was a seaport town; there were many and varied rides leading to it, and the town was a favorite place of visitation with all the family. Within a few hundred yards of the town was a small cottage, prettily situated in the midst of a garden, kept with singular neatness, and ornamented with several rare shrubs and exotics. I had more than once observed in the garden of this house a female in the very first blush of youth, and beautiful enough to excite within me a strong curiosity to learn the owner of the cottage. I inquired, and ascertained that its tenant was a Spaniard of high birth, and one who had acquired a melancholy celebrity by his conduct and misfortunes in the part he had taken in a certain feeble but gallant insurrection in his native country. He had only escaped with life and a very small sum of money, and now lived in the obscure seaport of —, a refugee and a recluse. He was a widower, and had only one child, — a daughter; and I was therefore at no loss to discover who was the beautiful female I had noted and admired.

On the day after my conversation with Aubrey, detailed in the last chapter, in riding past this cottage alone, I perceived a crowd assembled round the entrance; I paused to inquire the cause.

“Why, your honor,” quoth a senior of the village, “I believe the tipstaves be come to take the foreigner for not paying his rent; and he does not understand our English liberty like, and has drawn his sword, and swears, in his outlandish lingo, he will not be made prisoner alive.”

I required no further inducement to make me enter the house. The crowd gave way when they saw me dismount, and suffered me to penetrate into the first apartment. There I found the gallant old Spaniard with his sword drawn, keeping at bay a couple of sturdy-looking men, who appeared to be only prevented from using violence by respect for the person or the safety of a young woman, who clung to her father's knees, and implored him not to resist where resistance was so unavailing. Let me cut short this scene, — I dismissed the bailiffs, and paid the debt. I then endeavored to explain to the Spaniard in French, for he scarcely understood three words of our language, the cause of a rudeness towards him which he persisted in calling a great insult and inhospitality manifested to a stranger and an exile. I succeeded at length in pacifying him. I remained for more than an hour at the cottage, and I left it with a heart beating at the certain persuasion that I had established therein the claim of acquaintance and visitation.

Will the reader pardon me for having curtailed this scene? It is connected with a subject on which I shall better endure to dwell as my narrative proceeds. From that time I paid frequent visits to the cottage; the

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Spaniard soon grew intimate with me, and I thought the daughter began to blush when I entered, and to sigh when I departed.

One evening I was conversing with Don Diego D'Alvarez (such was the Spaniard's name), as he sat without his threshold, inhaling the gentle air that stole freshness from the rippling sea that spread before us, and fragrance from the earth, over which the summer now reigned in its most mellow glory. Isora (the daughter) sat at a little distance.

"How comes it," said Don Diego, "that you have never met our friend Señor Bar — Bar — These English names are always escaping my memory. How is he called, Isora?"

"Mr. — Mr. Barnard," said Isora (who, brought early to England, spoke its language like a native), but with evident confusion, and looking down as she spoke, — "Mr. Barnard, I believe, you mean."

"Right, my love," rejoined the Spaniard, who was smoking a long pipe with great gravity, and did not notice his daughter's embarrassment, — "a fine youth, but somewhat shy and over-modest in manner."

"Youth!" thought I; and I darted a piercing look towards Isora. "How comes it, indeed," I said aloud, "that I have not met him? Is he a friend of long standing?"

"Nay, not very, — perhaps of some six weeks' earlier date than you, Señor Don Devereux. I pressed him, when he called this morning, to tarry your coming; but, poor youth, he is diffident, and not yet accustomed to mix freely with strangers, especially those of rank; our own presence a little overawes him," — and from Don Diego's gray mustachios issued a yet fuller cloud than was ordinarily wont to emerge thence.

My eyes were still fixed on Isora; she looked up, met them, blushed deeply, rose, and disappeared within the house. I was already susceptible of jealousy. My lip trembled as I resumed: "And will Don Diego pardon me for inquiring how commenced his knowledge of this ingenuous youth?"

The question was a little beyond the pale of good breeding; perhaps the Spaniard, who was tolerably punctilious in such matters, thought so, for he did not reply. I was sensible of my error, and, apologizing for it, insinuated, nevertheless, the question in a more respectful and covert shape. Still Don Diego, inhaling the fragrant weed with renewed vehemence, only — like Pion's tomb, recorded by Pausanias — replied to the request of his petitioner *by smoke*. I did not venture to renew my interrogatories, and there was a long silence. My eyes fixed their gaze on the door by which Isora had disappeared. In vain, — she returned not; and as the chill of the increasing evening began now to make itself felt by the frame of one accustomed to warmer skies, the Spaniard soon rose to re-enter his house, and I took my farewell for the night.

There were many ways (as I before said) by which I could return home, all nearly equal in picturesque beauty; for the county in which my uncle's estates were placed was one where stream roved and woodland flourished even to the very strand, or cliff of the sea. The shortest *route*, though one the least frequented by any except foot-passengers, was along the coast, and it was by this path that I rode slowly homeward. On winding a curve in the road, about one mile from Devereux Court, the old building broke slowly, tower by tower, upon me. I have never yet described the house, and perhaps it will not be uninteresting to the reader if I do so now.

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It had anciently belonged to Ralph de Bigod. From his possession it had passed into that of the then noblest branch of the stem of Devereux, whence, without break or flaw in the direct line of heritage, it had ultimately descended to the present owner. It was a pile of vast extent, built around three quadrangular courts, the farthest of which spread to the very verge of the gray tall cliffs that overhung the sea; in this court was a rude tower, which, according to tradition, had contained the apartments ordinarily inhabited by our ill-fated namesake and distant kinsman, Robert Devereux, the favorite and the victim of Elizabeth, whenever he had honored the mansion with a visit. There was nothing, it is true, in the old tower calculated to flatter the tradition, for it contained only two habitable rooms, communicating with each other, and by no means remarkable for size or splendor; and every one of our household, save myself, was wont to discredit the idle rumor which would assign to so distinguished a guest so unseemly a lodgement. But, as I looked from the narrow lattices of the chambers over the wide expanse of ocean and of land which they commanded, — as I noted, too, that the tower was utterly separated from the rest of the house, and that the convenience of its site enabled one, on quitting it, to escape at once, and privately, either to the solitary beach, or to the glades and groves of the wide park which stretched behind, — I could not help indulging the belief that the unceremonious and not unromantic noble had himself selected his place of retirement, and that, in so doing, the gallant of a stately court was not, perhaps, undesirous of securing, at well-chosen moments, a brief relaxation from the heavy honors of country homage; or that the patron and poetic admirer of the dreaming Spenser might have

preferred, to all more gorgeous accommodation, the quiet and unseen egress to that sea and shore which, if we may believe the accomplished Roman,¹ are so fertile in the powers of inspiration.

However this be, I had cheated myself into the belief that my conjecture was true, and I had petitioned my uncle, when on leaving school he assigned to each of us our several apartments, to grant me the exclusive right to this dilapidated tower. I gained my boon easily enough; and, so strangely is our future fate compounded from past trifles, I verily believe that the strong desire which thenceforth seized me to visit courts and mix with statesmen, which afterwards hurried me into intrigue, war, the plots of London, the dissipations of Paris, the perilous schemes of Petersburg, nay, the very hardships of a Cossack tent, was first formed by the imaginary honor of inhabiting the same chamber as the glittering but ill-fated courtier of my own name. Thus youth imitates where it should avoid; and thus that which should have been to me a warning became an example.

In the oaken floor to the outer chamber of this tower was situated a trap-door, the entrance into a lower room, or rather cell, fitted up as a bath; and here a wooden door opened into a long subterranean passage that led out into a cavern by the sea-shore. This cave, partly by nature, partly by art, was hollowed into a beautiful Gothic form; and here, on moonlight evenings, when the sea crept gently over the yellow and smooth sands, and the summer tempered the air from too keen a fresh-

¹ "O mare, O litus, verum secretumque Μουσείον, quam multa dictatis, quam multa invenitis!" — PLINIUS.

"O sea, O shore, true and secret sanctuary of the Muses, how many things ye dictate, how many things ye discover!"

ness, my uncle had often in his younger days, ere gout and rheum had grown familiar images, assembled his guests. It was a place which the echoes peculiarly adapted for music; and the scene was certainly not calculated to diminish the effect of "sweet sounds." Even now, though my uncle rarely joined us, we were often wont to hold our evening revels in this spot; and the high cliffs, circling either side in the form of a bay, tolerably well concealed our meetings from the gaze of the vulgar. It is true (for these cliffs were perforated with numerous excavations) that some roving peasant, mariner, or perchance smuggler would now and then, at low water, intrude upon us. But our London Nereids and courtly Tritons were always well pleased with the interest of what they graciously termed "an adventure;" and our assemblies were too numerous to think an unbroken secrecy indispensable. Hence, therefore, the cavern was almost considered a part of the house itself; and though there was an iron door at the entrance which it gave to the passage leading to my apartments, yet so great was our confidence in our neighbors or ourselves, that it was rarely secured, save as a defence against the high tides of winter.

The stars were shining quietly over the old gray castle (for castle it really was), as I now came within view of it. To the left, and in the rear of the house, the trees of the park, grouped by distance, seemed blended into one thick mass of wood; to the right, as I now (descending the cliff by a gradual path) entered on the level sands, and at about the distance of a league from the main shore, a small islet, notorious as the resort and shelter of contraband adventurers, scarcely relieved the wide and glassy azure of the waves. The tide was out; and passing through one of the arches worn in the bay,

I came somewhat suddenly by the cavern. Seated there on a crag of stone I found Aubrey.

My acquaintance with Isora and her father had so immediately succeeded the friendly meeting with Aubrey which I last recorded, and had so utterly engrossed my time and thoughts, that I had not taken of that interview all the brotherly advantage which I might have done. My heart now smote me for my involuntary negligence. I dismounted, and fastening my horse to one of a long line of posts that ran into the sea, approached Aubrey and accosted him.

"Alone, Aubrey? and at an hour when my uncle always makes the old walls ring with revel! Hark, can you not hear the music even now? It comes from the ball-room, I think, does it not?"

"Yes!" said Aubrey, briefly, and looking down upon a devotional book, which (as was his wont) he had made his companion.

"And we are the only truants! Well, Gerald will supply our places with a lighter step, and, perhaps, a merrier heart."

Aubrey sighed. I bent over him affectionately (I loved that boy with something of a father's as well as a brother's love); and as I did bend over him, I saw that his eyelids were red with weeping.

"My brother, my own dear brother," said I, "what grieves you?—are we not friends, and more than friends?—what can grieve you that grieves not me?"

Suddenly raising his head, Aubrey gazed at me with a long, searching intentness of eye; his lips moved, but he did not answer.

"Speak to me, Aubrey," said I, passing my arm over his shoulder; "has any one, anything, hurt you? See, now, if I cannot remedy the evil."

“Morton,” said Aubrey, speaking very slowly, “do you believe that Heaven pre-orders as well as foresees our destiny?”

“It is the schoolman’s question,” said I, smiling, “but I know how these idle subtleties vex the mind, — and you, my brother, are ever too occupied with considerations of the future. If Heaven *does* pre-order our destiny, we know that Heaven is merciful, and we should be fearless as we arm ourselves in that knowledge.”

“Morton Devereux,” said Aubrey, again repeating my name, and with an evident inward effort that left his lip colorless, and yet lit his dark dilating eye with a strange and unwonted fire, — “Morton Devereux, I feel that I am predestined to the power of the Evil One!”

I drew back, inexpressibly shocked. “Good Heavens!” I exclaimed, “what can induce you to cherish so terrible a phantasy? What can induce you to wrong so fearfully the goodness and mercy of our Creator?”

Aubrey shrunk from my arm, which had still been round him, and covered his face with his hands. I took up the book he had been reading; it was a Latin treatise on predestination, and seemed fraught with the most gloomy and bewildering subtleties. I sat down beside him, and pointed out the various incoherences and contradictions of the work, and the doctrine it espoused; so long and so earnestly did I speak that at length Aubrey looked up, seemingly cheered and relieved.

“I wish,” said he, timidly, — “I wish that you loved me, and that you loved *me only*; but you love pleasure and power and show and wit and revelry, and you know not what it is to feel for me as I feel at times for you; nay, perhaps you really dislike or despise me!”

Aubrey's voice grew bitter in its tone as he concluded these words, and I was instantly impressed with the belief that some one had insinuated distrust of my affection for him.

"Why should you think thus?" I said. "Has any cause occurred of late to make you deem my affection for you weaker than it was? Has any one hinted a surmise that I do not repay your brotherly regard?"

Aubrey did not answer.

"Has Gerald," I continued, "jealous of our mutual attachment, uttered aught tending to diminish it? Yes, I see that he has!"

Aubrey remained motionless, sullenly gazing downward, and still silent.

"Speak," said I, "in justice to both of us, — speak! You know, Aubrey, how I *have* loved and love you: put your arms round me, and say that thing on earth which you wish me to do, and it shall be done!"

Aubrey looked up; he met my eyes, and he threw himself upon my neck, and burst into a violent paroxysm of tears.

I was greatly affected. "I see my fault," said I, soothing him: "you are angry, and with justice, that I have neglected you of late; and, perhaps, while I ask your confidence, you suspect that there is some subject on which I should have granted you mine. You are right, and at a fitter moment I will. Now, let us turn homeward: our uncle is never merry when we are absent; and when my mother misses your dark locks and fair cheek, I fancy that she sees little beauty in the ball. And yet, Aubrey," I added, as he now rose from my embrace and dried his tears, "I will own to you that I love this scene better than any, however gay, within;" and I turned to the sea, starlit as it was and

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murmuring with a silver voice, and I became suddenly silent.

There was a long pause. I believe we both felt the influence of the scene around us, softening and tranquillizing our hearts; for at length Aubrey put his hand in mine, and said, "You were always more generous and kind than I, Morton, though there are times when you seem different from what you are; and I know you have already forgiven me."

I drew him affectionately towards me, and we went home.

But although I meant, from that night, to devote myself more to Aubrey than I had done of late, my hourly increasing love for Isora interfered greatly with my resolution. In order, however, to excuse any future neglect, I, the very next morning, bestowed upon him my confidence. Aubrey did not much encourage my passion: he represented to me Isora's situation, my own youth, my own worldly ambition; and, more than all (reminding me of my uncle's aversion even to the most prosperous and well-suited marriage), he insisted upon the certainty that Sir William would never yield consent to the lawful consummation of so unequal a love. I was not too well pleased with this reception of my tale, and I did not much trouble my adviser with any further communication and confidence on the subject. Day after day I renewed my visits to the Spaniard's cottage; and yet time passed on, and I had not told Isora a syllable of my love. I was inexpressibly jealous of this Barnard whom her father often eulogized, and whom I never met. There appeared to be some mystery in his acquaintance with Don Diego, which that personage carefully concealed; and once, when I was expressing my surprise to have so often missed seeing

his friend, the Spaniard shook his head gravely, and said that he had now learned the real reason for it; there were circumstances of state which made men fearful of new acquaintances, even in their own country. He drew back, as if he had said too much, and left me the conjecture that Barnard was connected with him in some intrigue, more delightful in itself than agreeable to the government. This belief was strengthened by my noting that Alvarez was frequently absent from home, and this, too, in the evening, when he was generally wont to shun the bleakness of the English air, — an atmosphere, by the by, which I once heard a Frenchman wittily compare to Augustus placed between Horace and Virgil; namely, in the *bon mot* of the emperor himself, — *between sighs and tears*.

But Isora herself never heard the name of this Barnard mentioned without a visible confusion, which galled me to the heart; and at length, unable to endure any longer my suspense upon the subject, I resolved to seek from her own lips its termination. I long tarried my opportunity; it was one evening, that, coming rather unexpectedly to the cottage, I was informed by the single servant that Don Diego had gone to the neighboring town, but that Isora was in the garden. Small as it was, this garden had been cultivated with some care, and was not devoid of variety. A high and very thick fence of living box-wood, closely interlaced with the honeysuckle and the common rose, screened a few plots of rarer flowers, a small circular fountain, and a rustic arbor, both from the sea-breezes and the eyes of any passer-by, to which the open and unsheltered portion of the garden was exposed. When I passed through the opening cut in the fence, I was somewhat surprised at not immediately seeing Isora. Perhaps she was in

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the arbor. I approached the arbor tremblingly. What was my astonishment and my terror, when I beheld her stretched lifeless on the ground!

I uttered a loud cry, and sprang forwards. I raised her from the earth, and supported her in my arms; her complexion — through whose pure and transparent white the wandering blood was wont so gently yet so glowingly to blush, undulating, while it blushed, as youngest rose-leaves which the air just stirs into trembling — was blanched into the hues of death. My kisses tinged it with a momentary color not its own; and yet, as I pressed her to my heart, methought hers, which seemed still before, began, as if by an involuntary sympathy, palpably and suddenly to throb against my own. My alarm melted away as I held her thus, — nay, I would not, if I could, have recalled her *y^e* to life: I was forgetful, — I was unheeding; I was unconscious of all things else, — a few broken and passionate words escaped my lips, but even they ceased when I felt her breath just stirring and mingling with my own. It seemed to me as if all living kind but ourselves had, by a spell, departed from the earth, and we were left alone with the breathless and inaudible Nature from which spring the love and the life of all things.

Isora slowly recovered; her eyes, in opening, dwelt upon mine, — her blood rushed at once to her cheek, and as suddenly left it hueless as before. She rose from my embrace, but I still extended my arms towards her; and words over which I had no control, and of which now I have no remembrance, rushed from my lips. Still pale and leaning against the side of the arbor, Isora heard me, as — confused, incoherent, impetuous, but still intelligible to her — my released heart poured itself forth. And when I had ceased,

she turned her face towards me, and my blood seemed at once frozen in its channel. Anguish — deep, ineffable anguish — was depicted upon every feature; and when she strove at last to speak, her lips quivered so violently that after a vain effort she ceased abruptly. I again approached, — I seized her hand, which I covered with my kisses.

“Will you not answer me, Isora?” said I, tremblingly. “*Be* silent, then; but give me one look, one glance of hope, of pardon, from those dear eyes, and I ask no more.”

Isora’s whole frame seemed sinking beneath her emotions: she raised her head, and looked hurriedly and fearfully round; my eye followed hers, and I then saw upon the damp ground the recent print of a man’s footstep, not my own; and close to the spot where I had found Isora, lay a man’s glove. A pang shot through me, — I felt my eyes flash fire and my brow darken as I turned to Isora, and said, “I see it, I see all: I have a rival, who has but just left you, — you love me not; your affections are for him!” Isora sobbed violently, but made no reply. “You love him,” said I, but in a milder and more mournful tone, — “you love him: it is enough, I will persecute you no more; and yet —” I paused a moment, for the remembrance of many a sign, which my heart had interpreted flatteringly, flashed upon me, and my voice faltered. “Well, I have no right to murmur; only, Isora — only tell me with your lips that you love another, and I will depart in peace.”

Very slowly Isora turned her eyes to me, and even through her tears they dwelt upon me with a tender and a soft reproach.

“You love another?” said I; and from her lips,

which scarcely parted, came a single word which thrilled to my heart like fire, — “*No!*”

“*No!*” I repeated, “*No!* — say that again, and again; yet who then is this that has dared so to agitate and overpower you? Who is he whom you have met, and whom, even now while I speak, you tremble to hear me recur to? Answer me one word, — is it this mysterious stranger whom your father honors with his friendship? — is it Barnard?”

Alarm and fear again wholly engrossed the expression of Isora’s countenance.

“*Barnard!*” she said; “yes, yes, it is Barnard!”

“*Who is he?*” I cried vehemently, — “*who or what is he, and of what nature is his influence upon you? Confide in me;*” and I poured forth a long tide of inquiry and solicitation.

By the time I had ended, Isora seemed to have recovered herself. With her softness was mingled something of spirit and of self-control, which was rare alike in her country and her sex.

“*Listen to me!*” said she; and her voice, which faltered a little at first, grew calm and firm as she proceeded. “*You profess to love me, — I am not worthy your love; and if, Count Devereux, I do not reject nor disclaim it, — for I am a woman, and a weak and fond one, — I will not at least wrong you by encouraging hopes which I may not and I dare not fulfil. I cannot*” — here she spoke with a fearful distinctness, — “*I cannot, I can never, be yours; and when you ask me to be so, you know not what you ask nor what perils you incur. Enough, — I am grateful to you. The poor exiled girl is grateful for your esteem, and — and your affection. She will never forget them, — never! But be this our last meeting, our very last! God bless*

you, Morton!" and as she read my heart, pierced and agonized as it was, in my countenance, Isora bent over me, for I knelt beside her, and I felt her tears upon my cheek, — "God bless you, and farewell."

"You insult, you wound me," said I, bitterly, "by this cold and taunting kindness; tell me, tell me only, who it is that you love better than me."

Isora had turned to leave me, for I was too proud to detain her; but when I said this, she came back, after a moment's pause, and laid her hand upon my arm.

"If it make you happy to know *my* unhappiness," she said, — and the tone of her voice made me look full in her face, which was one deep blush, — "know that I am not insensible —"

I heard no more; my lips pressed themselves involuntarily to hers; a long, long kiss, burning, intense, — concentrating emotion, heart, soul, all the rays of life's light into a single focus, — and she tore herself from me, and I was alone.

CHAPTER IX.

A Discovery and a Departure.

I HASTENED home after my eventful interview with Isora, and gave myself up to tumultuous and wild conjecture. Aubrey sought me the next morning. I narrated to him all that had occurred. He said little; but that little enraged me, for it was contrary to the dictates of my own wishes. The character of Morose, in the "Silent Woman," is by no means an uncommon one. Many men — certainly many lovers — would say with equal truth, always provided they had equal candor, "All discourses but my own afflict me; they seem harsh, impertinent, and irksome." Certainly I felt that amiable sentiment most sincerely with regard to Aubrey. I left him abruptly: a resolution possessed me, — "I will see," said I, "this Barnard; I will lie in wait for him; I will demand and obtain, though it be by force, the secret which evidently subsists between him and this exiled family."

Full of this idea, I drew my cloak round me, and repaired on foot to the neighborhood of the Spaniard's cottage. There was no place near it very commodious for accommodation both of vigil and concealment. However, I made a little hill, in a field opposite the house, my warder's station, and lying at full length on the ground, wrapped in my cloak, I trusted to escape notice. The day passed, — no visitor appeared. The next morning I went from my own rooms, through the

subterranean passage, into the Castle Cave, as the excavation I have before described was generally termed. On the shore I saw Gerald, by one of the small fishing-boats usually kept there. I passed him with a sneer at his amusements, which were always those of conflicts against fish or fowl. He answered me in the same strain, as he threw his nets into the boat, and pushed out to sea. "How is it that you go alone?" said I; "is there so much glory in the capture of mackerel and dogfish that you will allow no one to share it?"

"There are other sports besides those for men," answered Gerald, coloring indignantly; "my taste is confined to amusements in which he is but a fool who seeks companionship; and if you could read character better, my wise brother, you would know that the bold rover is ever less idle and more fortunate than the speculative dreamer!"

As Gerald said this, which he did with a significant emphasis, he rowed vigorously across the water, and the little boat was soon half-way to the opposite islet. My eyes followed it musingly as it glided over the waves, and my thoughts painfully revolved the words which Gerald had uttered. "What can he mean?" said I, half aloud; "yet what matters it? Perhaps some low amour, some village conquest, inspires him with that becoming fulness of pride and vainglory, — joy be with so bold a rover!" and I strode away, along the beach, towards my place of watch. Once only I turned to look at Gerald, — he had then just touched the islet, which was celebrated as much for the fishing it afforded as the smuggling it protected.

I arrived at last at the hillock, and resumed my station. Time passed on, till, at the dusk of evening, the Spaniard came out. He walked slowly towards the

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town; I followed him at a distance. Just before he reached the town, he turned off by a path which led to the beach. As the evening was unusually fresh and chill, I felt convinced that some cause, not wholly trivial, drew the Spaniard forth to brave it. My pride a little revolted at the idea of following him; but I persuaded myself that Isora's happiness, and perhaps her father's safety, depended on my obtaining some knowledge of the character and designs of this Barnard, who appeared to possess so dangerous an influence over both daughter and sire, — nor did I doubt but that the old man was now gone forth to meet him. The times were those of mystery and of intrigue; the emissaries of the House of Stuart were restlessly at work among all classes, — many of them, obscure and mean individuals, made their way the more dangerously from their apparent insignificance. My uncle, a moderate Tory, was opposed, though quietly and without vehemence, to the claims of the banished House. Like Sedley, who became so stanch a revolutionist, he had seen the court of Charles II., and the character of that king's brother, too closely to feel much respect for either; but he thought it indecorous to express opposition loudly against a party among whom were many of his early friends; and the good old knight was too much attached to private ties to be very much alive to public feeling. However, at his well-filled board conversation generally, though displeasingly to himself, turned upon politics, and I had there often listened of late to dark hints of the danger to which we were exposed, and of the restless machinations of the Jacobites. I did not, therefore, scruple to suspect this Barnard of some plot against the existing state; and I did it the more from observing that the Spaniard often

spoke bitterly of the English court, which had rejected some claims he had imagined himself entitled to make upon it, and that he was naturally of a temper vehemently opposed to quiet and alive to enterprise. With this impression, I deemed it fair to seize any opportunity of seeing, at least, even if I could not question, the man whom the Spaniard himself confessed to have state reasons for concealment; and my anxiety to behold one whose very name could agitate Isora, and whose presence could occasion the state in which I had found her, sharpened this desire into the keenness of a passion.

While Alvarez descended to the beach, I kept the upper path, which wound along the cliff. There was a spot where the rocks were rude and broken into crags, and afforded me a place where, unseen, I could behold what passed below. The first thing I beheld was a boat approaching rapidly towards the shore; one man was seated in it; he reached the shore, and I recognized Gerald. That was a dreadful moment. Alvarez now slowly joined him; they remained together for nearly an hour. I saw Gerald give the Spaniard a letter, which appeared to make the chief subject of their conversation. At length they parted, with the signs rather of respect than familiarity. Don Diego returned homeward, and Gerald re-entered the boat. I watched its progress over the waves with feelings of a dark and almost unutterable nature. "My enemy! my rival! ruiner of my hopes! *my brother! my twin-brother!*" I muttered bitterly between my ground teeth.

The boat did not make to the open sea; it skulked along the shore, till distance and shadow scarcely allowed me to trace the outline of Gerald's figure. It then touched the beach, and I could just descry the dim

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shape of another man enter; and Gerald, instead of returning homewards, pushed out towards the islet. I spent the greater part of the night in the open air. Wearied and exhausted by the furious indulgence of my passions, I gained my room at length. There, however, as elsewhere, thought succeeded to thought, and scheme to scheme. Should I speak to Gerald? Should I confide in Alvarez? Should I renew my suit to Isora? If the first, what could I hope to learn from mine enemy? If the second, what could I gain from the father, while the daughter remained averse to me? If the third, — there my heart pointed, and the third scheme I resolved to adopt.

But was I sure that Gerald was this Barnard? Might there not be some hope that he was not? No, I could perceive none. Alvarez had never spoken to me of acquaintance with any other Englishman than Barnard. I had no reason to believe that he ever held converse with any other. Would it not have been natural, too, unless some powerful cause, such as love to Isora, induced silence, — would it not have been natural that Gerald should have mentioned his acquaintance with the Spaniard? Unless some dark scheme, such as that which Barnard appeared to have in common with Don Diego, commanded obscurity, would it have been likely that Gerald should have met Alvarez alone, at night, on an unfrequented spot? What that scheme *was*, I guessed not, I cared not. All my interest in the identity of Barnard with Gerald Devereux was that derived from the power he seemed to possess over Isora. Here, too, at once was explained the pretended Barnard's desire of concealment, and the vigilance with which it had been effected. It was so certain that Gerald, if my rival, would seek to avoid me; it was so easy for him,

who could watch all my motions, to secure the power of doing so. Then I remembered Gerald's character through the country, as a gallant and a general lover; and I closed my eyes, as if to shut out the vision, when I recalled the beauty of his form, contrasted with the comparative plainness of my own.

"There is no hope," I repeated; and an insensibility, rather than sleep, crept over me. Dreadful and fierce dreams peopled my slumbers; and when I started from them at a late hour the next day, I was unable to rise from my bed; my agitation and my wanderings had terminated in a burning fever. In four days, however, I recovered sufficiently to mount my horse. I rode to the Spaniard's house; I found there only the woman who had been Don Diego's solitary domestic. The morning before, Alvarez and his daughter had departed, none knew for certain whither; but it was supposed their destination was London. The woman gave me a note; it was from Isora; it contained only these lines:—

Forget me; we are now parted forever. As you value my peace of mind, — of happiness I do not speak, — seek not to discover our next retreat. I implore you to think no more of what has been. You are young, very young. Life has a thousand paths for you; any one of them will lead you from the remembrance of me. Farewell, again and again!

ISORA D'ALVAREZ.

With this note was another, in French, from Don Diego; it was colder and more formal than I could have expected; it thanked me for my attentions towards him; it regretted that he could not take leave of me in person; and it enclosed the sum by the loan of which our acquaintance had commenced.

"It is well!" said I calmly to myself, — "it is well;

I will forget her;” and I rode instantly home. “But,” I resumed in my soliloquy, “I will yet strive to obtain confirmation to what perhaps needs it not. I will yet strive to see if Gerald can deny the depth of his injuries towards me; there will be at least some comfort in witnessing either his defiance or his confusion.”

Agreeably to this thought, I hastened to seek Gerald. I found him in his apartment. I shut the door, and seating myself, with a smile thus addressed him, —

“Dear Gerald, I have a favor to ask of you.”

“What is it?”

“How long have you known a certain Mr. Barnard?”

Gerald changed color; his voice faltered as he repeated the name, “Barnard!”

“Yes,” said I, with affected composure, “Barnard! a great friend of Don Diego D’Alvarez.”

“I perceive,” said Gerald, collecting himself, “that you are in some measure acquainted with my secret: how far it is known to you I cannot guess; but I tell you, very fairly, that from me you will not increase the sum of your knowledge.”

When one is in a good sound rage, it is astonishing how calm one can be! I was certainly somewhat amazed by Gerald’s hardihood and assurance; but I continued, with a smile, —

“And Donna Isora, how long, if not very intrusive on your confidence, have you known her?”

“I tell you,” answered Gerald, doggedly, “that I will answer no questions.”

“You remember the old story,” returned I, “of the two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, whose very ashes refused to mingle. Faith, Gerald, our love seems much of the same sort. I know not if our ashes will exhibit so laudable an antipathy; but I think our hearts and

hands will do so while a spark of life animates them; yes, though our blood," I added, in a voice quivering with furious emotion, "prevents our contest by the sword, it prevents not the hatred and the curses of the heart."

Gerald turned pale. "I do not understand you," he faltered out. "I know you abhor me; but why, why this excess of malice?"

I cast on him a look of bitter scorn, and turned from the room.

It is not pleasing to place before the reader these dark passages of fraternal hatred; but in the record of all passions there is a moral; and it is wise to see to how vast a sum the units of childish animosity swell, when they are once brought into a heap by some violent event, and told over by the nice accuracy of revenge.

But I long to pass from these scenes, and my history is about to glide along others of more glittering and smiling aspect. Thank Heaven, I write a tale, not only of love, but of a life; and that which I cannot avoid I can at least condense.

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CHAPTER X.

A very short Chapter — containing a Valet.

MY uncle for several weeks had flattered himself that I had quite forgotten or foregone the desire of leaving Devereux Court for London. Good, easy man! he was not a little distressed when I renewed the subject with redoubled firmness, and demanded an early period for that event. He managed, however, still to protract the evil day. At one time it was impossible to part with me, because the house was so full; at another time it was cruel to leave him when the house was so empty. Meanwhile a new change came over me. As the first shock of Isora's departure passed away, I began to suspect the purity of her feelings towards me. Might not Gerald, the beautiful, the stately, the glittering Gerald, have been a successful wooer under that disguised name of Barnard, and hence Isora's confusion when that name was mentioned, and hence the power which its possessor exercised over her?

This idea, once admitted, soon gained ground. It is true that Isora had testified something of favorable feelings towards me; but this might spring from coquetry or compassion. My love had been a boy's love, founded upon beauty and colored by romance. I had not investigated the character of the object, and I had judged of the mind solely by the face. I might easily have been deceived; I persuaded myself that I was! Perhaps Gerald had provided their present retreat for sire and daughter; perhaps they at this moment laughed over

my rivalry and my folly. Methought Gerald's lip wore a contemptuous curve when we met. "It shall have no cause," I said, stung to the soul; "I will indeed forget this woman, and yet, though in other ways, eclipse this rival. Pleasure, ambition, the brilliancy of a court, the resources of wealth, invite me to a thousand joys. I will not be deaf to the call. Meanwhile I will not betray to Gerald — to any one — the scar of the wound I have received; and I will mortify Gerald by showing him that, handsome as he is, he shall be forgotten in my presence!"

Agreeably to this exquisite resolution, I paid incessant court to the numerous dames by whom my uncle's mansion was thronged; and I resolved to prepare among them the reputation for gallantry and for wit which I proposed to establish in town.

"You are greatly altered since your love," said Aubrey one day to me, "but not by your love. Own that I did right in dissuading you from its indulgence!"

"Tell me," said I, sinking my voice to a whisper, "do you think Gerald was my rival?" and I recounted the causes of my suspicion.

Aubrey's countenance testified astonishment as he listened. "It is strange, very strange," said he, "and the evidence of the boat is almost conclusive; still I do not think it quite sufficient to leave no loop-hole of doubt. But what matters it? you have conquered your love now."

"Ay," I said, with a laugh, "I have conquered it, and I am now about to find some other empress of the heart. What think you of the Lady Hasselton? — a fair dame and a sprightly. I want nothing but her love to be the most enviable of men, and a French *valet-de-chambre* to be the most irresistible."

"The former is easier to obtain than the latter, I fear," returned Aubrey: "all places produce light dames; but the war makes a scarcity of French valets."

"True," said I; "but I never thought of instituting a comparison between their relative value. The Lady Hasselton, no disparagement to her merits, is but one woman; but a French valet who knows his *métier*, arms one for conquest over a thousand;" and I turned to the saloon.

Fate, which had destined to me the valuable affections of the Lady Hasselton, granted me also, at a yet earlier period, the greater boon of a French valet. About two or three weeks after this sapient communication with Aubrey, the most charming person in the world presented himself a candidate *pour le suprême bonheur de soigner Monsieur le Comte*. Intelligence beamed in his eye; a modest assurance reigned upon his brow; respect made his step vigilant as a zephyr's; and his ruffles were the envy of the world!

I took him at a glance; and I presented to the admiring inmates of the house a greater coxcomb than the Count Devereux in the ethereal person of Jean Desmarais.

CHAPTER XI.

The Hero acquits himself honorably as a Coxcomb. — A Fine Lady of the Eighteenth Century, and a fashionable Dialogue, — the Substance of fashionable Dialogue being in all Centuries the same.

“ I AM thinking, Morton,” said my uncle, “ that if you are to go to town, you should go in a style suitable to your rank. What say you to flying along the road in my green and gold chariot? ’Sdeath, I ’ll make you a present of it. Nay, no thanks, — and you may have four of my black Flanders mares to draw you.”

“ Now, my dear Sir William,” cried Lady Hasselton, who, it may be remembered, was the daughter of one of King Charles’s beauties, and who alone shared the breakfast-room with my uncle and myself, — “ now, my dear Sir William, I think it would be a better plan to suffer the count to accompany us to town. We go next week. He shall have a seat in our coach; help Lovell to pay our post-horses; protect us at inns; scold at the drawers in the petty oaths of the fashion, which are so innocent that I will teach them to his countship myself; and unless I am much more frightful than my honored mother, whose beauties you so gallantly laud, I think you will own, Sir William, that this is better for your nephew than doing solitary penance in your chariot of green and gold, with a handkerchief tied over his head to keep away cold, and with no more fanciful occupation than composing sonnets to the four Flanders mares.”

"'Sdeath, madam, you inherit your mother's wit as well as beauty," cried my uncle, with an impassioned air.

"And his countship," said I, "will accept your invitation without asking his uncle's leave."

"Come, that is bold for a gentleman of — let me see, thirteen — are you not?"

"Really," answered I, "one learns to forget time so terribly in the presence of Lady Hasselton, that I do not remember even how long it has existed for me."

"Bravo," cried the knight, with a moistening eye; "you see, madam, the boy has not lived with his old uncle for nothing."

"I am lost in astonishment," said the lady, glancing towards the glass; "why, you will eclipse all our beaux at your first appearance; but — but — Sir William — how green those glasses have become! Bless me, there is something so contagious in the effects of the country that the very mirrors grow verdant. But — Count — Count — where are you, Count?" (I was exactly opposite to the fair speaker.) "Oh, there you are! Pray, do you carry a little pocket-glass of the true quality about you? But of course you do; lend it me."

"I have not the glass you want, but I carry with me a mirror that reflects your features much more faithfully."

"How! I protest I do not understand you!"

"The mirror is here!" said I, laying my hand to my heart.

"'Gad, I must kiss the boy!" cried my uncle, starting up.

"I have sworn," said I, fixing my eyes upon the lady, — "I have sworn never to be kissed even by women. You must pardon me, uncle."

"I declare," cried the Lady Hasselton, flirting her

fan, which was somewhat smaller than the screen that one puts into a great hall in order to take off the discomfort of too large a room, — “I declare, Count, there is a vast deal of originality about you. But tell me, Sir William, where did your nephew acquire at so early an age (eleven, you say he is) such a fund of agreeable assurance?”

“Nay, madam, let the boy answer for himself.”

“*Imprimis*, then,” said I, playing with the ribbon of my cane, — “*imprimis*, early study of the best authors, — Congreve and Farquhar, Etherege and Rochester; secondly, the constant intercourse of company, which gives one the spleen so overpoweringly that despair inspires one with boldness — to get rid of them; thirdly, the personal example of Sir William Devereux; and, fourthly, the inspiration of hope.”

“Hope, sir!” said the Lady Hasselton, covering her face with her fan so as only to leave me a glimpse of the farthest patch upon her left cheek, — “hope, sir?”

“Yes, the hope of being pleasing to you. Suffer me to add that the hope has now become certainty.”

“Upon my word, Count —”

“Nay, you cannot deny it, — if one can once succeed in impudence, one is irresistible.”

“Sir William,” cried Lady Hasselton, “you may give the count your chariot of green and gold and your four Flanders mares, and send his mother’s maid with him. He shall not go with me.”

“Cruel! and why?” said I.

“You are too —” The lady paused, and looked at me over her fan; she was really very handsome. “You are too *old*, Count. You *must* be more than nine.”

“Pardon me,” said I, “I *am* nine: a very mystical number nine is, too, and represents the Muses, who, you

know, were always attendant upon Venus, — or you, which is the same thing; so you can no more dispense with my company than you can with that of the Graces.”

“Good morning, Sir William!” cried the Lady Hasselton, rising.

I offered to hand her to the door, — with great difficulty, for her hoop was of the very newest enormity of circumference. I effected this object. “Well, Count!” said she, “I am glad to see you have brought so much learning from school; make the best use of it, while it lasts, for your memory will not furnish you with a single simile out of the mythology by the end of next winter.”

“That would be a pity!” said I, “for I intend having as many goddesses as the heathens had, and I should like to worship them in a classical fashion.”

“Oh the young reprobate!” said the beauty, tapping me with her fan. “And pray what other deities besides Venus do I resemble?”

“All!” said I, — “at least all the celestial ones!”

Though half-way through the door, the beauty extricated her hoop, and drew back.

“Bless me, the gods as well as the goddesses?”

“Certainly.”

“You jest, — tell me how.”

“Nothing can be easier: you resemble Mercury, because of your thefts —”

“Thefts!”

“Ay, stolen hearts and” (added I, in a whisper) “glances; Jupiter, partly because of your lightning, which you lock up in the said glances, — principally because all things are subservient to you; Neptune, because you are as changeable as the seas; Vulcan, because you live among the flames you excite; and Mars, because —”

“You are so destructive,” cried my uncle.

“Exactly so; and because,” added I, as I shut the door upon the beauty, — “because, thanks to your hoop, you cover nine acres of ground.”

“Od’s fish, Morton,” said my uncle, “you surprise me at times, — one while you are so reserved, at another so assured; to-day so brisk, to-morrow so gloomy. Why, now, Lady Hasselton (she is very comely, eh! faith, but not comparable to her mother) told me, a week ago, that she gave you up in despair, — that you were dull, past hoping for; and now, ’Gad, you had a life in you that Sid himself could not have surpassed. How comes it, sir, eh?”

“Why, uncle, you have explained the reason; it was exactly because she said I was dull that I was resolved to convict her in an untruth.”

“Well, now, there is some sense in that, boy; always contradict ill report by personal merit. But what think you of her ladyship? ’Gad, you know what old Bellair said of Emilia: ‘Make much of her, — she’s one of the best of your acquaintance. I like her countenance and behavior. Well, she has a modesty not i’ this age, a-dad she has.’ Applicable enough, eh, boy!”

“‘I know her value, sir, and esteem her accordingly,’” answered I, out of the same play, which by dint of long study I had got by heart. “But, to confess the truth,” added I, “I think you might have left out the passage about her modesty.”

“There, now, you young chaps are so censorious; why, ’sdeath, sir, you don’t think the worse of her virtue because of her wit?”

“Humph!”

“Ah, boy, when you are my age, you’ll know that

your demure cats are not the best; and that reminds me of a little story, — shall I tell it you, child?"

"If it so please you, sir."

"Zauns, — where 's my snuff-box? — oh, here it is. Well, sir, you shall have the whole thing from beginning to end. Sedley and I were one day conversing together about women. Sid was a very deep fellow in that game: no passion, you know; no love on his own side, — nothing of the sort all done by rule and compass, — knew women as well as dice, and calculated the exact moment when his snares would catch them, according to the principles of geometry. D——d clever fellow, faith, but a confounded rascal; but let it go no farther, — mum 's the word! — must not slander the dead, and 't is only my suspicion, you know, after all. Poor fellow, I don't think he was such a rascal; he gave a beggar an angel once, — well, boy, have a pinch? Well, so I said to Sir Charles, 'I think you will lose the widow, after all, — 'Gad I do.' 'Upon what principle of science, Sir William?' said he. 'Why, faith, man, she is so modest, you see, and has such a pretty way of blushing.' 'Hark ye, friend Devereux,' said Sir Charles, smoothing his collar, and mincing his words musically, as he was wont to do, — 'hark ye, friend Devereux, I will give you the whole experience of my life in one maxim, — I can answer for its being new, and I think it is profound, — and that maxim is — ' No, faith, Morton, no, I cannot tell it thee: it is villainous, and then it's so desperately against all the sex."

"My dear uncle, don't tantalize me so; pray tell it me, — it shall be a secret."

"No, boy, no, it will corrupt thee; besides, it will do poor Sid's memory no good. But, 'sdeath, it was a

most wonderfully shrewd saying, — i' faith, it was. But zounds, Morton, I forgot to tell you that I have had a letter from the abbé to-day."

"Ha! and when does he return?"

"To-morrow, God willing!" said the knight, with a sigh.

"So soon, or rather after so long an absence! Well, I am glad of it. I wish much to see him before I leave you."

"Indeed!" quoth my uncle; "you have an advantage over me, then! But od's fish, Morton, how is it that you grew so friendly with the priest before his departure? He used to speak very suspiciously of thee formerly; and when I last saw him, he lauded thee to the skies."

"Why, the clergy of his faith have a habit of defending the strong and crushing the weak, I believe; that's all. He once thought I was dull enough to damn my fortune, and then he had some strange doubts for my soul; now he thinks me wise enough to become prosperous, and it is astonishing what a respect he has conceived for my principles."

"Ha, ha, ha! you have a spice of your uncle's humor in you; and, 'Gad, you have no small knowledge of the world, considering you have seen so little of it."

A hit at the Popish clergy was, in my good uncle's eyes, the exact acme of wit and wisdom. We are always clever with those who imagine we think as they do. To be shallow you must differ with people; to be profound you must agree with them. "Why, sir," answered the sage nephew, "you forget that I have seen more of the world than many of twice my age. Your house has been full of company ever since I have been

in it, and you set me to making observations on what I saw before I was thirteen. And then, too, if one is reading books about real life at the very time one is mixing in it, it is astonishing how naturally one remarks, and how well one remembers."

"Especially if one has a genius for it,—eh, boy! And then, too, you have read my play, turned Horace's Satires into a lampoon upon the boys at school, been regularly to assizes during the vacation, attended the county-balls, and been a most premature male coquette with the ladies. Od's fish, boy! it is quite curious to see how the young sparks of the present day get on with their love-making."

"Especially if one has a genius for it,—eh, sir?" said I.

"Besides, too," said my uncle, ironically, "you have had the abbé's instructions."

"Ay; and if the priests would communicate to their pupils their experience in frailty as well as in virtue, how wise they would make us!"

"Od's fish! Morton, you are quite oracular. How got you that fancy of priests?—by observation in life already?"

"No, uncle; by observation in plays, which you tell me are the mirrors of life. You remember what Lee says, —

'Tis thought
That earth is more obliged to priests for bodies
Than heaven for souls.' "

And my uncle laughed, and called me a smart fellow.

CHAPTER XII.

The Abbé's return. — A Sword and a Soliloquy.

THE next evening, when I was sitting alone in my room, the Abbé Montreuil suddenly entered. "Ah, is it you? Welcome!" cried I. The priest held out his arms, and embraced me in the most paternal manner.

"It is your friend," said he, "returned at last to bless and congratulate you. Behold my success in your service;" and the abbé produced a long leather case, richly inlaid with gold.

"Faith, Abbé," said I, "am I to understand that this is a present for your eldest pupil?"

"You are," said Montreuil, opening the case and producing a sword. The light fell upon the hilt, and I drew back, dazzled with its lustre; it was covered with stones, apparently of the most costly value. Attached to the hilt was a label of purple velvet, on which, in letters of gold, was inscribed, "To the son of Marshal Devereux, the soldier of France, and the friend of Louis XIV."

Before I recovered my surprise at this sight, the abbé said: "It was from the king's own hand that I received this sword; and I have authority to inform you that if ever you wield it in the service of France, it will be accompanied by a post worthy of your name."

"The service of France!" I repeated; "why, at present, that is the service of an enemy."

"An enemy only to a *part* of England!" said the abbé, emphatically; "perhaps I have overtures to you

from other monarchs, and the friendship of the Court of France may be synonymous with the friendship of the true sovereign of England."

There was no mistaking the purport of this speech, and even in the midst of my gratified vanity I drew back alarmed. The abbé noted the changed expression of my countenance, and artfully turned the subject to comments on the sword, on which I still gazed with a lover's ardor. Thence he veered to a description of the grace and greatness of the royal donor; he dwelt at length upon the flattering terms in which Louis had spoken of my father and had inquired concerning myself; he enumerated all the hopes that the illustrious house into which my father had first married expressed for a speedy introduction to his son; he lingered, with an eloquence more savoring of the court than of the cloister, on the dazzling circle which surrounded the French throne; and when my vanity, my curiosity, my love of pleasure, my ambition, all that are most susceptible in young minds, were fully aroused, he suddenly ceased, and wished me a good-night.

"Stay," said I; and looking at him more attentively than I had hitherto done, I perceived a change in his external appearance which somewhat startled and surprised me. Montreuil had always hitherto been remarkably plain in his dress; but he was now richly attired, and by his side hung a rapier which had never adorned it before. Something in his aspect seemed to suit the alteration in his garb; and whether it was that long absence had effaced enough of the familiarity of his features to allow me to be more alive than formerly to the real impression they were calculated to produce, or whether a commune with kings and nobles had of late dignified their old expression, as power was said to have

clothed the soldier-mien of Cromwell with a monarch's bearing, — I do not affect to decide; but I thought that in his high brow and Roman features, the compression of his lip, and his calm but haughty air, there was a nobleness which I acknowledged for the first time. "Stay, my Father," said I, surveying him, "and tell me, if there be no irreverence in the question, whether brocade and a sword are compatible with the laws of the Order of Jesus?"

"Policy, Morton," answered Montreuil, "often dispenses with custom; and the declarations of the Institute provide, with their usual wisdom, for worldly and temporary occasions. Even while the constitution ordains us to discard habits repugnant to our professions of poverty, the following exception is made: 'Si in occurrenti aliquâ occasione, vel necessitate, quis vestibus melioribus, honestis tamen, indueretur.'"¹

"There is now, then, some occasion for a more glittering display than ordinary?" said I.

"There is, my pupil," answered Montreuil; "and whenever you embrace the offer of my friendship made to you more than two years ago; whenever, too, your ambition points to a lofty and sublime career; whenever to make and unmake kings — and, in the noblest sphere, to execute the will of God — indemnifies you for a sacrifice of petty wishes and momentary passions, I will confide to you schemes worthy of your ancestors and yourself."

With this the priest departed. Left to myself, I revolved his hints, and marvelled at the power he seemed to possess. "Closeted with kings," said I, soliloquizing, "bearing their presents through armed

¹ "But should there chance any occasion or necessity, one may wear better, though still decorous garments."

men and military espionage, speaking of empires and their overthrow as of ordinary objects of ambition, — and he himself a low-born and undignified priest, of a poor though a wise order, — well, there is more in this than I can fathom; but I will hesitate before I embark in his dangerous and concealed intrigues, — above all, I will look well ere I hazard my safe heritage of these broad lands in the service of that House which is reported to be ungrateful, and which is certainly exiled.”

After this prudent and notable resolution, I took up the sword, re-examined it, kissed the hilt once and the blade twice, put it under my pillow, sent for my valet, undressed, went to bed, fell asleep, and dreamed that I was teaching the Maréchal de Villars the thrust *en seconde*.

But Fate, that arch-gossip, who, like her prototypes on earth, settles all our affairs for us without our knowledge of the matter, had decreed that my friendship with the Abbé Montreuil should be of very short continuance, and that my adventures on earth should flow through a different channel than, in all probability, they would have done under his spiritual direction.

CHAPTER XIII.

A mysterious Letter. — A Duel. — The Departure of one of the Family.

THE next morning I communicated to the abbé my intention of proceeding to London. He received it with favor. "I myself," said he, "shall soon meet you there: my office in your family has expired, and your mother, after so long an absence, will perhaps readily dispense with my spiritual advice to her. But time presses, — since you depart so soon, give me an audience to-night in your apartment. Perhaps our conversation may be of moment."

I agreed; the hour was fixed, and I left the abbé to join my uncle and his guests. While I was employing among them my time and genius with equal dignity and profit, one of the servants informed me that a man at the gate wished to see me, — and alone.

Somewhat surprised, I followed the servant out of the room into the great hall, and desired him to bid the stranger attend me there. In a few minutes a small, dark man, dressed between gentility and meanness, made his appearance. He greeted me with great respect, and presented a letter, which, he said, he was charged to deliver into my own hands, "with," he added in a low tone, "a special desire that none should, till you have carefully read it, be made acquainted with its contents." I was not a little startled by this request; and, withdrawing to one of the windows, broke the seal. A letter, enclosed in the envelope, in the abbé's

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own handwriting, was the first thing that met my eyes. At that instant the abbé himself rushed into the hall. He cast one hasty look at the messenger, whose countenance evinced something of surprise and consternation at beholding him; and hastening up to me, grasped my hand vehemently, and, while his eye dwelt upon the letter I held, cried, "Do not read it, — not a word, not a word; there is poison in it!" and so saying, he snatched desperately at the letter. I detained it from him with one hand, and pushing him aside with the other, said, —

"Pardon me, Father, directly I have read it you shall have that pleasure, — not till then;" and as I said this, my eye, falling upon the letter, discovered my own name written in two places. My suspicions were aroused. I raised my eyes to the spot where the messenger had stood, with the view of addressing some question to him respecting his employer, when, to my surprise, I perceived he was already gone; I had no time, however, to follow him.

"Boy," said the abbé, gasping for breath, and still seizing me with his lean, bony hand, — "boy, give me that letter instantly! I charge you not to disobey me."

"You forget yourself, sir," said I, endeavoring to shake him off, — "you forget yourself: there is no longer between us the distinction of pupil and teacher; and if you have not yet learned the respect due to my station, suffer me to tell you that it is time you should."

"Give me the letter, I beseech you," said Montreuil, changing his voice from anger to supplication; "I ask your pardon for my violence. The letter does not concern you, but me; there is a secret in those lines, which you see are in my handwriting, that implicates my

personal safety. Give it me, my dear, dear son, — your own honor, if not your affection for me, demands that you should.”

I was staggered. His violence had confirmed my suspicions, but his gentleness weakened them. “Besides,” thought I, “the handwriting *is his*; and even if my life depended upon reading the letter of another, I do not think my honor would suffer me to do so against his consent.” A thought struck me, —

“Will you swear,” said I, “that this letter does not concern me?”

“Solemnly,” answered the abbé, raising his eyes.

“Will you swear that I am not even mentioned in it?”

“Upon peril of my soul, I will.”

“Liar, traitor, perjured blasphemer!” cried I, in an inexpressible rage, “look here, and here!” and I pointed out to the priest various lines in which my name legibly and frequently occurred. A change came over Montrenil’s face: he released my arm, and staggered back against the wainscot; but recovering his composure instantaneously, he said, “I forgot, my son, I forgot, — your name is mentioned, it is true, but with honorable eulogy, that is all.”

“Bravo, honest Father!” cried I, losing my fury in admiring surprise at his address, — “bravo! However, if that be all, you can have no objection to allow me to read the lines in which my name occurs; your benevolence cannot refuse me such a gratification as the sight of your written panegyric!”

“Count Devereux,” said the abbé, sternly, while his dark face worked with suppressed passion, “this is trifling with me, and I warn you not to push my patience too far. I *will* have that letter, or —” He ceased abruptly, and touched the hilt of his sword.

"Dare you threaten me?" I said; and the natural fierceness of my own disposition, deepened by vague and strong suspicions of some treachery designed against me, spoke in the tones of my voice.

"Dare I!" repeated Montreuil, sinking and sharpening his voice into a sort of inward screech. "Dare I! — ay, were your whole tribe arrayed against me. Give me the letter, or you will find me now and forever your most deadly foe; deadly, — ay, deadly, deadly!" and he shook his clinched hand at me, with an expression of countenance so malignant and menacing that I drew back involuntarily, and laid my hand on my sword.

The action seemed to give Montreuil a signal for which he had hitherto waited. "Draw then!" he said, through his teeth, and unsheathed his rapier.

Though surprised at his determination, I was not backward in meeting it. Thrusting the letter in my bosom, I drew my sword in time to parry a rapid and fierce thrust. I had expected easily to master Montreuil, for I had some skill at my weapon. I was deceived, — I found him far more adroit than myself in the art of offence; and perhaps it would have fared ill for the hero of this narrative had Montreuil deemed it wise to direct against my life all the science he possessed. But the moment our swords crossed, the constitutional coolness of the man, which rage or fear had for a brief time banished, returned at once, and he probably saw that it would be as dangerous to him to take away the life of his pupil as to forfeit the paper for which he fought. He therefore appeared to bend all his efforts towards disarming me. Whether or not he would have effected this it is hard to say; for my blood was up, and any neglect of my antagonist, in attaining an object very dangerous when engaged with

a skilful and quick swordsman, might have sent him to the place from which the prayers of his brethren have (we are bound to believe) released so many thousands of souls.

But meanwhile the servants, who at first thought the clashing of swords was the wanton sport of some young gallants as yet new to the honor of wearing them, grew alarmed by the continuance of the sound, and flocked hurriedly to the place of contest. At their intrusion we mutually drew back. Recovering my presence of mind (it was a possession I very easily lost at that time), I saw the unseemliness of fighting with my preceptor and a priest. I therefore burst, though awkwardly enough, into a laugh, and, affecting to treat the affair as a friendly trial of skill between the abbé and myself, resheathed my sword and dismissed the intruders, who, evidently disbelieving my version of the story, retreated slowly, and exchanging looks. Montreuil, who had scarcely seconded my attempt to gloss over our rencontre, now approached me.

"Count," he said, with a collected and cool voice, "suffer me to request you to exchange three words with me, in a spot less liable than this to interruption."

"Follow me, then!" said I; and I led the way to a part of the grounds which lay remote and sequestered from intrusion. I then turned round, and perceived that the abbé had left his sword behind. "How is this?" I said, pointing to his unarmed side, — "have you not come hither to renew our engagement?"

"No!" answered Montreuil, "I repent me of my sudden haste, and I have resolved to deny myself all further possibility of unseemly warfare. That letter, young man, I still demand from you; I demand it from your own sense of honor and of right: it was written by

me, — it was not intended for your eye; it contains secrets implicating the lives of others beside myself: now read it if you will.”

“ You are right, sir,” said I, after a short pause; “ there is the letter. Never shall it be said of Morton Devereux that he hazarded his honor to secure his safety; but the tie between us is broken now and forever! ”

So saying, I flung down the debated epistle, and strode away. I re-entered the great hall. I saw by one of the windows a sheet of paper; I picked it up, and perceived that it was the envelope in which the letter had been enclosed. It contained only these lines, addressed to me in French: —

“ A friend of the late Marshal Devereux encloses to his son a letter, the contents of which it is essential for his safety that he should know. — C. D. B.”

“ Umph! ” said I, — “ a very satisfactory intimation, considering that the son of the late Marshal Devereux is so very well assured that he shall not know one line of the contents of the said letter. But let me see after this messenger! ” and I immediately hastened to institute inquiry respecting him. I found that he was already gone; on leaving the hall he had remounted his horse, and taken his departure. One servant, however, had seen him, as he passed the front court, address a few words to my valet, Desmarais, who happened to be loitering there. I summoned Desmarais, and questioned him.

“ The dirty fellow, ” said the Frenchman, pointing to his spattered stockings with a lachrymose air, “ splashed me, by a prance of his horse, from head to foot; and while I was screaming for very anguish, he stopped and

said, 'Tell the Count Devereux that I was unable to tarry, but that the letter requires no answer.' "

I consoled Desmarais for his misfortune, and hastened to my uncle with a determination to reveal to him all that had occurred. Sir William was in his dressing-room, and his gentleman was very busy in adorning his wig. I entreated him to dismiss the *coiffeur*, and then, without much preliminary detail, acquainted him with all that had passed between the abbé and myself.

The knight seemed startled when I came to the story of the sword. "'Gad, Sir Count, what have you been doing?" said he; "know you not that this may be a very ticklish matter? The King of France is a very great man, to be sure, — a very great man, and a very fine gentleman; but you will please to remember that we are at war with his Majesty, and I cannot guess how far the accepting such presents may be held treasonable."

And Sir William shook his head with a mournful significance. "Ah," cried he, at last (when I concluded my whole story), with a complacent look, "I have not lived at court and studied human nature for nothing; and I will wager my best full-bottom to a nightcap, that the crafty old fox is as much a Jacobite as he is a rogue! The letter would have proved it, sir, — it would have proved it!"

"But what shall be done now?" said I; "will you suffer him to remain any longer in the house?"

"Why," replied the knight, suddenly recollecting his reverence to the fair sex, "he is your mother's guest, not mine; we must refer the matter to her. But zauns, sir, with all deference to her ladyship, we cannot suffer our house to be a conspiracy hatch as well as a Popish chapel; and to attempt your life too, — the devil! Od's fish, boy, I will go to the countess myself,

if you will just let Nicholls finish my wig; never attend the ladies *en déshabillé* — always, with them, take care of your person most when you most want to display your mind;" and, my uncle ringing a little silver bell on his dressing-table, the sound immediately brought Nicholls to his toilet.

Trusting the cause to the zeal of my uncle, whose hatred to the ecclesiastic would, I knew, be an efficacious adjunct to his diplomatic address, and not unwilling to avoid being myself the person to acquaint my mother with the suspected delinquency of her favorite, I hastened from the knight's apartment in search of Aubrey. He was not in the house. His attendants (for my uncle, with old-fashioned grandeur of respect, suitable to his great wealth and aristocratic temper, allotted to each of us a separate suite of servants as well as of apartments) believed he was in the park. Thither I repaired, and found him, at length, seated by an old tree, with a large book of a religious cast before him, on which his eyes were intently bent.

"I rejoice to have found thee, my gentle brother," said I, throwing myself on the green turf by his side; "in truth, you have chosen a fitting and fair place for study."

"I have chosen," said Aubrey, "a place meet for the peculiar study I am engrossed in; for where can we better read of the power and benevolence of God than among the living testimonies of both? Beautiful, — how very beautiful is this happy world; but I fear," added Aubrey, and the glow of his countenance died away, — "I fear that we enjoy it too much."

"We hold different interpretations of our creed, then," said I, "for I esteem enjoyment the best proof of gratitude; nor do I think we can pay a more acceptable duty

to the Father of all Goodness than by showing ourselves sensible of the favors He bestows upon us."

Aubrey shook his head gently, but replied not.

"Yes," resumed I, after a pause, — "yes, it is indeed a glorious and fair world which we have for our inheritance. Look, how the sunlight sleeps yonder upon fields covered with golden corn, and seems, like the divine benevolence of which you spoke, to smile upon the luxuriance which its power created. This carpet at our feet, covered with flowers that breathe, sweet as good deeds, to Heaven; the stream that breaks through that distant copse, laughing in the light of noon, and sending its voice through the hill and woodland, like a messenger of glad tidings; the green boughs over our head, vocal with a thousand songs, all inspirations of a joy too exquisite for silence; the very leaves, which seem to dance and quiver with delight, — think you, Aubrey, that these are so sullen as not to return thanks for the happiness they imbibe with being? What are those thanks but the incense of their joy? The flowers send it up to Heaven in fragrance, — the air and the wave in music. Shall the heart of man be the only part of His creation that shall dishonor His worship with lamentation and gloom? When the inspired writers call upon us to praise our Creator, do they not say to us, 'Be joyful in your God'?"

"How can we be joyful with the Judgment Day ever before us?" said Aubrey, — "how can we be joyful" (and here a dark shade crossed his countenance, and his lip trembled with emotion) "while the deadly passions of this world plead and rankle at the heart? Oh, none but they who have known the full blessedness of a commune with Heaven can dream of the whole anguish and agony of the conscience, when it feels itself sullied

by the mire and crushed by the load of earth!" Aubrey paused; and his words, his tone, his look, made upon me a powerful impression. I was about to answer, when, interrupting me, he said, "Let us talk not of these matters; speak to me on more worldly topics."

"I sought you," said I, "that I might do so;" and I proceeded to detail to Aubrey as much of my private intercourse with the abbé as I deemed necessary, in order to warn him from too close a confidence in the wily ecclesiastic. Aubrey listened to me with earnest attention; the affair of the letter, the gross falsehood of the priest in denying the mention of my name in his epistle, evidently dismayed him. "But," said he, after a long silence, — "but it is not for us, Morton, — weak, ignorant, inexperienced as we are, — to judge prematurely of our spiritual pastors. To them also is given a far greater license of conduct than to us, and ways enveloped in what to our eyes are mystery and shade; nay, I know not whether it be much less impious to question the paths of God's chosen than to scrutinize those of the Deity himself."

"Aubrey, Aubrey, this is childish!" said I, somewhat moved to anger. "Mystery is always the trick of imposture. God's chosen should be distinguished from their flock only by superior virtue, and not by a superior privilege in deceit."

"But," said Aubrey, pointing to a passage in the book before him, "see what a preacher of the Word has said!" and Aubrey recited one of the most dangerous maxims in priestcraft, as reverently as if he were quoting from the Scripture itself: "'The nakedness of truth should never be too openly exposed to the eyes of the vulgar; it was wisely feigned, by the ancients, that Truth did lie concealed in a well.'"

"Yes," said I, with enthusiasm; "but that well is like the holy stream at Dodona, which has the gift of enlightening those who seek it, and the power of illumining every torch which touches the surface of its water!"

Whatever answer Aubrey might have made was interrupted by my uncle, who appeared approaching towards us with unusual satisfaction depicted on his comely countenance.

"Well, boys, well," said he, when he came within hearing, "a holiday for you! Od's fish, — and a holier day than my old house has known since its former proprietor, Sir Hugo of valorous memory, demolished the nunnery, of which some remains yet stand on yonder eminence. Morton, my man of might, the thing is done, — the court is purified, the wicked one is departed. Look here, and be as happy as I am at our release;" and he threw me a note in Montreuil's writing.

TO SIR WILLIAM DEVEREUX, KT.

MY HONORED FRIEND, — In consequence of a dispute between your eldest nephew, Count Morton Devereux, and myself, in which he desired me to remember, not only that our former relationship of tutor and pupil was at an end, but that friendship for his person was incompatible with the respect due to his superior station, I can neither so far degrade the dignity of letters, nor, above all, so meanly debase the sanctity of my divine profession, as any longer to remain beneath your hospitable roof, — a guest not only unwelcome to, but insulted by your relation and apparent heir. Suffer me to offer you my gratitude for the favors you have hitherto bestowed on me, and to bid you farewell forever.

I have the honor to be,

With the most profound respect, etc.,

JULIAN MONTREUIL.

"Well, sir, what say you?" cried my uncle, stamping his cane firmly on the ground, when I had finished reading the letter, and had transmitted it to Aubrey.

"That the good abbé has displayed his usual skill in composition. And my mother? Is she imbued with our opinion of his priesthood?"

"Not exactly, I fear. However, Heaven bless her! she is too soft to say 'nay.' But those Jesuits are so smooth-tongued to women. 'Gad, they threaten damnation with such an irresistible air that they are as much like William the Conqueror as Edward the Confessor. Ha! Master Aubrey, have you become amorous of the old Jacobite, that you sigh over his crabbed writing as if it were a *billet-doux*?"

"There seems a great deal of feeling in what he says, sir," said Aubrey, returning the letter to my uncle.

"Feeling!" cried the knight; "ay, the reverend gentry always have a marvellously tender feeling for their own interests, — eh, Morton?"

"Right, dear sir," said I, wishing to change a subject which I knew might hurt Aubrey; "but should we not join yon party of dames and damsels? I see they are about to make a water excursion."

"'Sdeath, sir, with all my heart," cried the good-natured knight. "I love to see the dear creatures amuse themselves; for, to tell you the truth, Morton," said he, sinking his voice into a knowing whisper, "the best thing to keep them from playing the devil is to encourage them in playing the fool!" and, laughing heartily at the jest he had purloined from one of his favorite writers, Sir William led the way to the water-party.

CHAPTER XIV.

Being a Chapter of Trifles.

THE abbé disappeared! It is astonishing how well everybody bore his departure. My mother scarcely spoke on the subject; but, along the irrefragable smoothness of her temperament, all things glided without resistance to their course, or trace where they had been. Gerald, who, occupied solely in rural sports or rustic loves, seldom mingled in the festivities of the house, was equally silent on the subject. Aubrey looked grieved for a day or two, but his countenance soon settled into its customary and grave softness; and in less than a week so little was the abbé spoken of or missed that you would scarcely have imagined Julian Montreuil had ever passed the threshold of our gate. The oblivion of one buried is nothing to the oblivion of one disgraced.

Meanwhile I pressed for my departure; and at length the day was finally fixed. Ever since that conversation with Lady Hasselton which has been set before the reader, that lady had lingered and lingered, — though the house was growing empty, and London in all seasons was, according to her, better than the country in any, — until the Count Devereux, with that amiable modesty which so especially characterized him began to suspect that the Lady Hasselton lingered on his account. This emboldened that bashful personage to press in earnest for the fourth seat in the beauty's carriage, which we have seen, in the conversation

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before mentioned, had been previously offered to him in jest. After a great affectation of horror at the proposal, the Lady Hasselton yielded. She had always, she said, been dotingly fond of children, and it was certainly very shocking to send such a chit as the little count to London by himself.

My uncle was charmed with the arrangement. The beauty was a peculiar favorite of his, and in fact he was sometimes pleased to hint that he had private reasons for love towards her mother's daughter. Of the truth of this insinuation I am, however, more than somewhat suspicious, and believe it was only a little *ruse* of the good knight, in order to excuse the vent of those kindly affections with which (while the heartless tone of the company his youth had frequented made him ashamed to own it) his breast overflowed. There was in Lady Hasselton's familiarity, her ease of manner, a certain good-nature mingled with her affectation, and a gayety of spirit which never flagged, — something greatly calculated to win favor with a man of my uncle's temper.

An old gentleman, who filled in her family the office of the *chevalier* in a French one, — namely, who told stories, not too long, and did not challenge you for interrupting them; who had a good air and unexceptionable pedigree, — a turn for wit, literature, note-writing, and the management of lap-dogs; who could attend *madame* to auctions, plays, court, and the puppet-show; who had a right to the best company, but would on a signal give up his seat to any one the pretty *capricieuse* whom he served might select from the worst, — in short, a very useful, charming personage, “vastly” liked by all, and “prodigiously” respected by none, — this gentleman, I say, by name Mr. Lovell, had

attended her ladyship in her excursion to Devereux Court. Besides him there came also a widow lady, a distant relation, with one eye and a sharp tongue, — the Lady Needleham, whom the beauty carried about with her as a sort of *gouvernante* or duenna. These excellent persons made my *compagnons de voyage*, and filled the remaining complements of the coach. To say truth, and to say nothing of my *tendresse* for the Lady Hasselton, I was very anxious to escape the ridicule of crawling up to town, like a green beetle, in my uncle's verdant chariot, with the four Flanders mares trained not to exceed two miles an hour. And my Lady Hasselton's *private* railleries — for she was really well-bred, and made no jest of my uncle's antiquities of taste, in his presence at least — had considerably heightened my intuitive dislike to that mode of transporting myself to the metropolis. The day before my departure, Gerald, for the first time, spoke of it.

Glancing towards the mirror, which gave in full contrast the magnificent beauty of his person and the smaller proportions and plainer features of my own, he said, with a sneer, "Your appearance must create a wonderful sensation in town."

"No doubt of it," said I, taking his words literally, and arraying my laced cravat with the air of a *petit-maître*.

"What a wit the count has!" whispered the Duchess of Lackland, who had not yet given up all hope of the elder brother.

"Wit," said the Lady Hasselton; "poor child, he is a perfect simpleton!"

CHAPTER XV.

The Mother and Son. — Virtue should be the sovereign of the Feelings, not their Destroyer.

I TOOK the first opportunity to escape from the good company who were so divided in opinion as to my mental accomplishments, and repaired to my mother; for whom, despite of her evenness of disposition, verging towards insensibility, I felt a powerful and ineffaceable affection. Indeed, if purity of life, rectitude of intentions, and fervor of piety can win love, none ever deserved it more than she. It was a pity that with such admirable qualities she had not more diligently cultivated her affections. The seed was not wanting; but it had been neglected. Originally intended for the veil, she had been taught early in life that much feeling was synonymous with much sin; and she had so long and so carefully repressed in her heart every attempt of the forbidden fruit to put forth a single blossom, that the soil seemed at last to have become incapable of bearing it. If in one corner of this barren but sacred spot some green and tender verdure of affection did exist, it was, with a partial and petty reserve for my twin-brother, kept exclusive, and consecrated to Aubrey. His congenial habits of pious silence and rigid devotion; his softness of temper; his utter freedom from all boyish excesses, joined to his almost angelic beauty, — a quality which in no female heart is ever without its value, — were exactly calculated to attract

her sympathy and work themselves into her love. Gerald was also regular in his habits, attentive to devotion, and had from an early period been high in the favor of her spiritual director. Gerald, too, if he had not the delicate and dreamlike beauty of Aubrey, possessed attractions of more masculine and decided order; and for Gerald, therefore, the countess gave the little of love that she could spare from Aubrey. To me she manifested the most utter indifference. My difficult and fastidious temper; my sarcastic turn of mind; my violent and headstrong passions; my daring, reckless, and, when roused, almost ferocious nature, — all especially revolted the even and polished and quiescent character of my maternal parent. The little extravagances of my childhood seemed, to her pure and inexperienced mind, the crimes of a heart naturally distorted and evil; my jesting vein, which, though it never even in the wantonness of youth attacked the substances of good, seldom respected its semblances and its forms, she considered as the effusions of malignity; and even the bursts of love, kindness, and benevolence which were by no means unfrequent in my wild and motley character were so foreign to her stillness of temperament that they only revolted her by their violence instead of affecting her by their warmth.

Nor did she like me the better for the mutual understanding between my uncle and myself. On the contrary, shocked by the idle and gay turn of the knight's conversation, the frivolities of his mind, and his heretical disregard for the forms of the religious sect which she so zealously espoused, she was utterly insensible to the points which redeemed and ennobled his sterling and generous character, — utterly obtuse to his warmth of heart, his overflowing kindness of disposition, his

charity, his high honor, his justice of principle, that nothing save benevolence could warp, and the shrewd, penetrating sense which, though often clouded by foibles and humorous eccentricity, still made the stratum of his intellectual composition. Nevertheless, despite her prepossessions against us both, there was in her temper something so gentle, meek, and unupbraiding, that even the sense of injustice lost its sting, and one could not help loving the softness of her character, while one was most chilled by its frigidity. Anger, hope, fear, the faintest breath or sign of passion, never seemed to stir the breezeless languor of her feelings; and quiet was so inseparable from her image that I have almost thought, like that people described by Herodotus, her very sleep could never be disturbed by dreams.

Yes, how fondly, how tenderly I loved her! What tears — secret but deep, bitter but unrepublishing — have I retired to shed, when I caught her cold and unaffectionate glance! How (unnoticed and uncared for) have I watched and prayed and wept without her door, when a transitory sickness or suffering detained her within; and how, when stretched myself upon the feverish bed to which my early weakness of frame often condemned me, — how have I counted the moments to her punctilious and brief visit, and started as I caught her footstep, and felt my heart leap within me as she approached; and then, as I heard her cold tone and looked upon her unmoved face, how bitterly have I turned away with all that repressed and crushed affection which was construed into sullenness or disrespect! Oh, mighty and enduring force of early associations, that almost seems in its unconquerable strength to partake of an innate prepossession, that binds the son to the mother, who concealed him in her womb, and purchased

life for him with the travail of death! — fountain of filial love, which coldness cannot freeze, nor injustice embitter, nor pride divert into fresh channels, nor time and the hot suns of our toiling manhood exhaust, — even at this moment how livingly do you gush upon my heart, and water with your divine waves the memories that yet flourish amidst the sterility of years!

I approached the apartments appropriated to my mother; I knocked at her door. One of her women admitted me. The countess was sitting on a high-backed chair, curiously adorned with tapestry. Her feet, which were remarkable for their beauty, were upon a velvet cushion; three handmaids stood round her, and she herself was busily employed in a piece of delicate embroidery, — an art in which she eminently excelled.

“The Count, madam!” said the woman who had admitted me, placing a chair beside my mother, and then retiring to join her sister maidens.

“Good day to you, my son,” said the countess, lifting her eyes for a moment, and then dropping them again upon her work.

“I have come to seek you, dearest mother, as I know not if, among the crowd of guests and amusements which surround us, I shall enjoy another opportunity of having a private conversation with you; will it please you to dismiss your women?”

My mother again lifted up her eyes. “And why, my son? Surely there *can* be nothing between us which requires their absence; what is your reason?”

“I leave you to-morrow, madam; is it strange that a son should wish to see his mother alone before his departure?”

“By no means, Morton; but your absence will not be very long, will it?”

“Forgive my importunity, dear mother, — but *will* you dismiss your attendants?”

“If you wish it, certainly; but I dislike feeling alone, especially in these large rooms; nor do I think our being unattended quite consistent with our rank. However, I never contradict you, my son;” and the countess directed her women to wait in the anteroom.

“Well, Morton, what is your wish?”

“Only to bid you farewell, and to ask if London contains nothing which you will commission me to obtain for you!”

The countess again raised her eyes from her work. “I am greatly obliged to you, my dear son; this is a very delicate attention on your part. I am informed that stomachers are worn a thought less pointed than they were. I care not, you well know, for such vanities; but respect for the memory of your illustrious father renders me desirous to retain a seemingly appearance to the world, and my women shall give you written instructions thereon to Madame Tourville; she lives in St. James’s Street, and is the only person to be employed in these matters. She is a woman who has known misfortune, and appreciates the sorrowful and subdued tastes of those whom an exalted station has not preserved from like afflictions. So you go to-morrow. Will you get me the scissors? they are on the ivory table, yonder. When do you return?”

“Perhaps never!” said I, abruptly.

“Never, Morton; how singular! why?”

“I may join the army and be killed.”

“I hope not. Dear, how cold it is! will you shut the window? Pray forgive my troubling you, but you

would send away the women. Join the army, you say? It is a very dangerous profession; your poor father might be alive now but for having embraced it; nevertheless, in a righteous cause, under the Lord of Hosts, there is great glory to be obtained beneath its banners. Alas, however, for its private evils! alas for the orphan and the widow! You will be sure, my dear son, to give the note to Madame Tourville herself? Her assistants have not her knowledge of my misfortunes, nor indeed of my exact proportions; and at my age and in my desolate state I would fain be decorous in these things; and that reminds me of dinner. Have you aught else to say, Morton?"

"Yes," said I, suppressing my emotions, — "yes, mother! Do bestow on me one warm wish, one kind word, before we part. See, I kneel for your blessing; will you not give it me?"

"Bless you, my child, bless you! Look you, now, I have dropped my needle!"

I rose hastily, bowed profoundly (my mother returned the courtesy with the grace peculiar to herself), and withdrew. I hurried into the great drawing-room; found Lady Needleham alone; rushed out in despair; encountered the Lady Hasselton, and coquetted with her the rest of the evening. Vain hope! to forget one's real feelings by pretending those one never felt!

The next morning, then, after suitable adieux to all (Gerald excepted) whom I left behind; after some tears too from my uncle, which, had it not been for the presence of the Lady Hasselton, I could have returned with interest; and after a long caress to his dog Ponto, which now, in parting with that dear old man, seemed to me as dog never seemed before, — I hurried into the

beauty's carriage, bade farewell forever to the Rubicon of Life, and commenced my career of manhood and citizenship by learning, under the tuition of the prettiest coquette of her time, the dignified duties of a court gallant and a town beau.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The Hero in London. — Pleasure is often the shortest, as it is the earliest road to Wisdom, and we may say of the World what Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy says of the Pig-Booth, "We escape so much of the other vanities by our early entering."

It had, when I first went to town, just become the fashion for young men of fortune to keep house, and to give their bachelor establishments the importance hitherto reserved for the household of a Benedict.

Let the reader figure to himself a suite of apartments magnificently furnished, in the vicinity of the court. An anteroom is crowded with divers persons, all messengers in the various negotiations of pleasure. There a French valet, — that inestimable valet, Jean Desmarais, — sitting over a small fire, was watching the operations of a coffee-pot, and conversing in a mutilated attempt at the language of our nation, though with the enviable fluency of his own, with the various loiterers who were beguiling the hours they were obliged to wait for an audience of the master himself, by laughing at the master's Gallic representative. There stood a tailor, with his books of patterns just imported from Paris, — that modern Prometheus, who makes man what he is! Next to him a tall, gaunt fellow, in a coat covered with tarnished lace, a nightcap wig, and a large whip in his

hands, comes to vouch for the pedigree and excellence of the three horses he intends to dispose of, out of pure love and amity for the buyer. By the window stood a thin, starveling poet, who, like the grammarian of Cos, might have put lead in his pockets to prevent being blown away, had he not, with a more paternal precaution, put so much in his works that he had left none to spare. Excellent trick of the times, when ten guineas can purchase every virtue under the sun, and when an author thinks to vindicate the sins of his book by proving the admirable qualities of the paragon to whom it is dedicated.¹ There, with an air of supercilious contempt upon his smooth cheeks, a page, in purple and silver, sat upon the table, swinging his legs to and fro, and big with all the reflected importance of a *billet-doux*. There stood the pert haberdasher, with his box of silver-fringed gloves, and lace which Diana might have worn. At that time there was indeed no enemy to female chastity like the former article of man-millinery, — the delicate whiteness of the glove, the starry splendor of the fringe, were irresistible; and the fair Adorna, in poor Lee's tragedy of Cæsar Borgia, is far from the only lady who has been killed by a pair of gloves.

Next to the haberdasher, dingy and dull of aspect, a book-hunter bent beneath the load of old works gathered from stall and shed, and about to be resold according to the price exacted from all literary gallants, who affect to unite the fine gentleman with the profound scholar. A little girl, whose brazen face and voluble tongue betrayed the growth of her intellectual faculties, leaned against the wainscot, and repeated in the ante-

¹ Thank Heaven, for the honor of literature, *nous avons changé tout cela!* — ED.

room the tart repartees which her mistress (the most celebrated actress of the day) uttered on the stage; while a stout, sturdy, bull-headed gentleman, in a gray surtout and a black wig, mingled with the various voices of the motley group the gentle phrases of Hockley in the Hole, from which place of polite merriment he came charged with a message of invitation. While such were the inmates of the anteroom, what picture shall we draw of the *salon* and its occupants?

A table was covered with books, a couple of fencing-foils, a woman's mask, and a profusion of letters; a scarlet cloak, richly laced, hung over, trailing on the ground. Upon a slab of marble lay a hat, looped with diamonds, a sword, and a lady's lute. Extended upon a sofa, loosely robed in a dressing-gown of black velvet, his shirt-collar unbuttoned, his stockings ungartered, his own hair (undressed, and released for a brief interval from the false locks universally worn) waving from his forehead in short yet dishevelled curls, his whole appearance stamped with the morning negligence which usually follows midnight dissipation, lay a young man of about nineteen years. His features were neither handsome nor ill-favored, and his stature was small, slight, and somewhat insignificant, but not perhaps ill formed either for active enterprise or for muscular effort. Such, reader, is the picture of the young prodigal who occupied the apartments I have described, and such (though somewhat flattered by partiality) is a portrait of Morton Devereux, six months after his arrival in town.

The door was suddenly thrown open with that unhesitating rudeness by which our friends think it necessary to signify the extent of their familiarity; and a young man of about eight-and-twenty, richly dressed, and of

a countenance in which a dissipated nonchalance and an aristocratic hauteur seemed to struggle for mastery, abruptly entered.

"What, ho! my noble royster," cried he, flinging himself upon a chair, "still suffering from St. John's Burgundy! Fie, fie upon your apprenticeship! Why, before I had served half your time, I could take my three bottles as easily as the sea took the good ship 'Revolution,' swallow them down with a gulp, and never show the least sign of them the next morning!"

"I readily believe you, most magnanimous Tarleton. Providence gives to each of its creatures different favors, — to one wit, to the other a capacity for drinking. A thousand pities that they are never united!"

"So bitter, Count! Ah, what will ever cure you of sarcasm?"

"A wise man by conversion, or fools by satiety."

"Well, I daresay that is witty enough; but I never admire fine things of a morning. I like letting my faculties live till night in a *déshabille*. Let us talk easily and sillily of the affairs of the day. *Imprimis*, will you stroll to the New Exchange? There is a black eye there that measures out ribbons; and my green ones long to flirt with it."

"With all my heart; and in return you shall accompany me to Master Powell's puppet-show."

"You speak as wisely as Solomon himself in the puppet-show. I own that I love that sight; 'tis a pleasure to the littleness of human nature to see great things abased by mimicry, — kings moved by bobbins, and the pomps of the earth personated by Punch."

"But how do you like sharing the mirth of the groundlings, the filthy plebeians, and letting them see how petty are those distinctions which you value so

highly, by showing them how heartily you can laugh at such distinctions yourself? Allow, my superb Coriolanus, that one purchases pride by the loss of consistency."

"Ah, Devereux, you poison my enjoyment by the mere word 'plebeian!' Oh, what a beastly thing is a common person! — a shape of the trodden clay without any alloy; a compound of dirty clothes, bacon breaths, villanous smells, beggarly cowardice, and cattish ferocity. Pah, Devereux! rub civet on the very thought!"

"Yet they will laugh to-day at the same things you will; and, consequently, there will be a most flattering congeniality between you. Emotion, whether of ridicule, anger, or sorrow, — whether raised at a puppet-show, a funeral, or a battle, — is your grandest of levellers. The man who would be always superior should be always apathetic."

"Oracular, as usual, Count; but, hark! the clock gives tongue. One, by the Lord! Will you not dress?"

And I rose and dressed. We passed through the anteroom; my attendant assistants in the art of wasting money drew up in a row.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said I ("Gentlemen, indeed!" cried Tarleton), "for keeping you so long. Mr. Snivelship, your waistcoats are exquisite. Favor me by conversing with my valet on the width of the lace for my liveries; he has my instructions. Mr. Jockleton, your horses shall be tried to-morrow at one. Ay, Mr. Rymer, I beg you a thousand pardons. I beseech you to forgive the ignorance of my rascals in suffering a gentleman of your merit to remain for a moment unattended to. I have read your ode. It is splendid, —

the ease of Horace with the fire of Pindar. Your Pegasus never touches the earth, and yet in his wildest excesses you curb him with equal grace and facility. I object, sir, only to your dedication. It is too flattering."

"By no means, my Lord Count. It fits you to a hair."

"Pardon me," interrupted I, "and allow me to transfer the honor to Lord Halifax. He loves men of merit. He loves also their dedications. I will mention it to him to-morrow. Everything you say of me will suit him exactly. You will oblige me with a copy of your poem directly it is printed, and suffer me to pay your bookseller for it now and through your friendly mediation. Adieu!"

"Oh, Count, this is too generous."

"A letter for me, my pretty page. Ah! tell her ladyship I shall wait upon her commands at Powell's. Time will move with a tortoise speed till I kiss her hands. Mr. Fribbleden, your gloves would fit the giants at Guildhall. My valet will furnish you with my exact size. You will see to the legitimate breadth of the fringe. My little beauty, you are from Mrs. Bracegirdle. The play *shall* succeed. I have taken seven boxes. Mr. St. John promises his influence. Say, therefore, my Hebe, that the thing is certain, and let me kiss thee. Thou hast dew on thy lip already. Mr. Thumpem, you are a fine fellow, and deserve to be encouraged. I will see that the next time your head is broken it shall be broken fairly; but I will not patronize the bear. Consider that peremptory. What, Mr. Bookworm again! I hope you have succeeded better this time. The old songs had an autumn fit upon them, and had lost the best part of their *leaves*, and Plato had mortgaged one half his "Republic" to pay, I suppose, the

exorbitant sum you thought proper to set upon the other. As for Diogenes Laertius and his philosophers — ”

“ Pish! ” interrupted Tarleton; “ are you going, by your theoretical treatises on philosophy, to make me learn the practical part of it, and prate upon learning while I am supporting myself with patience? ”

“ Pardon me! Mr. Bookworm, you will deposit your load, and visit me to-morrow at an earlier hour. And now, Tarleton, I am at your service.”

CHAPTER II.

Gay Scenes and Conversations — the New Exchange and the Puppet-show — the Actor, the Sexton, and the Beauty.

“WELL, Tarleton,” said I, looking round that mart of millinery and lovemaking which, so celebrated in the reign of Charles II., still preserved the shadow of its old renown in that of Anne, — “well, here we are upon the classical ground so often commemorated in the comedies which our chaste grandmothers thronged to see. Here we can make appointments, while we profess to buy gloves, and should our mistress tarry too long, beguile our impatience by a flirtation with her milliner. Is there not a breathing air of gayety about the place? — does it not still smack of the Ethereges and Sedleys?”

“Right,” said Tarleton, leaning over a counter, and amorously eying the pretty coquette to whom it belonged; while, with the coxcombry then in fashion, he sprinkled the long curls that touched his shoulders with a fragrant shower from a bottle of jessamine water upon the counter, — “right; saw you ever such an eye? Have you snuff of the true scent, my beauty? — foh! this is for the nostril of a Welsh parson: choleric and hot, my beauty; pulverized horse-radish, — why, it would make a nose of the coldest constitution imaginable sneeze like a washed schoolboy on a Saturday night. Ah, this is better, my princess; there is some courtesy in this snuff, — it flatters the brain like a poet’s dedication. Right, Devereux, right, there *is* something

infectious in the atmosphere; one catches good-humor as easily as if it were cold. Shall we stroll on? — *my Clelia* is on the other side of the Exchange. You were speaking of the play-writers, — what a pity that our *Ethereges* and *Wycherleys* should be so frank in their gallantry that the prudish public already begins to look shy on them! They have a world of wit!”

“Ay,” said I; “and, as my good uncle would say, a world of knowledge of human nature, — namely, of the worst part of it. But they are worse than merely licentious; they are positively villanous, pregnant with the most redemptionless *scoundrelism*, — cheating, lying, thieving, and fraud; their humor debauches the whole moral system: they are like the Sardinian herb, — they make you laugh, it is true; but they poison you in the act. But who comes here?”

“Oh, honest Coll! Ah, Cibber, how goes it with you?”

The person thus addressed was a man of about the middle age, very grotesquely attired, and with a periwig preposterously long. His countenance (which, in its features, was rather comely) was stamped with an odd mixture of liveliness, impudence, and a coarse yet not unjoyous spirit of reckless debauchery. He approached us with a saunter, and saluted Tarleton with an air servile enough, in spite of an affected familiarity.

“What think you,” resumed my companion, “we were conversing upon?”

“Why, indeed, Mr. Tarleton,” answered Cibber, bowing very low, “unless it were the exquisite fashion of your waistcoat, or your success with my Lady Duchess, I know not what to guess.”

“Pooh, man!” said Tarleton, haughtily, “none of

your compliments;" and then added, in a milder tone, "No, Colley, we were abusing the immoralities that existed on the stage until thou, by the light of thy virtuous example, didst undertake to reform it."

"Why," rejoined Cibber, with an air of mock sanctity, "Heaven be praised, I have pulled out some of the weeds from our theatrical parterre —"

"Hear you that, Count? Does he not look a pretty fellow for a censor?"

"Surely," said Cibber, "ever since Dicky Steele has set up for a saint, and assumed the methodistical twang, some hopes of conversion may be left even for such reprobates as myself. Where, may I ask, will Mr. Tarleton drink to-night?"

"Not with thee, Coll. The Saturnalia don't happen every day. Rid us now of thy company; but stop, I will do thee a pleasure, — know you this gentleman?"

"I have not that extreme honor."

"Know a count, then! Count Devereux, demean yourself by sometimes acknowledging Colley Cibber, — a rare fellow at a song, a bottle, and a message to an actress; a lively rascal enough, but without the goodness to be loved, or the independence to be respected."

"Mr. Cibber," said I, rather hurt at Tarleton's speech, though the object of it seemed to hear this description with the most unruffled composure, — "Mr. Cibber, I am happy and proud of an introduction to the author of the 'Careless Husband.' Here is my address; oblige me with a visit at your leisure."

"How could you be so galling to the poor devil?" said I, when Cibber, with a profusion of bows and compliments, had left us to ourselves.

"Ah, hang him, — a low fellow who pins all his happiness to the skirts of the quality, is proud of

being despised, and that which would excruciate the vanity of others only flatters *his*. And now for my Clelia ! ”

After my companion had amused himself with a brief flirtation with a young lady who affected a most edifying demureness, we left the Exchange, and repaired to the Puppet-show.

On entering the Piazza, in which, as I am writing for the next century, it may be necessary to say that Punch held his court, we saw a tall, thin fellow loitering under the columns, and exhibiting a countenance of the most ludicrous discontent. There was an insolent arrogance about Tarleton's good-nature which always led him to consult the whim of the moment at the expense of every other consideration, especially if the whim referred to a member of the canaille whom my aristocratic friend esteemed as a base part of the exclusive and despotic property of gentlemen.

“ Egad, Devereux,” said he, “ do you see that fellow ? He has the audacity to affect spleen. Faith, I thought melancholy was the distinguishing patent of nobility, — we will smoke him.” And, advancing towards the man of gloom, Tarleton touched him with the end of his cane. The man started and turned round. “ Pray, sirrah,” said Tarleton, coldly, — “ pray, who the devil are you, that you presume to look discontented ? ”

“ Why, sir,” said the man, good-humoredly enough, “ I have some right to be angry.”

“ I doubt it, my friend,” said Tarleton. “ What is your complaint ? — a rise in the price of tripe, or a drinking wife ? Those, I take it, are the sole misfortunes incidental to your condition.”

“ If that be the case,” said I, observing a cloud on our new friend's brow, “ shall we heal thy sufferings ? ”

Tell us thy complaints, and we will prescribe thee a silver specific; there is a sample of our skill."

"Thank you humbly, gentlemen," said the man, pocketing the money and clearing his countenance; "and seriously, mine is an uncommonly hard case. I was, till within the last few weeks, the under-sexton of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and my duty was that of ringing the bells for daily prayers; but a man of Belial came hitherwards, set up a puppet-show, and, timing the hours of his exhibition with a wicked sagacity, made the bell I rang for church serve as a summons to Punch; so, gentlemen, that whenever your humble servant began to pull for the Lord, his perverted congregation began to flock to the devil, and instead of being an instrument for saving souls, I was made the innocent means of destroying them. Oh, gentlemen, it was a shocking thing to tug away at the rope till the sweat ran down one, for four shillings a week, and to see all the time that one was thinning one's own congregation and emptying one's own pockets!"

"It was indeed a lamentable dilemma; and what did you, Mr. Sexton?"

"Do, sir! why, I could not stifle my conscience, and I left my place. Ever since then, sir, I have stationed myself in the Piazza, to warn my poor, deluded fellow-creatures of their error, and to assure them that when the bell of St. Paul's rings, it rings for prayers, and not for puppet-shows; and, Lord help us! there it goes at this very moment; and look, look, gentlemen, how the wigs and hoods are crowding to the motion¹ instead of the minister."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Tarleton. "Mr. Powell is not the first man who has wrested things holy to serve a

¹ An antiquated word in use for puppet-shows.

carnal purpose, and made use of church-bells in order to ring money to the wide pouch of the church's enemies. Harkye, my friend; follow my advice, and turn preacher yourself; mount a cart opposite to the motion, and I'll wager a trifle that the crowd forsake the theatrical mountebank in favor of the religious one, — for the more sacred the thing played upon, the more certain is the game."

"Body of me, gentlemen," cried the ex-sexton, "I'll follow your advice."

"Do so, man, and never presume to look doleful again; leave dulness to your superiors."¹

And with this advice, and an additional compensation for his confidence, we left the innocent assistant of Mr. Powell, and marched into the puppet-show, by the sound of the very bells the perversion of which the good sexton had so pathetically lamented.

The first person I saw at the show, and indeed the express person I came to see, was the Lady Hasselton. Tarleton and myself separated for the present, and I repaired to the coquette. "Angels of grace!" said I, approaching; "and, by the by, before I proceed another word, observe, Lady Hasselton, how appropriate the exclamation is to *you!* Angels of *grace!* why, you have moved all your patches, — one, two, three, six, eight, — as I am a gentleman, from the left side of your cheek to the right! What is the reason of so sudden an emigration?"

"I have changed my politics,² Count, that is all, and have resolved to lose no time in proclaiming the change. But is it true that you are going to get married?"

¹ See "Spectator" No. 14, for a letter from this unfortunate under-sexton.

² Whig ladies patched on one side of the cheek, Tories on the other.

"Married! Heaven forbid! Which of my enemies spread so cruel a report?"

"Oh, the report is universal!" and the Lady Hasselton flirted her fan with a most flattering violence.

"It is false, nevertheless; I cannot afford to buy a wife at present, for, thanks to jointures and pin-money, these things are all matter of commerce; and (see how closely civilized life resembles the savage!) the English, like the Tartar gentleman, obtains his wife only by purchase! But who is the bride?"

"The Duke of Newcastle's rich daughter, Lady Henrietta Pelham."

"What, Harley's object of ambition!¹ Faith, madam, the report is not so cruel as I thought for!"

"Oh, you fop! but is it not true?"

"By my honor, I fear not; my rivals are too numerous and too powerful. Look, now, yonder! how they already flock around the illustrious heiress, — note those smiles and simpers. Is it not pretty to see those very fine gentlemen imitating bumpkins at a fair, and grinning their best *for a gold ring!* But you need not fear me, Lady Hasselton; my love cannot wander, if it would. In the quaint thought of Sidney,² love, having once flown to my heart, burned its wings there, and cannot fly away."

"La, you now!" said the beauty; "I do not comprehend you exactly: your master of the graces does not teach you your compliments properly."

"Yes, he does, but in your presence I forget them; and now," I added, lowering my voice into the lowest

¹ Lord Bolingbroke tells us that it was the main end of Harley's administration to marry his son to this lady. Thus is the fate of nations a bundle made up of a thousand little private schemes.

² In the "Arcadia," that museum of oddities and beauties.

of whispers, — “now that you are assured of my fidelity, will you not learn at last to discredit rumors and trust to me?”

“I love you too well!” answered the Lady Hasselton in the same tone, and that answer gives an admirable idea of the affection of every coquette! — love and confidence with them are qualities that have a natural antipathy, and can never be united! Our *tête-à-tête* was at an end; the people around us became social, and conversation general.

“Betterton acts to-morrow night,” cried the Lady Pratterly; “we must go!”

“We must go,” cried the Lady Hasselton.

“We must go!” cried all.

And so passed the time till the puppet-show was over, and my attendance dispensed with.

It is a charming thing to be the lover of a lady of the mode! One so honored does with his hours as a miser with his guineas, — namely, nothing but count them!

CHAPTER III.

More Lions.

THE next night, after the theatre, Tarleton and I strolled into Wills's. Half-a-dozen wits were assembled. Heavens! how they talked! Actors, actresses, poets, statesmen, philosophers, critics, divines, were all pulled to pieces with the most gratifying malice imaginable. We sat ourselves down, and while Tarleton amused himself with a dish of coffee and the "Flying Post," I listened very attentively to the conversation. Certainly, if we would take every opportunity of getting a grain or two of knowledge, we should soon have a chestful; a man earned an excellent subsistence by asking every one who came out of a tobacconist's shop for a pinch of snuff, and retailing the mixture as soon as he had filled his box.¹

While I was listening to a tall, lusty gentleman, who was abusing Dogget, the actor, a well-dressed man entered, and immediately attracted the general observation. He was of a very flat, ill-favored countenance, but of a quick eye and a genteel air; there was, however, something constrained and artificial in his address, and he appeared to be endeavoring to clothe a natural good-humor with a certain primness which could never be made to fit it.

"Ha, Steele!" cried a gentleman in an orange-colored coat, who seemed, by a fashionable swagger of importance, desirous of giving the tone to the company, —

¹ Tatler.

“ ha, Steele! whence come you, — from the chapel or the tavern? ” and the speaker winked round the room, as if he wished us to participate in the pleasure of a good thing.

Mr. Steele drew up, seemingly a little affronted; but his good-nature conquering the affectation of personal sanctity, which, at the time I refer to, that excellent writer was pleased to assume, he contented himself with nodding to the speaker, and saying, —

“ All the world knows, Colonel Cleland, that you are a wit, and therefore we take your fine sayings, as we take change from an honest tradesman, — rest perfectly satisfied with the coin we get, without paying any attention to it.”

“ Zounds, Cleland, you got the worst of it there,” cried a gentleman in a flaxen wig. And Steele slid into a seat near my own.

Tarleton, who was sufficiently well educated to pretend to the character of a man of letters, hereupon thought it necessary to lay aside the “ Flying Post,” and to introduce me to my literary neighbor.

“ Pray,” said Colonel Cleland, taking snuff and swinging himself to and fro with an air of fashionable grace, “ has any one seen the new paper? ”

“ What! ” cried the gentleman in the flaxen wig, “ what! the ‘ Tatler’s ’ successor, — the ‘ Spectator ’? ”

“ The same,” quoth the colonel.

“ To be sure, — who has not? ” returned he of the flaxen ornament. “ People say Congreve writes it.”

“ They are very much mistaken, then,” cried a little square man with spectacles; “ to my certain knowledge Swift is the author.”

“ Pooh! ” said Cleland, imperiously, — “ pooh! it is neither one nor the other; I, gentlemen, am in the

secret; but — you take me, eh! One must not speak well of one's self, — mum is the word."

"Then," asked Steele, quietly, "we are to suppose that you, Colonel, are the writer?"

"I never said so, Dicky; but the women will have it that I am;" and the colonel smoothed down his cravat.

"Pray, Mr. Addison, what say you?" cried the gentleman in the flaxen wig, "are you for Congreve, Swift, or Colonel Cleland?" This was addressed to a gentleman of a grave but rather prepossessing mien, who, with eyes fixed upon the ground, was very quietly, and to all appearance very inattentively, solacing himself with a pipe. Without lifting his eyes, this personage, then eminent, afterwards rendered immortal, replied, —

"Colonel Cleland must produce other witnesses to prove his claim to the authorship of the 'Spectator;' the women, we well know, are prejudiced in his favor."

"That's true enough, old friend," cried the colonel, looking askant at his orange-colored coat; "but, faith, Addison, I wish you would set up a paper of the same sort, d'ye see; you're a nice judge of merit, and your sketches of character would do justice to your friends."

"If ever I do, Colonel, I, or my coadjutors, will study at least to do justice to you."¹

"Prithee, Steele," cried the stranger in spectacles, "prithee tell us thy thoughts on the subject: dost thou know the author of this droll periodical?"

"I saw him this morning," said Steele, carelessly.

"Aha! and what said you to him?"

"I asked him his name."

¹ This seems to corroborate the suspicion entertained of the identity of Colonel Cleland with the Will Honeycomb of the "Spectator."

"And what did he answer?" cried he of the flaxen wig, while all of us crowded round the speaker, with the curiosity every one felt in the authorship of a work then exciting the most universal and eager interest.

"He answered me solemnly," said Steele, "in the following words, —

'Græci carent ablativo, Itali dativo, Ego nominativo.'"¹

"Famous, capital!" cried the gentleman in spectacles; and then, touching Colonel Cleland, added, "What does it exactly mean?"

"Ignoramus!" said Cleland, disdainfully, "every schoolboy knows *Virgil*!"

"Devereux," said Tarleton, yawning, "what a d——d delightful thing it is to hear so much wit, — pity that the atmosphere is so fine that no lunge unaccustomed to it can endure it long. Let us recover ourselves by a walk."

"Willingly," said I; and we sauntered forth into the streets.

"Wills's is not what it was," said Tarleton; "'t is a pitiful ghost of its former self, and if they had not introduced cards, one would die of the vapors there."

"I know nothing so insipid," said I, "as that mock literary air which it is so much the fashion to assume. 'T is but a wearisome relief to conversation to have interludes of songs about Strephon and Sylvia, recited with a lisp by a gentleman with fringed gloves and a languishing look."

"Fie on it!" cried Tarleton; "let us seek for a fresher topic. Are you asked to Abigail Masham's to-night, or will you come to Dame de la Riviere Manley's?"

¹ "The Greeks want an ablative, the Italians a dative, I a nominative."

“ Dame de la what? — in the name of long words, who is she? ”

“ Oh! Learning made libidinous: one who reads Catullus and profits by it.”

“ Bah, no; we will not leave the gentle Abigail for her. I have promised to meet St. John, too, at the Mashams’.”

“ As you like. We shall get some wine at Abigail’s, which we should never do at the house of her cousin of Marlborough.”

And, comforting himself with this belief, Tarleton peaceably accompanied me to that celebrated woman, who did the Tories such notable service, at the expense of being termed by the Whigs one great want divided into two parts, — namely, a great want of every shilling belonging to other people, and a great want of every virtue that should have belonged to herself. As we mounted the staircase, a door to the left (a private apartment) was opened, and I saw the favorite dismiss, with the most flattering air of respect, my old preceptor, the Abbé Montreuil. He received her attentions as his due, and, descending the stairs, came full upon me. He drew back, changed neither hue nor muscle, bowed civilly enough, and disappeared. I had not much opportunity to muse over this circumstance, for St. John and Mr. Domville — excellent companions both — joined us; and the party being small, we had the unwonted felicity of talking as well as bowing to each other. It was impossible to think of any one else when St. John chose to exert himself; and so even the Abbé Montreuil glided out of my brain as St. John’s wit glided into it. We were all of the same way of thinking on politics, and therefore were witty without being quarrelsome, — a rare thing. The trusty Abigail told us stories

of the good queen, and we added *bons-mots* by way of corollary. Wine, too, wine that even Tarleton approved, lit up our intellects, and we spent altogether an evening such as gentlemen and Tories very seldom have the sense to enjoy.

O Apollo! I wonder whether Tories of the next century will be such clever, charming, well-informed fellows as we were!

CHAPTER IV.

An Intellectual Adventure.

A **LITTLE** affected by the vinous potations which had been so much an object of anticipation with my companion, Tarleton and I were strolling homeward, when we perceived a remarkably tall man engaged in a contest with a couple of watchmen. Watchmen were in all cases the especial and natural enemies of the gallants in my young days; and no sooner did we see the unequal contest than, drawing our swords with that true English valor which makes all the quarrels of other people its own, we hastened to the relief of the weaker party.

"Gentlemen," said the elder watchman, drawing back, "this is no common brawl; we have been shamefully beaten by this here madman, and for no earthly cause."

"Who ever did beat a watchman for any earthly cause, you rascal!" cried the accused party, swinging his walking-cane over the complainant's head with a menacing air.

"Very true," cried Tarleton, coolly. "Seigneurs of the watch, you are both made and paid to be beaten; ergo, you have no right to complain. Release this worthy cavalier, and depart elsewhere to make night hideous with your voices."

"Come, come," quoth the younger Dogberry, who perceived a reinforcement approaching, "move on, good people, and let us do our duty."

"Which," interrupted the elder watchman, "consists in taking this hulking swaggerer to the watchhouse."

"Thou speakest wisely, man of peace," said Tarleton; "defend thyself;" and without adding another word, he ran the watchman through — not the body, but the coat; avoiding, with great dexterity, the corporeal substance of the attacked party, and yet approaching it so closely as to give the guardian of the streets very reasonable ground for apprehension. No sooner did the watchman find the hilt strike against his breast, than he uttered a dismal cry, and fell upon the pavement as if he had been shot.

"Now for thee, varlet!" cried Tarleton, brandishing his rapier before the eyes of the other watchman; "tremble at the sword of Gideon."

"O Lord, O Lord!" ejaculated the terrified comrade of the fallen man, dropping on his knees; "for Heaven's sake, sir, have a care."

"What argument canst thou allege, thou screech-owl of the metropolis, that thou shouldst not share the same fate as thy brother owl?"

"Oh, sir!" cried the craven night-bird (a bit of a humorist in its way), "because I have a nest and seven little owlets at home, and t' other owl is only a bachelor."

"Thou art an impudent thing to jest at us," said Tarleton; "but thy wit has saved thee: rise!"

At this moment two other watchmen came up.

"Gentlemen," said the tall stranger whom we had rescued, "we had better fly."

Tarleton cast at him a contemptuous look, and placed himself in a posture of offence.

"Hark ye," said I, "let us effect an honorable peace. Messieurs the watch, be it lawful for you to carry off the slain, and for us to claim the prisoners."

But our new foes understood not a jest, and advanced upon us with a ferocity which might really have termi-

nated in a serious engagement, had not the tall stranger thrust his bulky form in front of the approaching battalion, and cried out with a loud voice: "Zounds, my good fellows, what's all this for? If you take us up, you will get broken heads to-night, and a few shillings perhaps to-morrow. If you leave us alone, you will have whole heads, and a guinea between you. Now, what say you?"

Well spoke Phædra against the dangers of eloquence (*καλοὶ λίαν λόγοι*). The watchmen looked at each other. "Why, really, sir," said one, "what you say alters the case very much; and if Dick here is not much hurt, I don't know what we may say to the offer."

So saying, they raised the fallen watchman, who, after three or four grunts, began slowly to recover himself.

"Are you dead, Dick?" said the owl with seven owlets.

"I think I am," answered the other, groaning.

"Are you able to drink a pot of ale, Dick?" cried the tall stranger.

"I think I am," reiterated the dead man, very lackadaisically. And this answer satisfying his comrades, the articles of the peace were subscribed to.

Now, then, the tall stranger began searching his pockets with a most consequential air.

"'Gad, so!" said he at last; "not in my breeches pocket! — well, it must be in my waistcoat. No. Well, 't is a strange thing, — demme it is! Gentlemen, I have had the misfortune to leave my purse behind me; add to your other favors by lending me wherewithal to satisfy these honest men."

And Tarleton lent him the guinea. The watchmen now retired, and we were left alone with our portly ally.

Placing his hand to his heart, he made us half-a-dozen profound bows, returned us thanks for our assistance in some very courtly phrases, and requested us to allow him to make our acquaintance. We exchanged cards, and departed on our several ways.

"I have met that gentleman before," said Tarleton; "let us see what name he pretends to. 'Fielding — Fielding!' Ah, by the Lord, it is no less a person! it is the great Fielding himself."

"Is Mr. Fielding, then, as elevated in fame as in stature?"

"What! is it possible that you have not yet heard of Beau Fielding, who bared his bosom at the theatre in order to attract the admiring compassion of the female part of the audience?"

"What!" I cried, "the Duchess of Cleveland's Fielding?"

"The same; the best-looking fellow of his day! A sketch of his history is in the 'Tatler,' under the name of 'Orlando the Fair.' He is terribly fallen as to fortune since the day when he drove about in a car like a sea-shell, with a dozen tall fellows, in the Austrian livery, black and yellow, running before and behind him. You know he claims relationship to the house of Hapsburg. As for the present he writes poems, makes love, is still good-natured, humorous, and odd; is rather unhappily addicted to wine and borrowing, and rigidly keeps that oath of the Carthusians which never suffers them to carry any money about them."

"An acquaintance more likely to yield amusement than profit."

"Exactly so. He will favor you with a visit, — to-morrow, perhaps; and you will remember his propensities."

“ Ah! who ever forgets a warning that relates to his purse? ”

“ True! ” said Tarleton, sighing. “ Alas! my guinea, thou and I have parted company forever! *Vale, vale, inquit lolas!* ”

CHAPTER V.

The Beau in his Den, and a Philosopher discovered.

MR. FIELDING having twice favored me with visits which found me from home, I thought it right to pay my respects to him; accordingly, one morning I repaired to his abode. It was situated in a street which had been excessively the mode some thirty years back; and the house still exhibited a stately and somewhat ostentatious exterior. I observed a considerable cluster of infantine ragamuffins collected round the door; and no sooner did the portal open to my summons than they pressed forward in a manner infinitely more zealous than respectful. A servant in the Austrian livery, with a broad belt round his middle, officiated as porter. "Look, look!" cried one of the youthful gazers, — "look at the Beau's *keeper!*" This imputation on his own respectability and that of his master, the domestic seemed by no means to relish; for, muttering some maledictory menace, which I at first took to be German, but which I afterwards found to be Irish, he banged the door in the faces of the intrusive impertinents, and said, in an accent which suited very ill with his continental attire, —

"And is it my master you 're wanting, sir?"

"It is."

"And you would be after seeing him immadiately?"

"Rightly conjectured, my sagacious friend."

"Fait then, your honor, my master 's in bed with a terrible fit of the megrims."

"Then you will favor me by giving this card to your master, and expressing my sorrow at his indisposition."

Upon this the orange-colored lackey, very quietly reading the address on the card, and spelling letter by letter in an audible mutter, rejoined, —

"C—o—u (cou) n—t (unt) Count, D—e—v— Och, by my shoul, and it's Count Devereux after all, I'm thinking?"

"You think with equal profundity and truth."

"You may well say that, your honor. Stip in a bit: I'll till my master, — it is himself that will see you in a twinkling!"

"But you forget that your master is ill?" said I.

"Sorrow a bit for the matter o' that, — my master is never ill to a jontleman."

And with this assurance "the Beau's keeper" ushered me up a splendid staircase into a large, dreary, faded apartment, and left me to amuse myself with the curiosities within, while he went to perform a cure upon his master's "megrimms." The chamber, suiting with the house and the owner, looked like a place in the other world set apart for the reception of the ghosts of departed furniture. The hangings were wan and colorless; the chairs and sofas were most spiritually unsubstantial; the mirrors reflected all things in a sepulchral sea-green, — even a huge picture of Mr. Fielding himself, placed over the chimney-piece, seemed like the apparition of a portrait, so dim, watery, and indistinct had it been rendered by neglect and damp. On a huge, tomb-like table, in the middle of the room, lay two pencilled profiles of Mr. Fielding, a pawnbroker's ticket, a pair of ruffles, a very little muff, an immense broadsword, a Wycherley comb, a jack-boot, and an old plumed hat; to these were

added a cracked pomatum-pot containing ink, and a scrap of paper ornamented with sundry paintings of hearts and torches, on which were scrawled several lines in a hand so large and round that I could not avoid seeing the first verse, though I turned away my eyes as quickly as possible, — that verse, to the best of my memory, ran thus: "Say, lovely Lesbia, when thy swain." Upon the ground lay a box of patches, a periwig, and two or three well-thumbed books of songs. Such was the reception-room of Beau Fielding, one indifferently well calculated to exhibit the propensities of a man, half bully, half fribble; a poet, a fop, a fighter, a beauty, a walking museum of all odd humors, and a living shadow of a past renown. "There are changes in wit as in fashion," said Sir William Temple; and he proceeds to instance a nobleman, who was the greatest wit of the court of Charles I., and the greatest dullard in that of Charles II.¹ But, Heavens, how awful are the revolutions of coxcombry! what a change from Beau Fielding the Beauty to Beau Fielding the Oddity!

After I had remained in this apartment about ten minutes, the great man made his appearance. He was attired in a dressing-gown of the most gorgeous material and color, but so old that it was difficult to conceive any period of past time which it might not have been supposed to have witnessed; a little velvet cap, with a tarnished gold tassel, surmounted his head, and his nether limbs were sheathed in a pair of military boots. In person, he still retained the trace of that extraordinary symmetry he had once possessed, and his features were yet handsome, though the complexion had grown coarse and florid, and the expression had settled int

¹ The Earl of Norwich.

a broad, hardy, farcical mixture of effrontery, humor, and conceit.

But how different his costume from that of old! Where was the long wig with its myriad curls, the coat stiff with golden lace, the diamond buttons, — “the pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war,” — the glorious war Beau Fielding had carried on throughout the female world; finding in every saloon a Blenheim, in every playhouse a Ramilies? Alas! to what abyss of fate will not the love of notoriety bring men! To what but the lust of show do we owe the misanthropy of Timon or the ruin of Beau Fielding!

“By the Lord!” cried Mr. Fielding, approaching and shaking me familiarly by the hand, — “by the Lord, I am delighted to see thee! As I am a soldier, I thought thou wert a spirit, invisible and incorporeal; and as long as I was in that belief I trembled for thy salvation, for I knew at least that thou wert not a spirit of heaven, — since thy door is the very reverse of the doors above, which we are assured shall be opened unto our knocking. But thou art early, Count; like the ghost, in Hamlet, thou snuffest the morning air. Wilt thou not keep out the rank atmosphere by a pint of wine and a toast?”

“Many thanks to you, Mr. Fielding; but I have at least one property of a ghost, and don’t drink after daybreak.”

“Nay, now, ’t is a bad rule! a villanous bad rule, fit *only for* ghosts and graybeards. We youngsters, Count, should have a more generous policy. Come, now, where didst thou drink last night? Has the hottle bequeathed thee a qualm or a headache, which preaches repentance and abstinence this morning?”

“No; but I visit my mistress this morning. Would

you have me smell of strong potations, and seem a worshipper of the 'Glass of Fashion,' rather than of the 'Mould of Form'? Confess, Mr. Fielding, that the women love not an early tippler, and that they expect sober and sweet kisses from a pair of 'youngsters' like us."

"By the Lord," cried Mr. Fielding, stroking down his comely stomach, "there is a great show of reason in thy excuses, but only the show, not substance, my noble Count. You know me, you know *my* experience with the women: I would not boast, as I'm a soldier; but 't is something! nine hundred and fifty locks of hair have I got in my strong-box, under padlock and key; fifty within the last week, — true, on my soul, — so that I may pretend to know a little of the dear creatures: well, I give thee my honor, Count, that they like a royster; they love a fellow who can carry his six bottles under a silken doublet; there's vigor and manhood in it, — and then, too, what a power of toasts can a six-bottle man drink to his mistress! Oh, 't is your only chivalry now, your modern substitute for tilt and tournament; true, Count, as I am a soldier!"

"I fear my Dulcinea differs from the herd, then; for she quarrelled with me for supping with St. John three nights ago, and —"

"St. John," interrupted Fielding, cutting me off in the beginning of a witticism, — "St. John, famous fellow, is he not? By the Lord, we will drink to his administration, — you in chocolate, I in Madeira. O'Carroll, you dog, O'Carroll, rogue, rascal, ass, dolt!"

"The same, your honor," said the orange-colored lackey, thrusting in his lean visage.

"Ay, the same indeed, thou anatomized son of St. Patrick. Why dost thou not get fat? Thou shamest

my good living, and thy belly is a rascally minister to thee, devouring all things for itself, without fattening a single member of the body corporate. Look at *me*, you dog; am *I* thin? Go and get fat, or I will discharge thee, — by the Lord I will! The sun shines through thee like an empty wine-glass.”

“And is it upon your honor’s lavings you would have me get fat?” rejoined Mr. O’Carroll, with an air of deferential inquiry.

“Now, as I live, thou art the impudentest varlet!” cried Mr. Fielding, stamping his foot on the floor with an angry frown.

“And is it for talking of your honor’s lavings? an’ sure that’s *nothing* at all, at all,” said the valet, twirling his thumbs with expostulating innocence.

“Begone, rascal!” said Mr. Fielding, — “begone! Go to the Salop, and bring us a pint of Madeira, a toast, and a dish of chocolate.”

“Yes, your honor, in a twinkling,” said the valet, disappearing.

“A sorry fellow,” said Mr. Fielding, “but honest and faithful, and loves me as well as a saint loves gold; ’t is his love makes him familiar.”

Here the door was again opened, and the sharp face of Mr. O’Carroll again intruded.

“How now, sirrah!” exclaimed his master.

Mr. O’Carroll, without answering by voice, gave a grotesque sort of signal between a wink and a beckon. Mr. Fielding rose, muttering an oath, and underwent a whisper. “By the Lord,” cried he, seemingly in a furious passion, “and thou hast not got the bill cashed yet, though I told thee twice to have it done last evening! Have I not my debts of honor to discharge, and did I not give the last guinea I had about me for

a walking-cane yesterday? Go down to the city immediately, sirrah, and bring me the change."

The valet again whispered.

"Ah," resumed Fielding, "ah, — so far, you say, 't is true; 't is a great way, and perhaps the count can't wait till you return. Prithee" (turning to me), "prithee now, is it not vexatious, — no change about me, and my fool has not cashed a trifling bill I have, for a thousand or so, on Messrs. Child! and the cursed Salop puts not its *trust* even in princes, — 't is its way. 'Gad now, — you have not a guinea about you?"

What could I say? My guinea joined Tarleton's in a visit to that bourne whence no *such* traveller e'er returned.

Mr. O'Carroll now vanished in earnest; the wine and the chocolate soon appeared. Mr. Fielding brightened up, recited his poetry, blessed his good fortune, promised to call on me in a day or two; and assured me, with a round oath, that the next time he had the honor of seeing me, he would treat me with another pint of Madeira, exactly of the same sort.

I remember well that it was the evening of the same day in which I had paid this visit to the redoubted Mr. Fielding, that, on returning from a drum at Lady Hasselton's, I entered my anteroom with so silent a step that I did not arouse even the keen senses of Monsieur Desmarais. He was seated by the fire, with his head supported by his hands, and intently poring over a huge folio. I had often observed that he possessed a literary turn, and all the hours in which he was unemployed by me he was wont to occupy with books. I felt now, as I stood still and contemplated his absorbed attention in the contents of the book before him, a strong curiosity to know the nature of his studies; and so little

did my taste second the routine of trifles in which I had been lately engaged, that in looking upon the earnest features of the man, on which the solitary light streamed calm and full, and impressed with the deep quiet and solitude of the chamber, together with the undisturbed sanctity of comfort presiding over the small, bright hearth, and contrasting what I saw with the brilliant scene — brilliant with gaudy, wearing, wearisome frivolities — which I had just quitted, a sensation of envy, at the enjoyments of my dependant, entered my breast, accompanied with a sentiment resembling humiliation at the nature of my own pursuits. I am generally thought a proud man, but I am never proud to my inferiors; nor can I imagine pride where there is not competition. I approached Desmarais, and said, in French, —

“How is this? Why did you not, like your fellows, take advantage of my absence to pursue your own amusements? They must be dull, indeed, if they do not hold out to you more tempting inducements than that colossal offspring of the press.”

“Pardon me, sir,” said Desmarais, very respectfully, and closing the book, — “pardon me, I was not aware of your return. Will Monsieur doff his cloak?”

“No; shut the door, — wheel round that chair, and favor me with a sight of your book.”

“Monsieur will be angry, I fear,” said the valet (obeying the first two orders, but hesitating about the third), “with my course of reading: I confess it is not very compatible with my station.”

“Ah, some long romance, the ‘Clelia,’ I suppose, — nay, bring it hither; that is to say, if it be movable by the strength of a single man.”

Thus urged, Desmarais modestly brought me the book. Judge of my surprise when I found it was a volume of

Leibnitz, — a philosopher then very much the rage, because one might talk of him very safely without having read him.¹ Despite of my surprise, I could not help smiling when my eye turned from the book to the student. It is impossible to conceive an appearance less like a philosopher's than that of Jean Desmarais. His wig was of a nicety that would not have brooked the irregularity of a single hair; his dress was not preposterous, for I do not remember, among gentles or valets, a more really exquisite taste than that of Desmarais: but it evinced, in every particular, the arts of the toilet. A perpetual smile sat upon his lips, — sometimes it deepened into a sneer; but that was the only change it ever experienced. An irresistible air of self-conceit gave piquancy to his long, marked features, small, glittering eye, and withered cheeks, on which a delicate and soft bloom excited suspicion of artificial embellishment. A very fit frame of body this for a valet; but, I humbly opine, a very unseemly one for a student of Leibnitz.

“And what,” said I, after a short pause, “is your opinion of this philosopher? I understand that he has just written a work² above all praise and all comprehension.”

“It is true, Monsieur, that it is above his own understanding. He knows not what sly conclusions may be drawn from his premises; but I beg Monsieur's pardon, I shall be tedious and intrusive.”

“Not a whit; speak out, and at length. So you conceive that Leibnitz makes ropes, which *others* will make into ladders?”

¹ Which is possibly the reason why there are so many disciples of Kant at the present moment. — Ed.

² The “Theodicea.”

"Exactly so," said Desmarais; "all his arguments go to swell the sails of the great philosophical truth, 'Necessity!' We are the things and toys of Fate, and its everlasting chain compels even the Power that creates, as well as the things created."

"Ha!" said I, who, though little versed at that time in these metaphysical subtleties, had heard St. John often speak of the strange doctrine to which Desmarais referred, "you are, then, a believer in the fatalism of Spinoza?"

"No, Monsieur," said Desmarais, with a complacent smile, "my system is my own, — it is composed of the thoughts of others; but my thoughts are the cords which bind the various sticks into a faggot."

"Well," said I, smiling at the man's conceited air, "and what is your main dogma?"

"Our utter impotence."

"Pleasing! Mean you that we have no free will?"

"None."

"Why, then, you take away the very existence of vice and virtue; and, according to you, we sin or act well, not from our own accord, but because we are compelled and preordained to it."

Desmarais' smile withered into the grim sneer with which, as I have said, it was sometimes varied.

"Monsieur's penetration is extreme; but shall I not prepare his nightly draught?"

"No; answer me at length, and tell me the difference between good and ill, if we are compelled by Necessity to either."

Desmarais hemmed, and began. Despite of his caution, the coxcomb loved to hear himself talk, and he talked therefore to the following purpose:—

"Liberty is a thing impossible! Can you *will* a

single action, however simple, independent of your organization, independent of the organization of others, independent of the order of things past, independent of the order of things to come? You cannot. But if not independent, you are dependent; if dependent, where is your liberty, where your freedom of will? Education disposes our characters, — can you control your own education, begun at the hour of birth? You cannot. Our character, joined to the conduct of others, disposes of our happiness, our sorrow, our crime, our virtue. Can you control your character? We have already seen that you cannot. Can you control the conduct of others, — others, perhaps, whom you have never seen, but who may ruin you at a word; a despot, for instance, or a warrior? You cannot. What remains? that if we cannot choose our characters, nor our fates, we cannot be accountable for either. If you are a good man, you are a lucky man; but you are not to be praised for what you could not help. If you are a bad man, you are an unfortunate one; but you are not to be execrated for what you could not prevent.”¹

“Then, most wise Desmarais, if you steal this diamond loop from my hat, you are only an unlucky man, not a guilty one, and worthy of my sympathy, not anger?”

“Exactly so; but you must hang me for it. You cannot control events, but you can modify man. Education, law, adversity, prosperity, correction, praise, modify him, — without his choice, and sometimes without his perception. But once acknowledge Necessity, and evil passions cease; you may punish, you may

¹ Whatever pretensions Monsieur Desmarais may have had to originality, this tissue of opinions is as old as philosophy itself.
— ED.

destroy others, if for the safety and good of the commonwealth; but motives for doing so cease to be private: you can have no personal hatred to men for committing actions which they were irresistibly compelled to commit."

I felt that, however I might listen to and dislike these sentiments, it would not do for the master to argue with the domestic, especially when there was a chance that he might have the worst of it. And so I was suddenly seized with a fit of sleepiness, which broke off our conversation. Meanwhile I inly resolved, in my own mind, to take the first opportunity of discharging a valet who saw no difference between good and evil but that of luck; and who, by the irresistible compulsion of Necessity, might some day or other have the involuntary misfortune to cut the throat of his master!

I did not, however, carry this unphilosophical resolution into effect. Indeed, the rogue, doubting, perhaps, the nature of the impression he had made on me, redoubled so zealously his efforts to please me in the science of his profession, that I could not determine upon relinquishing such a treasure for a speculative opinion, and I was too much accustomed to laugh at my Sosia to believe there could be any reason to fear him.

CHAPTER VI.

An Universal Genius — Pericles turned Barber.— Names of Beauties in 171- . — The Toasts of the Kit-Cat Club.

As I was riding with Tarleton towards Chelsea one day, he asked me if I had ever seen the celebrated Mr. Salter. "No," said I; "but I heard Steele talk of him the other night at Wills's. He is an antiquarian and a barber, is he not?"

"Yes, a shaving virtuoso; really a comical and strange character, and has oddities enough to compensate one for the debasement of talking with a man in his rank."

"Let us go to him forthwith," said I, spurring my horse into a canter.

"*Quod petis hic est,*" cried Tarleton, "there is his house." And my companion pointed to a coffee-house.

"What!" said I, "does he draw wine as well as teeth?"

"To be sure: Don Saltero is an universal genius. Let us dismount."

Consigning our horses to the care of our grooms, we marched into the strangest-looking place I ever had the good fortune to behold. A long, narrow coffee-room was furnished with all manner of things that, belonging neither to heaven, earth, nor the water under the earth, the redoubted Saltero might well worship without incurring the crime of idolatry. The first thing that greeted my eyes was a bull's head, with a most

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ferocious pair of vulture's wings on its neck. While I was surveying this I felt something touch my hat. I looked up and discovered an immense alligator swinging from the ceiling, and fixing a monstrous pair of glass eyes upon me. A thing which seemed to me like an immense shoe, upon a nearer approach expanded itself into an Indian canoe, and a most hideous spectre, with mummy skin and glittering teeth, that made my blood run cold, was labelled, "Beautiful Specimen of a Calmuc Tartar."

While, lost in wonder, I stood in the middle of the apartment, up walks a little man, as lean as a miser, and says to me, rubbing his hands, —

"Wonderful, sir, is it not?"

"Wonderful, indeed, Don!" said Tarleton; "you look like a Chinese Adam, surrounded by a Japanese creation."

"He, he, he, sir, you have so pleasant a vein," said the little Don, in a sharp, shrill voice. "But it has been all done, sir, by one man; all of it collected by me, simple as I stand."

"Simple, indeed," quoth Tarleton; "and how gets on the fiddle?"

"Bravely, sir, bravely; shall I play you a tune?"

"No, no, my good Don; another time."

"Nay, sir, nay," cried the antiquarian; "suffer me to welcome your arrival properly."

And forthwith disappearing, he returned in an instant with a marvellously ill-favored old fiddle. Throwing a *penseroso* air into his thin cheeks, our Don then began a few preliminary thrummings, which set my teeth on edge, and made Tarleton put both hands to his ears. Three sober-looking citizens, who had just sat themselves down to pipes and the journal, started to their

feet like so many pieces of clockwork; but no sooner had Don Saltero, with a *dégagé* air of graceful melancholy, actually launched into what he was pleased to term a tune, than an universal irritation of nerves seized the whole company. At the first overture the three citizens swore and cursed; at the second division of the tune they seized their hats; at the third, they vanished. As for me, I found all my limbs twitching as if they were dancing to St. Vitus's music; the very drawers disappeared; the alligator itself twirled round, as if revived by so harsh an experiment on the nervous system; and I verily believe the whole museum — bull, wings, Indian canoe, and Calmuc Tartar — would have been set into motion by this new Orpheus, had not Tarleton, in a paroxysm of rage, seized him by the tail of the coat, and whirled him round, fiddle and all, with such velocity that the poor musician lost his equilibrium, and, falling against a row of Chinese monsters, brought the whole set to the ground, where he lay covered by the wrecks that accompanied his overthrow, screaming and struggling, and grasping his fiddle, which every now and then, touched involuntarily by his fingers, uttered a dismal squeak, as if sympathizing in the disaster it had caused, until the drawer ran in, and, raising the unhappy antiquarian, placed him on a great chair.

“O Lord!” groaned Don Saltero, “O Lord, my monsters, my monsters, — the pagoda, the mandarin, and the idol, — where are they? broken, ruined, annihilated!”

“No, sir, — all safe, sir,” said the drawer, — a smart, small, smug, pert man; “put 'em down in the bill, nevertheless, sir. Is it Alderman Atkins, sir, or Mr. Higgins?”

“Pooh,” said Tarleton, “bring me some lemonade;

send the pagoda to the bricklayer, the mandarin to the surgeon, and the idol to the Papist over the way! There 's a guinea to pay for their carriage. How are you, Don?"

"Oh, Mr. Tarleton, Mr. Tarleton! how could you be so cruel?"

"The nature of things demanded it, my good Don. Did I not call you a Chinese Adam, and how could you bear that name without undergoing the fall?"

"Oh, sir, this is no jesting matter, — broke the railing of my pagoda, bruised my arm, cracked my fiddle, and cut me off in the middle of that beautiful air! — no jesting matter."

"Come, Mr. Salter," said I, "'t is very true, but cheer up. 'The gods,' says Seneca, 'look with pleasure on a great man falling with the statesmen, the temples, and the divinities of his country;' all of which, mandarin, pagoda, and idol, accompanied *your* fall. Let us have a bottle of your best wine, and the honor of your company to drink it."

"No, Count, no," said Tarleton, haughtily; "we can drink not with the Don: but we 'll have the wine, and *he* shall drink it. Meanwhile, Don, tell us what possible combination of circumstances made thee fiddler, barber, anatomist, and virtuoso!"

Don Saltero loved fiddling better than anything in the world; but next to fiddling, he loved talking. So, being satisfied that he should be reimbursed for his pagoda, and fortifying himself with a glass or two of his own wine, he yielded to Tarleton's desire, and told us his history. I believe it was very entertaining to the good barber, but Tarleton and I saw nothing extraordinary in it; and long before it was over, we wished him an excellent good-day, and a new race of Chinese monsters.

That evening we were engaged at the Kit-Cat Club; for though I was opposed to the politics of its members, they admitted me on account of my literary pretensions. Halifax was there, and I commended the poet to his protection. We were very gay, and Halifax favored us with three new toasts by himself. O Venus! what beauties we made, and what characters we murdered! Never was there so important a synod to the female world as the gods of the Kit-Cat Club. Alas! I am writing for the children of an after age, to whom the very names of those who made the blood of their ancestors leap within their veins will be unknown. What cheek will color at the name of Carlisle? What hand will tremble as it touches the paper inscribed by that of Brudenel? The graceful Godolphin, the sparkling enchantment of Harper, the divine voice of Claverine, the gentle and bashful Bridgewater, the damask cheek and ruby lips of the Hebe Manchester, — what will these be to the race for whom alone these pages are penned? This history is a union of strange contrasts! Like the tree of the Sun, described by Marco Polo, which was green when approached on one side, but white when perceived on the other, — to me it is clothed in the verdure and spring of the existing time; to the reader it comes covered with the hoariness and wanness of the past!

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CHAPTER VII.

A Dialogue of Sentiment succeeded by the Sketch of a Character, in whose eyes Sentiment was to Wise Men what Religion is to Fools, — namely, a subject of ridicule.

ST. JOHN was now in power, and in the full flush of his many ambitious and restless schemes. I saw as much of him as the high rank he held in the state, and the consequent business with which he was oppressed, would suffer me, — me, who was prevented by religion from actively embracing any political party, and who therefore, though inclined to Toryism, associated pretty equally with all. St. John and myself formed a great friendship for each other, — a friendship which no after change or chance could efface, but which exists, strengthened and mellowed by time, at the very hour in which I now write.

One evening he sent to tell me he should be alone, if I would sup with him; accordingly I repaired to his house. He was walking up and down the room with uneven and rapid steps, and his countenance was flushed with an expression of joy and triumph, very rare to the thoughtful and earnest calm which it usually wore. "Congratulate me, Devereux," said he, seizing me eagerly by the hand, — "congratulate me!"

"For what?"

"Ay, true; you are not yet a politician, — you cannot yet tell how dear, how inexpressibly dear to a politician is a momentary and petty victory; but if I were prime minister of this country, what would you say?"

“That you could bear the duty better than any man living; but remember, Harley is in the way.”

“Ah! there’s the rub!” said St. John, slowly; and the expression of his face again changed from triumph to thoughtfulness; “but this is a subject not to your taste: let us choose another.” And flinging himself into a chair, this singular man, who prided himself on suiting his conversation to every one, began conversing with me upon the lighter topics of the day; these we soon exhausted, and at last we settled upon that of love and women.

“I own,” said I, “that in this respect pleasure has disappointed as well as wearied me. I have longed for some better object of worship than the trifle of fashion, or the yet more ignoble minion of the senses. I ask a vent for enthusiasm, for devotion, for romance, for a thousand subtle and secret streams of unuttered and unutterable feeling. I often think that I bear within me the desire and the sentiment of poetry, though I enjoy not its faculty of expression; and that that desire and that sentiment, denied legitimate egress, centre and shrink into one absorbing passion, which is the want of love. Where am I to satisfy this want? I look round these great circles of gayety which we term the world; I send forth my heart as a wanderer over their regions and recesses, and it returns, sated and palled and languid, to myself again.”

“You express a common want in every less worldly or more morbid nature,” said St. John, — “a want which I myself have experienced; and if I had never felt it, I should never, perhaps, have turned to ambition to console or to engross me. But do not flatter yourself that the want will ever be fulfilled. Nature places us alone in this inhospitable world, and no heart is cast in

a similar mould to that which we bear within us. We pine for sympathy; we make to ourselves a creation of ideal beauties, in which we expect to find it; but the creation has no reality. It is the mind's phantasma which the mind adores; and it is because the phantasma can have no actual being that the mind despairs. Throughout life, from the cradle to the grave, it is no real or living thing which we demand; it is the realization of the idea we have formed within us, and which, as we are not gods, we can never call into existence. We are enamored of the statue ourselves have graven; but, unlike the statue of the Cyprian, it kindles not to our homage, nor melts to our embraces."

"I believe you," said I; "but it is hard to undeceive ourselves. The heart is the most credulous of all fanatics, and its ruling passion the most enduring of all superstitions. Oh, what can tear from us, to the last, the hope, the desire, the yearning for some bosom which, while it mirrors our own, parts not with the reflection. I have read that in the very hour and instant of our birth one exactly similar to ourselves in spirit and form is born also, and that a secret and unintelligible sympathy preserves that likeness, even through the vicissitudes of fortune and circumstance, until, in the same point of time, the two beings are resolved once more into the elements of earth. Confess that there is something welcome, though unfounded, in the fancy, and that there are few of the substances of worldly honor which one would not renounce to possess, in the closest and fondest of all relations, this shadow of ourselves!"

"Alas!" said St. John, "the possession, like all earthly blessings, carries within it its own principle of corruption. The deadliest foe to love is not change,

nor misfortune, nor jealousy, nor wrath, nor anything that flows from passion or emanates from fortune. The deadliest foe to it is *custom*. With custom die away the delusions and the mysteries which encircle it; leaf after leaf, in the green poetry, on which its beauty depends, droops and withers, till nothing but the bare and rude trunk is left. With all passion the soul demands something unexpressed, some vague recess to explore or to marvel upon, — some veil upon the mental as well as the corporeal deity. Custom leaves nothing to romance, and often but little to respect. The whole character is bared before us like a plain, and the heart's eye grows wearied with the sameness of the survey. And to weariness succeeds distaste, and to distaste, one of the myriad shapes of the Proteus Aversion; so that the passion we would make the rarest of treasures fritters down to a very instance of the commonest of proverbs, and out of familiarity cometh indeed contempt!"

"And are we, then," said I, "forever to forego the most delicious of our dreams? Are we to consider love as an entire delusion, and to reconcile ourselves to an eternal solitude of heart? What, then, shall fill the crying and unappeasable void of our souls? What shall become of those mighty sources of tenderness which, refused all channel in the rocky soil of the world, must have an outlet elsewhere, or stagnate into torpor?"

"Our passions," said St. John, "are restless, and will make each experiment in their power, though vanity be the result of all. Disappointed in love, they yearn towards ambition; *and the object of ambition, unlike that of love, never being wholly possessed, ambition is the more durable passion of the two.* But

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sooner or later even that, and all passions, are sated at last; and when wearied of too wide a flight, we limit our excursions, and, looking round us, discover the narrow bounds of our proper end, we grow satisfied with the loss of rapture, if we can partake of enjoyment; and the experience which seemed at first so bitterly to betray us becomes our most real benefactor, and ultimately leads us to content. For it is the excess and not the nature of our passions which is perishable. Like the trees which grew by the tomb of Protesilaus, the passions flourish till they reach a certain height; but no sooner is that height attained than they wither away."

Before I could reply, our conversation received an abrupt and complete interruption for the night. The door was thrown open, and a man pushing aside the servant with a rude and yet a dignified air, entered the room unannounced, and with the most perfect disregard to ceremony.

"How d'ye do, Mr. St. John," said he, — "how d'ye do? Pretty sort of a day we've had. Lucky to find you at home; that is to say, if you will give me some broiled oysters and champagne for supper."

"With all my heart, Doctor," said St. John, changing his manner at once from the pensive to an easy and somewhat brusque familiarity, — "with all my heart; but I am glad to hear you are a convert to champagne: you spent a whole evening last week in endeavoring to dissuade me from the sparkling sin."

"Pish! I had suffered the day before from it; so, like a true Old Bailey penitent, I preached up conversion to others, not from a desire of their welfare, but a plaguy sore feeling for my own misfortune. Where did you dine to-day? At home! Oh, the devil! I starved on three courses at the Duke of Ormond's."

“Aha! Honest Matt was there!”

“Yes, to my cost. He borrowed a shilling of me for a chair. Hang this weather! it costs me seven shillings a day for coach-fare, besides my paying the fares of all my poor brother parsons, who come over from Ireland to solicit my patronage for a bishopric, and end by borrowing half a crown in the mean while. But Matt Prior will pay me again, I suppose, out of the public money?”

“To be sure, if Chloe does not ruin him first.”

“Hang the slut! don’t talk of her. How Prior rails against his place!¹ He says the exercise spoils his wit, and that the only rhymes he ever dreams of nowadays are ‘docket and cocket.’”

“Ha, ha! we must do something better for Matt, — make him a bishop or an ambassador. But, pardon me, Count, I have not yet made known to you the most courted, authoritative, impertinent, clever, independent, haughty, delightful, troublesome parson of the age: do homage to Dr. Swift. Doctor, be merciful to my particular friend, Count Devereux.”

Drawing himself up, with a manner which contrasted his previous one strongly enough, Dr. Swift saluted me with a dignity which might even be called polished, and which certainly showed that, however he might prefer, as his usual demeanor, an air of negligence and semi-rudeness, he had profited sufficiently by his acquaintance with the great to equal them in the external graces, supposed to be peculiar to their order, whenever it suited his inclination. In person, Swift is much above the middle height, strongly built, and with a remarkably fine outline of throat and chest; his front face is certainly displeasing, though far from

¹ In the Customs.

uncomely; but the clear chiselling of the nose, the curved upper-lip, the full, round Roman chin, the hanging brow, and the resolute decision stamped upon the whole expression of the large forehead and the clear blue eye, make his profile one of the most striking I ever saw. He honored me, to my great surprise, with a fine speech and a compliment; and then, with a look which menaced to St. John the retort that ensued, he added: "And I shall always be glad to think that I owe your acquaintance to Mr. Secretary St. John, who, if he talked less about operas and singers, thought less about Alcibiades and Pericles; if he never complained of the load of business not being suited to his temper at the very moment he had been working, like Gumdragon, to get the said load upon his shoulders; and if he persuaded one of his sincerity being as great as his genius, — would appear to all time as adorned with the choicest gifts that Heaven has yet thought fit to bestow on the children of men. Prithee now, Mr. Sec., when shall we have the oysters? Will you be merry to-night, Count?"

"Certainly; if one may find absolution for the champagne?"

"I'll absolve you, with a vengeance, on condition that you'll walk home with me, and protect the poor parson from the Mohawks. Faith, they ran young Davenant's chair through with a sword t'other night. I hear they have sworn to make daylight through my Tory cassock, — all Whigs, you know, Count Devereux; nasty, dangerous animals, how I hate them! they cost me five-and-sixpence a week in chairs to avoid them."

"Never mind, Doctor, I'll send my servants home with you," said St. John.

"Ay, a nice way of mending the matter. That's

curing the itch by scratching the skin off. "I could not give your tall fellows less than a crown apiece; and I could buy off the bloodiest Mohawk in the kingdom, if he's a Whig, for half that sum. But, thank Heaven, the supper is ready."

And to supper we went. The oysters and champagne seemed to exhilarate, if it did not refine the Doctor's wit. St. John was unusually brilliant. I myself caught the infection of their humor, and contributed my quota to the common stock of jest and repartee; and that evening, spent with the two most extraordinary men of the age, had in it more of broad and familiar mirth than any I have ever wasted in the company of the youngest and noisiest disciples of the bowl and its concomitants. Even amidst all the coarse ore of Swift's conversation, the diamond perpetually broke out; his vulgarity was never that of a vulgar mind. Pity that while he condemned St. John's over-affectation of the graces of life, he never perceived that his own affectation of coarseness and brutality was to the full as unworthy of the simplicity of intellect,¹ and that the

¹ It has been said that Swift was only coarse in his later years, and, with a curious ignorance both of fact and of character, that Pope was the cause of the Dean's grossness of taste. There is no doubt that he grew coarser with age; but there is also no doubt that, graceful and dignified as that great genius could be when he pleased, he affected, at a period earlier than the one in which he is now introduced, to be coarse both in speech and manner. I seize upon this opportunity, *mal à propos* as it is, to observe that Swift's preference of Harley to St. John is by no means so certain as writers have been pleased generally to assert. Warton has already noted a passage in one of Swift's letters to Bolingbroke, to which I will beg to call the reader's attention:—

"It is *you were* my hero, but the other (Lord Oxford) *never was*; yet if he were, it was your own fault, who taught me to love him, and often vindicated him, in the beginning of your ministry, from

aversion to cant, which was the strongest characteristic of his mind, led him into the very faults he despised, only through a more displeasing and offensive road. That same aversion to cant is, by the way, the greatest and most prevalent enemy to the reputation of high and strong minds; and in judging Swift's character in especial, we should always bear it in recollection. This aversion — the very antipodes to hypocrisy — leads men not only to disclaim the virtues they have, but to pretend to the vices they have not. Foolish trick of disguised vanity! the world, alas! readily believes them. Like Justice Overdo, in the garb of poor Arthur of Bradley, they may deem it a virtue to have assumed the disguise; but they must not wonder if the sham Arthur is taken for the real, beaten as a vagabond, and set in the stocks as a rogue!

my accusations. But I granted he had the greatest inequalities of any man alive; and his whole scene was fifty times more a what-d'ye-call-it than yours; for I declare yours was *unite*, and I wish you would so order it that the world may be as wise as I upon that article."

I have to apologize for introducing this quotation, which I have done because (and I entreat the reader to remember this) I observe that Count Devereux always speaks of Lord Bolingbroke as he was spoken of by the eminent men of that day, — not as he is now rated by the judgment of posterity. — ED.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lightly won — lightly lost. — A Dialogue of equal Instruction and Amusement. — A Visit to Sir Godfrey Kneller.

ONE morning Tarleton breakfasted with me. "I don't see the little page," said he, "who was always in attendance in your anteroom. What the deuce has become of him?"

"You must ask his mistress. She has quarrelled with me, and withdrawn both her favor and her messenger."

"What! the Lady Hasselton quarrelled with you? *Diable!* Wherefore?"

"Because I am not enough of the 'pretty fellow;' am tired of carrying hood and scarf, and sitting behind her chair through five long acts of a dull play; because I disappointed her in not searching for her at every drum and quadrille party; because I admired not her monkey; and because I broke a teapot with a toad for a cover."

"And is not that enough?" cried Tarleton. "Heavens, what a black bead-roll of offences! Mrs. Merton would have discarded me for one of them. However, thy account has removed my surprise. I heard her praise thee the other day. Now, as long as she loved thee, she always abused thee like a pickpocket."

"Ha, ha, ha! and what said she in my favor?"

"Why, that you were certainly very handsome, though you were small; that you were certainly a great genius, though every one would not discover it; and that you certainly had quite the air of high birth, though you

were not nearly so well dressed as Beau Tippetly. But *entre nous*, Devereux, I think she hates you, and would play you a trick of spite — revenge is too strong a word — if she could find an opportunity.”

“Likely enough, Tarleton; but a coquette’s lover is always on his guard: so she will not take me unawares.”

“So be it. But tell me, Devereux, who is to be your next mistress, — Mrs. Denton or Lady Clancathcart? the world gives them both to you.”

“The world is always as generous with what is worthless as the bishop in the fable was with his blessing. However, I promise thee, Tarleton, that I will not interfere with thy claims either upon Mrs. Denton or Lady Clancathcart.”

“Nay,” said Tarleton, “I will own that you are a very Scipio; but it must be confessed, even by you, satirist as you are, that Lady Clancathcart has a beautiful set of features.”

“A handsome face, but so vilely made. She would make a splendid picture, if, like the goddess Laverna, she could be painted as a head without a body.”

“Ha, ha, ha! you have a bitter tongue, Count; but Mrs. Denton, what have you to say against her?”

“Nothing; she has no pretensions for me to contradict. She has a green eye and a sharp voice, a mincing gait and a broad foot. What friend of Mrs. Denton’s would not, therefore, counsel her to a prudent obscurity?”

“She never had but one lover in the world,” said Tarleton, “who was old, blind, lame, and poor; she accepted him, and became Mrs. Denton.”

“Yes,” said I; “she was like the magnet, and received her name from the very first person¹ sensible of her attraction.”

¹ Magnes.

"Well, you have a shrewd way of saying sweet things," said Tarleton; "but I must own that you rarely or never direct it towards women individually. What makes you break through your ordinary custom?"

"Because I am angry with women collectively, and must pour my spleen through whatever channel presents itself."

"Astonishing!" said Tarleton. "I despise women myself, I always did; but you were their most enthusiastic and chivalrous defender a month or two ago. What makes thee change, my Sir Amadis?"

"Disappointment! they weary, vex, disgust me; selfish, frivolous, mean, heartless, — out on them! 't is a disgrace to have their love!"

"*O ciel!* What a sensation the news of thy misogyny will cause! The young, gay, rich Count Devereux, whose wit, vivacity, splendor of appearance in equipage and dress, in the course of one season have thrown all the most established beaux and pretty fellows into the shade; to whom dedications and odes and billets-doux are so much waste paper; who has carried off the most general envy and dislike that any man ever was blessed with, since St. John turned politician, — what! thou all of a sudden to become a railer against the divine sex that made thee what thou art! Fly, fly, unhappy apostate, or expect the fate of Orpheus, at least!"

"None of your railleries, Tarleton, or I shall speak to you of plebeians and the canaille!"

"*Sacré!* my teeth are on edge already! Oh, the base, base canaille, how I loathe them! Nay, Devereux, joking apart, I love you twice as well for your humor. I despise the sex heartily. Indeed, *sub rosa* be it spoken, there are few things that breathe which I do

not despise. Human nature seems to me a most pitiful bundle of rags and scraps, which the gods threw out of heaven, as the dust and rubbish there."

"A pleasant view of thy species," said I.

"By my soul it is. Contempt is to me a luxury. I would not lose the privilege of loathing for all the objects which fools ever admired. What does old Persius say on the subject?

'Hoc ridere meum tam nil, nulla tibi vendo Iliade.'"¹

"And yet, Tarleton," said I, "the littlest feeling of all is a delight in contemplating the littleness of other people. Nothing is more contemptible than habitual contempt."

"Prithee, now," answered the haughty aristocrat, "let us not talk of these matters so subtly; leave me my enjoyment without refining upon it. What is your first pursuit for the morning?"

"Why, I have promised my uncle a picture of that invaluable countenance which Lady Hasselton finds so handsome; and I am going to give Kneller my last sitting."

"So, so, I will accompany you; I like the vain old dog: 't is a pleasure to hear him admire himself so wittily."

"Come, then!" said I, taking up my hat and sword; and, entering Tarleton's carriage, we drove to the painter's abode.

We found him employed in finishing a portrait of Lady Godolphin.

"He, he!" cried he, when he beheld me approach. "By Got, I am glad to see you, Count Tevereux; dis

¹ "This privilege of mine, to laugh, — such a nothing as it seems, — I would not barter to thee for an Iliad."

painting is tanned poor work by oneself, widout any one to make *des grands yeux*, and cry, ' Oh, Sir Godfrey Kneller, how fine dis is! ' ”

“ Very true, indeed,” said I, “ no great man can be expected to waste his talents widout his proper reward of praise. But, Heavens, Tarleton, did you ever see anything so wonderful? — that hand, that arm, — how exquisite! If Apollo turned painter, and borrowed colors from the rainbow, and models from the goddesses, he would not be fit to hold the pallet to Sir Godfrey Kneller.”

“ By Got, Count Tevereux, you are von grand judge of painting,” cried the artist, with sparkling eyes, “ and I vill paint you as von tanned handsome man! ”

“ Nay, my Apelles, you might as well preserve some likeness.”

“ Likeness, by Got! I vill make you like and handsome both. By my shoul you make me von Apelles, I vill make you von Alexander! ”

“ People in general,” said Tarleton, gravely, “ believe that Alexander had a wry neck, and was a very plain fellow; but no one can know about Alexander like Sir Godfrey Kneller, who has studied military tactics so accurately, and who, if he had taken up the sword instead of the pencil, would have been at least an Alexander himself.”

“ By Got, Meester Tarleton, you are as goot a judge of de talents for de war as Count Tevereux of de *genie* for de painting! Meester Tarleton, I vill paint your picture, and I vill make your eyes von goot inch bigger than dey are! ”

“ Large or small,” said I (for Tarleton, who had a haughty custom of contracting his orbs till they were scarce perceptible, was so much offended that I thought

it prudent to cut off his reply), — “large or small, Sir Godfrey, Mr. Tarleton’s eyes are capable of admiring your genius; why, your painting is like lightning, and one flash of your brush would be sufficient to restore even a blind man to sight.”

“It is tammed true,” said Sir Godfrey, earnestly; “and it did restore von man to sight once, — by my shoul it did! But sit yourself town, Count Tevereux, and look over your left shoulder, — ah, dat is it, — and now, praise on, Count Tevereux: de thought of my genius gives you — vat you call it — von animation, von fire, look you, — by my shoul it does!”

And by dint of such moderate panegyric the worthy Sir Godfrey completed my picture with equal satisfaction to himself and the original. See what a beautifier is flattery! — a few sweet words will send the Count Devereux down to posterity with at least three times as much beauty as he could justly lay claim to.¹

¹ This picture represents the count in an undress. The face is decidedly, though by no means remarkably, handsome; the nose is aquiline; the upper lip short and chiselled; the eyes gray; and the forehead, which is by far the finest feature in the countenance, is peculiarly high, broad, and massive. The mouth has but little beauty; it is severe, caustic, and rather displeasing, from the extreme compression of the lips. The great and prevalent expression of the face is energy. The eye, the brow, the turn of the head, the erect, penetrating aspect, are all strikingly bold, animated, and even daring. And this expression makes a singular contrast to that in another likeness of the count, which was taken at a much later period of life. The latter portrait represents him in a foreign uniform, decorated with orders. The peculiar sarcasm of the mouth is hidden beneath a very long and thick mustachio, of a much darker color than the hair (for in both portraits, as in Jervas’s picture of Lord Bolingbroke, the hair is left undisguised by the odious fashion of the day). Across one cheek there is a slight scar, as of a sabre-cut. The whole character of this portrait

is widely different from that in the earlier one. Not a trace of the fire, the animation, — which were so striking in the physiognomy of the youth of twenty, — is discoverable in the calm, sedate, stately, yet somewhat stern expression, which seems immovably spread over the paler hue, and the more prominent features of the man of about four or five and thirty. Yet, upon the whole, the face in the latter portrait is handsomer; and from its air of dignity and reflection, even more impressive than that in the one I have first described. — ED.

CHAPTER IX.

A Development of Character, and a long Letter — a Chapter, on the whole, more important than it seems.

THE scenes through which, of late, I have conducted my reader, are by no means episodal; they illustrate, far more than mere narration, the career to which I was so honorably devoted. Dissipation, women, wine, — Tarleton for a friend, Lady Hasselton for a mistress. Let me now throw aside the mask.

To people who have naturally very intense and very acute feelings, nothing is so fretting, so wearing to the heart, as the commonplace affections, which are the properties and offspring of the world. We have seen the birds which, with wings unclipped, children fasten to a stake. The birds seek to fly, and are pulled back before their wings are well spread; till, at last, they either perpetually strain at the end of their short tether, exciting only ridicule by their anguish and their impotent impatience; or, sullen and despondent, they remain on the ground, without an attempt to fly, nor creep, even to the full limit which their fetters would allow. Thus is it with feelings of the keen, wild nature I speak of: they are either striving forever to pass the little circle of slavery to which they are condemned, and so move laughter by an excess of action and a want of adequate power; or they rest motionless and moody, disdaining the petty indulgence they *might* enjoy, till sullenness is construed into resignation, and despair.

seems the apathy of content. Time, however, cures what it does not kill; and both bird and beast, if they pine not to the death at first, grow tame and acquiescent at last.

What to me was the companionship of Tarleton, or the attachment of Lady Hasselton? I had yielded to the one, and I had half eagerly, half scornfully, sought the other. These, and the avocations they brought with them, consumed my time; and of Time murdered, there is a ghost which we term *ennui*. The hauntings of this spectre are the especial curse of the higher orders; and hence springs a certain consequence to the passions. Persons in those ranks of society, so exposed to ennui, are either rendered totally incapable of real love, or they love far more intensely than those in a lower station; for the affections in them are either utterly frittered away on a thousand petty objects (poor shifts to escape the persecuting spectre), or else, early disgusted with the worthlessness of these objects, the heart turns within, and languishes for something not found in the daily routine of life. When this is the case, and when the pining of the heart is once satisfied, and the object of love is found, there are two mighty reasons why the love should be most passionately cherished. The first is, the utter indolence in which aristocratic life oozes away, and which allows full food for that meditation which can nurse, by sure degrees, the weakest desire into the strongest passion; and the second reason is, that the insipidity and hollowness of all patrician pursuits and pleasures render the excitement of love more delicious and more necessary to the *ignavi terrarum domini* than it is to those orders of society more usefully, more constantly, and more engrossingly engaged.

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Wearied and sated with the pursuit of what was worthless, my heart, at last, exhausted itself in pining for what was pure. I recurred, with a tenderness which I struggled with at first, and which in yielding to I blushed to acknowledge, to the memory of Isora. And in the world, surrounded by all which might be supposed to cause me to forget her, my heart clung to her far more endearingly than it had done in the rural solitudes in which she had first allured it. The truth was this: at the time I first loved her, other passions — passions almost equally powerful — shared her empire. Ambition and pleasure — vast whirlpools of thought — had just opened themselves a channel in my mind, and thither the tides of my desires were hurried and lost. Now those whirlpools had lost their power, and the channels, being dammed up, flowed back upon my breast. Pleasure had disgusted me, and the only ambition I had yet courted and pursued had palled upon me still more. I say, the only ambition, — for as yet that which is of the loftier and more lasting kind had not afforded me a temptation; and the hope which had borne the name and rank of ambition had been the hope rather to glitter than to rise.

These passions, not yet experienced when I lost Isora, had afforded me at that period a ready comfort and a sure engrossment. And, in satisfying the hasty jealousies of my temper, in deeming Isora unworthy, and Gerald my rival, I naturally aroused in my pride a dexterous orator as well as a firm ally. Pride not only strengthened my passions, it also persuaded them by its voice; and it was not till the languid yet deep stillness of sated wishes and palled desires fell upon me, that the low accent of a love still surviving at my heart made itself heard in answer.

I now began to take a different view of Isora's conduct. I now began to doubt, where I had formerly believed; and the doubt, first allied to fear, gradually brightened into hope. Of Gerald's rivalry, at least of his identity with Barnard, and, consequently, of his power over Isora, there was, and there could be, no feeling short of certainty. But of what nature was that power? Had not Isora assured me that it was not love? Why should I disbelieve her? Nay, did she not love myself? Had not her cheek blushed and her hand trembled when I addressed her? Were these signs the counterfeits of love? Were they not rather of that heart's dye which no skill *can* counterfeit? She had declared that she could not, that she could never be mine: she had declared so with a fearful earnestness which seemed to annihilate hope; but had she not also, in the same meeting, confessed that I was dear to her? Had not her lip given me a sweeter and a more eloquent assurance of that confession than words? — and could hope perish while love existed? She had left me, — she had bid me farewell forever; but that was no proof of a want of love or of her unworthiness. Gerald, or Barnard, evidently possessed an influence over father as well as child. Their departure from — might have been occasioned by him, and she might have deplored while she could not resist it: or she might *not* even have deplored; nay, she might have desired, she might have advised it, for my sake as well as hers, were she thoroughly convinced that the union of our loves was impossible.

But, then, of what nature could be this mysterious authority which Gerald possessed over her? That which he possessed over the sire, political schemes might account for; but these, surely, could not have

much weight for the daughter. This, indeed, must still remain doubtful and unaccounted for. One presumption, that Gerald was either no favored lover or that he was unacquainted with her retreat, might be drawn from his continued residence at Devereux Court. If he loved Isora and knew her present abode, would he not have sought her? Could he, I thought, live away from that bright face, if once allowed to behold it? unless, indeed (terrible thought!), there hung over it the dimness of guilty familiarity, and indifference had been the offspring of possession. But was that delicate and virgin face, where changes with every moment coursed each other, harmonious to the changes of the mind, as shadows in the valley reflect the clouds of heaven, — was that face, so ingenuous, so girlishly revelant of all — even of the slightest, the most transitory — emotion, the face of one hardened in deceit and inured to shame? The countenance is, it is true, but a faithless mirror; but what man that has studied women will not own that there is, at least while the down of first youth is not brushed away, in the eye and cheek of a zoned and untainted Innocence that which survives not even the fruition of a lawful love, and has no (nay, not even a shadowed and imperfect) likeness in the face of Guilt? Then, too, had any worldlier or mercenary sentiment entered her breast respecting me, would Isora have flown from the suit of the eldest scion of the rich house of Devereux; and would she, poor and destitute, the daughter of an alien and an exile, — would she have spontaneously relinquished any hope of obtaining that alliance which maidens of the loftiest houses of England had not disdained to desire? Thus confused and incoherent, but thus yearning fondly towards her image and its imagined purity, did my

thoughts daily and hourly array themselves; and, in proportion as I suffered common ties to drop from me one by one, those thoughts clung the more tenderly to that which, though severed from the rich argosy of former love, was still indissolubly attached to the anchor of its hope.

It was during this period of revived affection that I received the following letter from my uncle: —

I thank thee for thy long letter, my dear boy; I read it over three times with great delight. Od's fish, Morton, you are a sad Pickle, I fear, and seem to know all the ways of the town as well as your old uncle did some thirty years ago! 'T is a very pretty acquaintance with human nature that your letters display. You put me in mind of little Sid, who was just about your height, and who had just such a pretty, shrewd way of expressing himself in simile and point. Ah, it is easy to see that you have profited by your old uncle's conversation, and that Farquhar and Etherege were not studied for nothing.

But I have sad news for thee, my child, or rather it is sad for me to tell thee my tidings. It is sad for the old birds to linger in their nest when the young ones take wing and leave them; but it is merry for the young birds to get away from the dull old tree and frisk it in the sunshine, — merry for them to get mates, and have young themselves. Now, do not think, Morton, that by speaking of mates and young, I am going to tell thee thy brothers are already married; nay, there is time enough for those things, and I am not friendly to early weddings, nor, to speak truly, a marvellous great admirer of that holy ceremony at any age; for the which there may be private reasons, too long to relate to thee now. Moreover, I fear my young day was a wicked time, — a heinous wicked time, and we were wont to laugh at the wedded state, until, body of me, some of us found it no laughing matter.

But to return, Morton, — to return to thy brothers, — they have both left me; and the house seems to me not the

good old house it did when ye were all about me; and, somehow or other, I look now oftener at the churchyard than I was wont to do. You are all gone now, — all shot up and become men; and when your old uncle sees you no more, and recollects that all his own contemporaries are out of the world, he cannot help saying, as William Temple, poor fellow, once prettily enough said, “Methinks it seems an impertinence in me to be still alive.” You went first, Morton, and I missed you more than I cared to say; but you were always a kind boy to those you loved, and you wrote the old knight merry letters, that made him laugh, and think he was grown young again (faith, boy, that was a jolly story of the three Squires at Button’s), — and once a week comes your packet, well filled, as if you did not think it a task to make me happy, which your handwriting always does; nor a shame to my gray hairs that I take pleasure in the same things that please thee! So, thou seest, my child, that I have got through thy absence pretty well, save that I have had no one to read thy letters to; for Gerald and thou are still jealous of each other, — a great sin in thee, Morton, which I prithee to reform. And Aubrey, poor lad, is a little too rigid, considering his years, and it looks not well in the dear boy to shake his head at the follies of his uncle. And as to thy mother, Morton, I read her one of thy letters, and she said thou wert a graceless reprobate to think so much of this wicked world, and to write so familiarly to thine aged relative. Now, I am not a young man, Morton; but the word “aged” has a sharp sound with it when it comes from a lady’s mouth.

Well, after thou hadst been gone a month, Aubrey and Gerald, as I wrote thee word long since, in the last letter I wrote thee with my own hand, made a tour together for a little while, and that was a hard stroke on me. But after a week or two Gerald returned; and I went out in my chair to see the dear boy shoot, — ’sdeath, Morton, he handles the gun well. And then Aubrey returned alone; but he looked pined and moping, and shut himself up, and as thou dost love him so, I did not like to tell thee till now, when he is quite well, that he alarmed me much for him. He is too much addicted

to his devotions, poor child, and seems to forget that the hope of the next world ought to make us happy in this. Well, Morton, at last, two months ago, Aubrey left us again, and Gerald last week set off on a tour through the sister kingdom, as it is called. Faith, boy, if Scotland and England are sister kingdoms, 't is a thousand pities for Scotland that they are not co-heiresses !

I should have told thee of this news before, but I have had, as thou knowest, the gout so villanously in my hand that till t' other day I have not held a pen, and old Nicholls, my amanuensis, is but a poor scribe ; and I did not love to let the dog write to thee on all our family affairs, — especially as I have a secret to tell thee which makes me plaguy uneasy. Thou must know, Morton, that after thy departure Gerald asked me for thy rooms; and though I did not like that any one else should have what belonged to thee, yet I have always had a foolish antipathy to say, “No !” So thy brother had them, on condition to leave them exactly as they were, and to yield them to thee whenever thou shouldst return to claim them. Well, Morton, when Gerald went on his tour with thy youngest brother, old Nicholls — you know 't is a garrulous fellow — told me one night that his son Hugh, — you remember Hugh, a thin youth, and a tall, — lingering by the beach one evening, saw a man, wrapped in a cloak, come out of the castle cave, unmoor one of the boats, and push off to the little island opposite. Hugh swears by more than yea and nay, that the man was Father Montreuil. Now, Morton, this made me very uneasy, and I saw why thy brother Gerald wanted thy rooms, which communicate so snugly with the sea. So I told Nicholls, slyly, to have the great iron gate at the mouth of the passage carefully locked ; and when it was locked, I had an iron plate put over the whole lock, that the lean Jesuit might not creep even through the keyhole. Thy brother returned, and I told him a tale of the smugglers, who have really been too daring of late, and insisted on the door being left as I had ordered; and I told him, moreover, though not as if I had suspected his communication with the priest, that I interdicted all further converse with that limb of the

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church. Thy brother heard me with an indifferently bad grace ; but I was peremptory, and the thing was agreed on.

Well, child, the day before Gerald last left us, I went to take leave of him in his own room, — to tell thee the truth, I had forgotten his travelling expenses, — when I was on the stairs of the tower, I heard — by the Lord, I did — Montreuil's voice in the outer room, as plainly as ever I heard it at prayers. Od's fish, Morton, I was an angered, and I made so much haste to the door that my foot slipped by the way ; thy brother heard me fall, and came out ; but I looked at him as I never looked at thee, Morton, and entered the room. Lo, the priest was not there ; I searched both chambers in vain ; so I made thy brother lift up the trap-door, and kindle a lamp, and I searched the room below, and the passage. The priest was invisible. Thou knowest, Morton, that there is only one egress in the passage, and that was locked, as I said before ; so where the devil — the devil indeed — could thy tutor have escaped ? He could not have passed me on the stairs without my seeing him ; he could not have leaped the window without breaking his neck ; he could not have got out of the passage without making himself a current of air — Od's fish, Morton, this thing might puzzle a wiser man than thine uncle. Gerald affected to be mighty indignant at my suspicions ; but, God forgive him, I saw he was playing a part. A man does not write plays, my child, without being keen-sighted in these little intrigues ; and, moreover, it is impossible I could have mistaken thy tutor's voice, which, to do it justice, is musical enough, and is the most singular voice I ever heard, — unless little Sid's be excepted.

Apropos of little Sid. I remember that in the Mall, when I was walking there alone, three weeks after my marriage, De Grammont and Sid joined me. I was in a melancholic mood, — ('sdeath, Morton, marriage tames a man as water tames mice !), — “Aha, Sir William,” cried Sedley, “thou hast a cloud on thee, — prithee now brighten it away : see, thy wife shines on thee from the other end of the Mall.” “Ah, talk not to a dying man of his physic !” said Grammont [that Grammont was a shocking rogue, Morton !] — “Prithee, Sir

William, what is the chief characteristic of wedlock? is it a state of war or of peace?" "Oh, peace, to be sure!" cried Sedley, "and Sir William and his lady carry with them the emblem." "How?" cried I; for I do assure thee, Morton, I was of a different turn of mind. "How?" said Sid, gravely; "why, the emblem of peace is the cornucopia, which your lady and you equitably divide, — she carries the copia, and you the cor —" Nay, Morton, nay, I cannot finish the jest; for, after all, it was a sorry thing in little Sid, whom I had befriended like a brother, with heart and purse, to wound me so cuttingly; but 't is the way with your jesters.

Od's fish, now, how I have got out of my story! Well, I did not go back to my room, Morton, till I had looked to the outside of the iron door, and seen that the plate was as firm as ever; so now you have the whole of the matter. Gerald went the next day, and I fear me much lest he should already be caught in some Jacobite trap. Write me thy advice on the subject. Meanwhile I have taken the precaution to have the trap-door removed, and the aperture strongly boarded over.

But 't is time for me to give over. I have been four days on this letter, for the gout comes now to me oftener than it did, and I do not know when I may again write to thee with my own hand; so I resolved I would e'en empty my whole budget at once. Thy mother is well and blooming; she is, at the present, abstractedly employed in a prodigious piece of tapestry, which old Nicholls informs me is the wonder of all the women.

Heaven bless thee, my child! Take care of thyself, and drink moderately. It is hurtful, at thy age, to drink above a gallon or so at a sitting. Heaven bless thee again, and when the weather gets warmer, thou must come with thy kind looks, to make me feel at home again. At present the country wears a cheerless face, and everything about us is harsh and frosty, except the blunt, good-for-nothing heart of thine uncle, and that, winter or summer, is always warm to thee.

WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

P. S. — I thank thee heartily for the little spaniel of the new breed thou gottest me from the Duchess of Marlborough.

It has the prettiest red and white, and the blackest eyes possible. But poor Ponto is as jealous as a wife three years married, and I cannot bear the old hound to be vexed, so I shall transfer the little creature, its rival, to thy mother.

This letter, tolerably characteristic of the blended simplicity, penetration, and overflowing kindness of the writer, occasioned me much anxious thought.

There was no doubt in my mind but that Gerald and Montreuil were engaged in some intrigue for the exiled family. The disguised name which the former assumed; the state reasons which D'Alvarez confessed that Bernard, or rather Gerald, had for concealment, and which proved, at least, that some state plot in which Gerald was engaged was known to the Spaniard, joined to those expressions of Montreuil, which did all but own a design for the restoration of the deposed Line; and the power which I knew he possessed over Gerald, whose mind, at once bold and facile, would love the adventure of the intrigue, and yield to Montreuil's suggestions on its nature, — these combined circumstances left me in no doubt upon a subject deeply interesting to the honor of our house, and the very life of one of its members. Nothing, however, for me to do, calculated to prevent or impede the designs of Montreuil and the danger of Gerald, occurred to me. Eager alike in my hatred and my love, I said inly, "What matters it whether one whom the ties of blood never softened towards me, with whom, from my childhood upwards, I have wrestled as with an enemy, — what matters it whether he win fame or death in the perilous game he has engaged in?" And turning from this most generous and most brotherly view of the subject, I began only to think whether the search or the society of Isora also influenced Gerald

in his absence from home. After a fruitless and inconclusive meditation on that head, my thoughts took a less selfish turn, and dwelt with all the softness of pity and the anxiety of love upon the morbid temperament and ascetic devotions of Aubrey. What, for one already so abstracted from the enjoyments of earth, so darkened by superstitious misconceptions of the true nature of God, and the true objects of his creatures, — what could be anticipated but wasted powers and a perverted life? Alas! when will men perceive the difference between religion and priestcraft? When will they perceive that reason, so far from extinguishing religion by a more gaudy light, sheds on it all its lustre? It is fabled that the first legislator of the Peruvians received from the deity a golden rod, with which in his wanderings he was to strike the earth, until in some destined spot the earth entirely absorbed it, and there — and there alone — was he to erect a temple to the Divinity. What is this fable but the cloak of an inestimable moral? Our reason is the rod of gold; the vast world of truth gives the soil, which it is perpetually to sound; and only where without resistance the soil receives the rod which guided and supported us, will our Altar be sacred and our worship be accepted.

CHAPTER X.

Being a short Chapter, containing a most important Event.

SIR WILLIAM'S letter was still fresh in my mind, when, for want of some less noble quarter wherein to bestow my tediousness, I repaired to St. John. As I crossed the hall to his apartment, two men, just dismissed from his presence, passed me rapidly: one was unknown to me, but there was no mistaking the other, — it was Montreuil. I was greatly startled; the priest not appearing to notice me, and conversing in a whispered yet seemingly vehement tone with his companion, hurried on, and vanished through the street-door. I entered St. John's room; he was alone, and received me with his usual gayety.

"Pardon me, Mr. Secretary," said I; "but if not a question of state, do inform me what you know respecting the taller one of those two gentlemen who have just quitted you."

"It is a question of state, my dear Devereux; so my answer must be brief, — very little."

"You know who he is?"

"Yes, a Jesuit, and a marvellously shrewd one, — the Abbé Montreuil."

"He was my tutor."

"Ah! so I have heard."

"And your acquaintance with him is positively and *bonâ fide* of a state nature?"

"Positively and *bonâ fide*."

"I could tell you something of him; he is certainly in the service of the Court at St. Germain's, and a terrible plotter on this side the Channel."

"Possibly; but I wish to receive no information respecting him."

One great virtue of business did St. John possess, and I have never known any statesman who possessed it so eminently: it was the discreet distinction between friends of the statesman and friends of the man. Much and intimately as I knew St. John, I could never glean from him a single secret of a state nature, until, indeed, at a later period, I leagued myself to a portion of his public schemes. Accordingly I found him, at the present moment, perfectly impregnable to my inquiries; and it was not till I knew Montreuil's companion was that celebrated intrigant, the Abbé Gaultier, that I ascertained the exact nature of the priest's business with St. John, and the exact motive of the civilities he had received from Abigail Masham.¹ Being at last forced, despairingly, to give over the attempt on his discretion, I suffered St. John to turn the conversation upon other topics; and as these were not much to the existent humor of my mind, I soon rose to depart.

"Stay, Count," said St. John; "shall you ride to-day?"

"If you will bear me company."

"*Volontiers*. To say the truth, I was about to ask you to canter your bay horse with me first to Spring

¹ Namely, that Count Devereux ascertained the priest's communications and overtures from the chevalier. The precise extent of Bolingbroke's secret negotiations with the exiled prince is still one of the darkest portions of the history of that time. That negotiations were carried on, both by Harley and by St. John, very largely and very closely, I need not say that there is no doubt. — Ed.

Gardens,¹ where I have a promise to make to the director; and secondly, on a mission of charity to a poor foreigner of rank and birth, who, in his profound ignorance of this country, thought it right to enter into a plot with some wise heads, and to reveal it to some foolish tongues, who brought it to us with as much clatter as if it were a second gunpowder project. I easily brought him off that scrape, and I am now going to give him a caution for the future. Poor gentleman! I hear that he is grievously distressed in pecuniary matters, and I always had a kindness for exiles. Who knows but that a state of exile may be our own fate? and this alien is sprung from a race as haughty as that of St. John or of Devereux. The *res angusta domi* must gall him sorely!"

"True," said I, slowly. "What may be the name of the foreigner?"

'Why, — complain not hereafter that I do not trust you in state matters, — I will divulge: D'Alvarez, — Don Diego, — an hidalgo of the best blood of Andalusia; and not unworthy of it, I fancy, in the virtues of fighting, though he may be in those of counsel. But — Heaven! Devereux, you seem ill!"

"No, no! Have you ever seen this man?"

"Never!"

At this word a thrill of joy shot across me, for I knew St. John's fame for gallantry, and I was suspicious of the motives of his visit.

"St. John, I know this Spaniard, — I know him well and intimately. Could you not commission me to do your errand and deliver your caution? Relief from me he might accept; from you, as a stranger, pride might forbid it; and you would really confer on me a

¹ Vauxhall.

personal and an essential kindness, if you would give me so fair an opportunity to confer kindness upon him."

"Very well; I am delighted to oblige you in any way. Take his direction; you see his abode is in a very pitiful suburb. Tell him from me that he is quite safe at present; but tell him also to avoid henceforward all imprudence, all connection with priests, plotters, *et tous ces gens-là*, as he values his personal safety, or at least his continuance in this most hospitable country. It is not from every wood that we make a Mercury, nor from every brain that we can carve a Mercury's genius of intrigue."

"Nobody ought to be better skilled in the materials requisite for such productions than Mr. Secretary St. John!" said I; "and now, adieu."

"Adieu, if you will not ride with me. We meet at Sir William Wyndham's to-morrow."

Masking my agitation till I was alone, I rejoiced when I found myself in the open streets. I summoned a hackney-coach, and drove as rapidly as the vehicle would permit, to the petty and obscure suburb to which St. John had directed me. The coach stopped at the door of a very humble but not absolutely wretched abode. I knocked at the door. A woman opened it, and, in answer to my inquiries, told me that the poor foreign gentleman was very ill, very ill indeed, — had suffered a paralytic stroke, — not expected to live. His daughter was with him now; would see no one, — even Mr. Barnard had been denied admission.

At that name my feelings, shocked and stunned at first by the unexpected intelligence of the poor Spaniard's danger, felt a sudden and fierce revulsion. I combated it. This is no time, I thought, for any

jealous, for any selfish emotion. If I can serve her, if I can relieve her father, let me be contented. "She will see me," I said aloud; and I slipped some money in the woman's hand. "I am an old friend of the family, and I shall not be an unwelcome intruder on the sick-room of the sufferer."

"Intruder, sir! — bless you, the poor gentleman is quite speechless and insensible."

At hearing this, I could refrain no longer. Isora's disconsolate, solitary, destitute condition broke irresistibly upon me, and all scruple of more delicate and formal nature vanished at once. I ascended the stairs, followed by the old woman. She stopped me by the threshold of a room on the second floor, and whispered, "*There!*" I paused an instant, — collected breath and courage, and entered. The room was partially darkened. The curtains were drawn closely around the bed. By a table, on which stood two or three phials of medicine, I beheld Isora, listening with an eager, a *most* eager and intent face, to a man whose garb betrayed his healing profession, and who, laying a finger on the outstretched palm of his other hand, appeared giving his precise instructions, and uttering that oracular breath which — mere human words to him — was a message of fate itself, a fiat on which hung all that makes life life to his trembling and devout listener. Monarchs of earth, ye have not so supreme a power over woe and happiness as one village leech! As he turned to leave her, she drew from a most slender purse a few petty coins, and I saw that she muttered some words indicative of the shame of poverty, as she tremblingly tendered them to the outstretched palm. Twice did that palm close and open on the paltry sum; and the third time the native instinct of the heart over-

came the later impulse of the profession. The limb of Galen drew back, and shaking with a gentle oscillation his capitalian honors, he laid the money softly on the table, and buttoning up the pouch of his nether garment, as if to resist temptation, he pressed the poor hand still extended towards him, and bowing over it with a kind respect, for which I did long to approach and kiss his most withered and undainty cheek, he turned quickly round, and almost fell against me in the abstracted hurry of his exit.

“Hush!” said I, softly. “What hope of your patient?”

The leech glanced at me meaningly, and I whispered to him to wait for me below. Isora had not yet seen me. It is a notable distinction in the feelings, that all but the solitary one of grief sharpen into exquisite edge the keenness of the senses, but grief blunts them to a most dull obtuseness. I hesitated now to come forward; and so I stood, hat in hand, by the door, and not knowing that the tears streamed down my cheeks as I fixed my gaze upon Isora. She, too, stood still, just where the leech had left her, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, and her head drooping. The right hand which the man had pressed had sunk slowly and heavily by her side, with the small, snowy fingers half closed over the palm. There is no describing the despondency which the listless position of that hand spoke; and the left hand lay with a like indolence of sorrow on the table, with one finger outstretched and pointing towards the phials, just as it had, some moments before, seconded the injunctions of the prim physician. Well, for my part, if I were a painter I would come now and then to a sick-chamber for a study!

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At last Isora, with a very quiet gesture of self-recovery, moved towards the bed, and the next moment I was by her side. If my life depended on it, I could not write one, no, not *one* syllable more of this scene.

CHAPTER XI.

Containing more than any other Chapter in the Second Book of this History.

My first proposal was to remove the patient, with all due care and gentleness, to a better lodging, and a district more convenient for the visits of the most eminent physicians. When I expressed this wish to Isora, she looked at me long and wistfully, and then burst into tears. "You will not deceive us," said she, "and I accept your kindness at once; from *him* I rejected the same offer."

"Him? Of whom speak you? — this Barnard, or rather — But I know him!" A startling expression passed over Isora's speaking face.

"Know him!" she cried, interrupting me; "you do not, — you cannot!"

"Take courage, dearest Isora, — if I may so dare to call you, — take courage; it is fearful to have a rival in that quarter, but I am prepared for it. This Barnard, tell me again, do you love him?"

"Love? — O God, no!"

"What, then? Do you still fear him? — fear him, too, protected by the unsleeping eye and the vigilant hand of a love like mine?"

"Yes!" she said falteringly, "I fear for *you*!"

"Me!" I cried, laughing scornfully, — "me! Nay, dearest, there breathes not that man whom you need fear on *my* account. But, answer me, is not —"

"For Heaven's sake, for mercy's sake!" cried Isora, eagerly, "do not question me, — I may not tell you who or what this man is; I am bound, by a most solemn oath, never to divulge that secret."

"I care not," said I, calmly; "I want no confirmation of my knowledge, — this masked rival is my own brother!"

I fixed my eyes full on Isora while I said this, and she quailed beneath my gaze; her cheek, her lips, were utterly without color, and an expression of sickening and keen anguish was graven upon her face. She made no answer.

"Yes!" resumed I, bitterly, "it is my brother: be it so, — I am prepared; but if you can, Isora, say one word to deny it."

Isora's tongue seemed literally to cleave to her mouth; at last, with a violent effort, she muttered: "I have told you, Morton, that I am bound by oath not to divulge this secret; nor may I breathe a single syllable calculated to do so, — if I deny one name, you may question me no more; and therefore to deny one is a breach of my oath. But beware!" she added, vehemently, "oh, beware how your suspicions — mere vague, baseless suspicions — criminate a brother; and, above all, whomsoever you believe to be the real being under this disguised name, as you value your life and therefore mine, breathe not to him a syllable of your belief."

I was so struck with the energy with which this was said that after a short pause I rejoined in an altered tone, —

"I cannot believe that I have aught against life to fear from a brother's hand; but I will promise you to guard against latent danger. But is your oath so per-

emptory that you cannot deny even one name? — if not, and you *can* deny this, I swear to you that I will never question you upon another.”

Again a fierce convulsion wrung the lip and distorted the perfect features of Isora. She remained silent for some moments, and then murmured: “ My oath forbids me even that single answer, — tempt me no more: now and forever I am mute upon this subject.”

Perhaps some slight and momentary anger or doubt or suspicion betrayed itself upon my countenance; for Isora, after looking upon me long and mournfully, said in a quiet but melancholy tone: “ I see your thoughts, and I do not reproach you for them: it is natural that you should think ill of one whom this mystery surrounds, — one, too, placed under such circumstances of humiliation and distrust. I have lived long in your country, — I have seen, for the last few months, much of its inhabitants; I have studied, too, the works which profess to unfold its national and peculiar character; I know that you have a distrust of the people of other climates; I know that you are cautious and full of suspicious vigilance, even in your commerce with each other; I know, too ” (and Isora’s heart swelled visibly as she spoke), “ that poverty itself, in the eyes of your commercial countrymen, is a crime, and that they rarely feel confidence or place faith in those who are unhappy; — why, Count Devereux, why should I require more of you than of the rest of your nation? Why should you think better of the penniless and friendless girl, the degraded exile, the victim of doubt, which is so often the disguise of guilt, than any other — any one even among my own people — would think of one so mercifully deprived of all the decent and appropriate barriers by which a maiden should be surrounded? No, no;

leave me as you found me, — leave my poor father where you see him: any place will do for us to die in.”

“Isora!” I said, clasping her in my arms, “you do not know me yet. Had I found you in prosperity and in the world’s honor; had I wooed you in your father’s halls, and girt around with the friends and kinsmen of your race, — I might have pressed for more than you will now tell me, I might have indulged suspicion where I perceived mystery, and I might not have loved as I love you now! *Now*, Isora, in misfortune, in destitution, I place without reserve my whole heart — its trust, its zeal, its devotion — in your keeping; come evil or good, storm or sunshine, I am yours wholly and forever. Reject me if you will, I will return to you again; and never, never, save from my own eyes or your own lips, will I receive a single evidence detracting from your purity or — Isora, mine own, own Isora, may I not add also — from your love?”

“Too, too generous!” murmured Isora, struggling passionately with her tears; “may Heaven forsake me if ever I am ungrateful to thee! and believe — believe, that if love, more fond, more true, more devoted than woman ever felt before, can repay you, you shall be repaid!”

Why, at that moment, did my heart leap so joyously within me? — why did I say inly, “The treasure I have so long yearned for is found at last: we have met, and through the waste of years we will walk together and never part again”? Why, at that moment of bliss, did I not rather feel a foretaste of the coming woe? Oh, blind and capricious Fate, that gives us a presentiment at one while, and withholds it at another! Knowledge, and Prudence, and calculating Foresight, what are ye? — warnings unto others, not ourselves. Reason is a

lamp which sheddeth afar a glorious and general light, but leaveth all that is around it in darkness and in gloom! We foresee and foretell the destiny of others, — we march credulous and benighted to our own; and like Laocoön, from the very altars by which we stand as the soothsayer and the priest, creep forth, unsuspected and undreamed of, the serpents which are fated to destroy us!

That very day, then, Alvarez was removed to a lodging more worthy of his birth, and more calculated to afford hope of his recovery. He bore the removal without any evident sign of fatigue; but his dreadful malady had taken away both speech and sense, and he was already more than half the property of the grave. I sent, however, for the best medical advice which London could afford. They met, prescribed, and left the patient just as they found him. I know not, in the progress of science, what physicians may be to posterity; but in my time they are false witnesses subpoenaed against Death, whose testimony always tells less in favor of the plaintiff than the defendant.

Before we left the poor Spaniard's former lodging, and when I was on the point of giving some instructions to the landlady respecting the place to which the few articles of property belonging to Don Diego and Isora were to be moved, Isora made me a sign to be silent, which I obeyed. "Pardon me," said she, afterwards; "but I confess that I am anxious our next residence should not be known, — should not be subject to the intrusion of — of this —"

"Barnard, as you call him. I understand you; be it so!" and accordingly I enjoined the goods to be sent to my own house, whence they were removed to Don Diego's new abode; and I took especial care to leave with

the good lady no clew to discover Alvarez and his daughter, otherwise than *through me*. The pleasure afforded me of directing Gerald's attention to myself, I could not resist. "Tell Mr. Barnard, when he calls," said I, "that only through Count Morton Devereux will he hear of Don Diego d'Alvarez, and the lady his daughter."

"I will, your honor," said the landlady; and then, looking at me more attentively, she added, "Bless me! now when you speak, there is a very strong likeness between yourself and Mr. Barnard."

I recoiled as if an adder had stung me, and hurried into the coach to support the patient, who was already placed there.

Now, then, my daily post was by the bed of disease and suffering; in the chamber of death was my vow of love ratified, and in sadness and in sorrow was it returned. But it is in such scenes that the deepest, the most endearing, and the most holy species of the passion is engendered. As I heard Isora's low voice tremble with the suspense of one who watches over the hourly severing of the affection of Nature and of early years; as I saw her light step flit by the pillow which she smoothed, and her cheek alternately flush and fade, in watching the wants which she relieved; as I marked her mute, her unwearying tenderness, breaking into a thousand nameless but mighty cares, and pervading, like an angel's vigilance, every — yea, the minutest — course into which it flowed, — did I not behold her in that sphere in which woman is most lovely, and in which love itself consecrates its admiration, and purifies its most ardent desires? That was not a time for our hearts to speak audibly to each other; but we felt that they grew closer and closer, and we asked not for the

poor eloquence of words. But over this scene let me not linger.

One morning, as I was proceeding on foot to Isora's, I perceived, on the opposite side of the way, Montreuil and Gerald: they were conversing eagerly; they both saw me. Montreuil made a slight, quiet, and dignified inclination of the head; Gerald colored and hesitated. I thought he was about to leave his companion and address me; but, with a haughty and severe air, I passed on; and Gerald, as if stung by my demeanor, bit his lip vehemently, and followed my example. A few minutes afterwards I felt an inclination to regret that I had not afforded him an opportunity of addressing me. "I might," thought I, "have then taunted him with his persecution of Isora, and defied him to execute those threats against me in which it is evident, from her apprehensions for my safety, that he indulged."

I had not, however, much leisure for these thoughts. When I arrived at the lodgings of Alvarez, I found that a great change had taken place in his condition; he had recovered speech, though imperfectly, and testified a return to sense. I flew upstairs with a light step, to congratulate Isora. She met me at the door. "Hush!" she whispered; "my father sleeps!" But she did not speak with the animation I had anticipated.

"What is the matter, dearest?" said I, following her into another apartment; "you seem sad, and your eyes are red with tears, which are not, methinks, entirely the tears of joy at this happy change in your father?"

"I am marked out for suffering," returned Isora, more keenly than she was wont to speak. I pressed her to explain her meaning; she hesitated at first, but at length confessed that her father had always been anxious for

her marriage with the *soi-disant* Barnard, and that his first words on his recovery had been to press her to consent to his wishes.

"My poor father," said she, weepingly, "speaks and thinks only for my fancied good; but his senses as yet are only recovered in part, and he cannot even understand me when I speak of you. 'I shall die,' he said, — 'I shall die, and you will be left on the wide world!' I in vain endeavored to explain to him that I should have a protector. He fell asleep, muttering those words, and with tears in his eyes."

"Does he know as much of this Barnard as you do?" said I.

"Heavens, no! or he would never have pressed me to marry one so wicked."

"Does he know even who he is?"

"Yes!" said Isora, after a pause; "but he has not known it long."

Here the physician joined us, and taking me aside, informed me that, as he had foreboded, sleep had been the harbinger of death, and that Don Diego was no more. I broke the news as gently as I could to Isora; but her grief was far more violent than I could have anticipated; and nothing seemed to cut her so deeply to the heart as the thought that his last wish had been one with which she had not complied and could never comply.

I pass over the first days of mourning. I come to the one after Don Diego's funeral. I had been with Isora in the morning. I left her for a few hours, and returned at the first dusk of evening with some books and music, which I vainly hoped she might recur to for a momentary abstraction from her grief. I dismissed my carriage, with the intention of walking home, and, addressing the

woman-servant who admitted me, inquired, as was my wont, after Isora. "She has been very ill," replied the woman, "ever since the strange gentleman left her."

"The strange gentleman?"

Yes, he had forced his way upstairs, despite of the denial the servant had been ordered to give to all strangers. He had entered Isora's room; and the woman, in answer to my urgent inquiries, added that she had heard his voice raised to a loud and harsh key in the apartment; he had stayed there about a quarter of an hour, and had then hurried out, seemingly in great disorder and agitation.

"What description of man was he?" I asked.

The woman answered that he was mantled from head to foot in his cloak, which was richly laced, and his hat was looped with diamonds, but slouched over that part of his face which the collar of his cloak did not hide, so that she could not further describe him than as one of a haughty and abrupt bearing, and evidently belonging to the higher ranks.

Convinced that Gerald had been the intruder, I hastened up the stairs to Isora. She received me with a sickly and faint smile, and endeavored to conceal the traces of her tears.

"So," said I, "this insolent persecutor of yours has discovered your abode, and again insulted or intimidated you. He shall do so no more! I will seek him to-morrow; and no affinity of blood shall prevent —"

"Morton, dear Morton!" cried Isora, in great alarm; and yet with a certain determination stamped upon her features, "hear me! It is true this man has been here; it is true that, fearful and terrible as he is, he has agitated and alarmed me: but it was only for you, Morton, — by the Holy Virgin, it was only for you!

‘The moment,’ said he, and his voice ran shiveringly through my heart, like a dagger, — ‘the moment Morton Devereux discovers who is his rival, that moment his death-warrant is irrevocably sealed!’ ”

“Arrogant boaster!” I cried; and my blood burned with the intense rage which a much slighter cause would have kindled, from the natural fierceness of my temper. “Does he think my life is at his bidding, to allow or to withhold? Unhand me, Isora, unhand me! I tell you I will seek him this moment, and dare him to do his worst!”

“Do so,” said Isora, calmly, and releasing her hold, — “do so; but hear me first: the moment you breathe to him your suspicions, you place an eternal barrier betwixt yourself and me! Pledge me your faith that you will never, while I live at least, reveal to him — to any one whom you suspect — your reproach, your defiance, your knowledge, nay, not even your slightest suspicion of his identity with my persecutor. Promise me this, Morton Devereux, or I, in my turn, before that crucifix, whose sanctity we both acknowledge and adore, — that crucifix which has descended to my race for three unbroken centuries, — which for my departed father, in the solemn vow and in the death agony, has still been a witness, a consolation, and a pledge between the soul and its Creator, — by that crucifix which my dying mother clasped to her bosom, when she committed me, an infant, to the care of that Heaven which hears and records forever our lightest word, — I swear that I will never be yours!”

“Isora!” said I, awed and startled, yet struggling against the impression her energy made upon me, “you know not to what you pledge yourself, nor what you require of me. If I do not seek out this man, — if I

do not expose to him my knowledge of his pursuit and unhallowed persecution of you; if I do not effectually prohibit and prevent their continuance, — think well, what security have I for your future peace of mind, nay, even for the safety of your honor or your life? A man thus bold, daring, and unbaffled in his pursuit, thus vigilant and skilful in his selection of time and occasion, so that, despite my constant and anxious endeavor to meet him in your presence, I have never been able to do so, — from a man, I say, thus pertinacious in resolution, thus crafty in disguise, what may you not dread when you leave him utterly fearless by the license of impunity? Think too, again, Isora, that the mystery dishonors as much as the danger menaces. Is it meet that my betrothed and my future bride should be subjected to these secret and terrible visitations, — visitations of a man professing himself her lover, and evincing the vehemence of his passion by that of his pursuit? Isora, Isora, you have weighed not these things; you know not what you demand of me.”

“I do,” answered Isora; “I do know all that I demand of you. I demand of you only to preserve your life.”

“How!” said I, impatiently; “cannot my hand preserve my life? and is it for you, the daughter of a line of warriors, to ask your lover and your husband to shrink from a single foe?”

“No, Morton,” answered Isora. “Were you going to battle, I would gird on your sword myself; were, too, this man other than he is, and you were about to meet him in open contest, I would not wrong you, nor degrade your betrothed, by a fear. But I know my persecutor well, — fierce, unrelenting, dreadful in his dark and ungovernable passions as he is, he has not the

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courage to confront you. I fear not the open foe, but the lurking and sure assassin. His very earnestness to avoid you, the precautions he has taken, are alone sufficient to convince you that he dreads personally to oppose your claim or to vindicate himself."

"Then what have I to fear?"

"Everything! Do you not know that from men at once fierce, crafty, and shrinking from bold violence, the stuff for assassins is always made? And if I wanted surer proof of his designs than inference, his oath — it rings in my ears now — is sufficient: 'The moment Morton Devereux discovers who is his rival, that moment his death-warrant is irrevocably sealed.' Morton, I demand your promise, or, though my heart break, I will record my own vow."

"Stay, stay!" I said, in anger and in sorrow; "were I to promise this, and for my own safety hazard yours, what could you deem me?"

"Fear not for me, Morton," answered Isora; "you have no cause. I tell you that this man, villain as he is, ever leaves me humbled and abased. Do not think that in all times and all scenes I am the foolish and weak creature you behold me now. Remember that you said rightly I was the daughter of a line of warriors; and I have that within me which will not shame my descent."

"But, dearest, your resolution may avail you for a time; but it cannot forever baffle the hardened nature of a man. I know my own sex, and I know my own ferocity, were it once aroused."

"But, Morton, you do not know *m*," said Isora, proudly; and her face, as she spoke, was set and even stern. "I am only the coward when I think of you. A word, a look of mine, can abash this man; or, if it

could not, I am never without a weapon to defend myself or — or — ” Isora’s voice, before firm and collected, now faltered, and a deep blush flowed over the marble paleness of her face.

“ Or what? ” said I, anxiously.

“ Or thee, Morton, ” murmured Isora, tenderly, and withdrawing her eyes from mine.

The tone, the look that accompanied these words, melted me at once. I rose, I clasped Isora to my heart.

“ You are a strange compound, my own fairy queen; but these lips, this cheek, those eyes, are not fit features for a heroine. ”

“ Morton, if I had less determination in my heart, I could not love you so well. ”

“ But tell me, ” I whispered with a smile, “ where is this weapon on which you rely so strongly? ”

“ Here! ” answered Isora, blushing; and, extricating herself from me, she showed me a small, two-edged dagger, which she wore carefully concealed within the folds of her dress. I looked over the bright, keen blade with surprise and yet with pleasure at the latent resolution of a character seemingly so soft. I say, with pleasure, for it suited well with my own fierce and wild temper. I returned the weapon to her with a smile and a jest.

“ Ah! ” said Isora, shrinking from my kiss, “ I should not have been so bold if I only feared danger for myself. ”

But if for a moment we forgot, in the gushings of our affection, the object of our converse and dispute, we soon returned to it again. Isora was the first to recur to it. She reminded me of the promise she required; and she spoke with a seriousness and a solemnity which I found myself scarcely able to resist.

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"But," I said, "if he ever molest you hereafter; if again I find that bright cheek blanched, and those dear eyes dimmed with tears, and I know that in my own house some one has dared thus to insult its queen, am I to be still torpid and inactive, lest a dastard and craven hand should avenge my assertion of your honor and mine?"

"No, Morton; after our marriage, whenever that be, you will have nothing to apprehend from him on the same ground as before: my fear for you, too, will not be what it is now; your honor will be bound in mine, and nothing shall induce me to hazard it, — no, not even your safety. I have every reason to believe that after that event he will subject me no longer to his insults, — how, indeed, can he, under your perpetual protection; or for what cause should he attempt it, if he could? I shall be then yours, — only and ever yours; what hope could, therefore, then nerve his hardihood, or instigate his intrusions? Trust to me at that time, and suffer me to — nay, I repeat, promise me that I may — trust in you now!"

What could I do? I still combated her wish and her request; but her steadiness and rigidity of purpose made me, though reluctantly, yield to them at last. So sincere and so stern, indeed, appeared her resolution, that I feared, by refusal, that she would take the rash oath that would separate us forever. Added to this, I felt in her that confidence which I am apt to believe is far more akin to the latter stages of real love than jealousy and mistrust; and I could not believe that either now, or still less after our nuptials, she would risk aught of honor, or the seemings of honor, from a visionary and superstitious fear. In spite, therefore, of my keen and deep interest in the thorough discovery of this myste-

rious persecutor, and, still more, in the prevention of all future designs from his audacity, I constrained myself to promise her that I would on no account seek out the person I suspected, or wilfully betray to him, by word or deed, my belief of his identity with Barnard.

Though greatly dissatisfied with my self-compulsion, I strove to reconcile myself to its idea. Indeed, there was much in the peculiar circumstances of Isora, — much in the freshness of her present affliction, much in the unfriended and utter destitution of her situation, — that, while on the one hand it called forth her pride, and made stubborn that temper which was naturally so gentle and so soft, on the other hand made me yield even to wishes that I thought unreasonable, and consider rather the delicacy and deference due to her condition than insist upon the sacrifices which in more fortunate circumstances I might have imagined due to myself. Still more indisposed to resist her wish and expose myself to its penalty was I, when I considered her desire was the mere excess and caution of her love, and when I felt that she spoke sincerely when she declared that it was only for me that she was the coward. Nevertheless, and despite all these considerations, it was with a secret discontent that I took my leave of her, and departed homeward.

I had just reached the end of the street where the house was situated, when I saw there, very imperfectly, for the night was extremely dark, the figure of a man entirely enveloped in a long cloak, such as was commonly worn by gallants in affairs of secrecy or intrigue; and, in the pale light of a single lamp near which he stood, something like the brilliance of gems glittered on the large Spanish hat which overhung his brow. I

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immediately recalled the description the woman had given me of Barnard's dress, and the thought flashed across me that it was he whom I beheld. "At all events," thought I, "I may confirm my doubts, if I may not communicate them, and I may watch over her safety if I may not avenge her injuries." I therefore took advantage of my knowledge of the neighborhood, passed the stranger with a quick step, and then, running rapidly, returned by a circuitous route to the mouth of a narrow and dark street which was exactly opposite to Isora's house. Here I concealed myself by a projecting porch, and I had not waited long before I saw the dim form of the stranger walk slowly by the house. He passed it three or four times, and each time I thought — though the darkness might well deceive me — that he looked up to the windows. He made, however, no attempt at admission, and appeared as if he had no other object than that of watching by the house. Wearied and impatient at last, I came from my concealment. "I may *confirm* my suspicions," I repeated, recurring to my oath; and I walked straight towards the stranger.

"Sir!" I said very calmly, "I am the last person in the world to interfere with the amusements of any other gentleman; but I humbly opine that no man can parade by this house, upon so very cold a night, without giving just ground for suspicion to the friends of its inhabitants. I happen to be among that happy number; and I therefore, with all due humility and respect, venture to request you to seek some other spot for your nocturnal perambulations."

I made this speech purposely prolix, in order to have time fully to reconnoitre the person of the one I addressed. The dusk of the night and the loose garb of the stranger certainly forbade any decided success to

this scrutiny; but methought the figure seemed, despite of my prepossessions, to want the stately height and grand proportions of Gerald Devereux. I must own, however, that the necessary inexactitude of my survey rendered this idea without just foundation, and did not by any means diminish my firm impression that it was Gerald whom I beheld. While I spoke, he retreated with a quick step, but made no answer; I pressed upon him, — he backed with a still quicker step; and when I had ended, he fairly turned round, and made at full speed along the dark street in which I had fixed my previous post of watch. I fled after him, with a step as fleet as his own: his cloak encumbered his flight; I gained upon him sensibly; he turned a sharp corner, threw me out, and entered into a broad thoroughfare. As I sped after him, Bacchanalian voices burst upon my ear; and presently a large band of those young men who, under the name of Mohawks, were wont to scour the town nightly, and, sword in hand, to exercise their love of riot under the disguise of party zeal, became visible in the middle of the street. Through them my fugitive dashed headlong, and, profiting by their surprise, escaped unmolested. I attempted to follow with equal speed, but was less successful. "Hallo!" cried the foremost of the group, placing himself in my way.

"No such haste! Art Whig or Tory? Under which king, — Bezonian, speak or die?"

"Have a care, sir!" said I fiercely, drawing my sword.

"Treason, treason!" cried the speaker, confronting me with equal readiness. "Have a care, indeed, — have *at thee!*"

"Ha!" cried another, "'t is a Tory; 't is the Sec-

retary's popish friend, Devereux, — pike him, pike him!"

I had already run my opponent through the sword arm, and was in hopes that this act would intimidate the rest, and allow my escape; but at the sound of my name and political bias, coupled with the drawn blood of their confederate, the patriots rushed upon me with that amiable fury generally characteristic of all true lovers of their country. Two swords passed through my body simultaneously, and I fell bleeding and insensible to the ground. When I recovered I was in my own apartments, whither two of the gentler Mohawks had conveyed me; the surgeons were by my bedside; I groaned audibly when I saw them. If there is a thing in the world I hate, it is in any shape the disciples of Hermes; they always remind me of that Indian people (the Padæi, I think) mentioned by Herodotus, who sustained themselves by devouring the sick. "All is well," said one, when my groan was heard. "He will not die," said another. "At least not till we have had more fees," said a third, more candid than the rest. And thereupon they seized me and began torturing my wounds anew, till I fainted away with the pain. However, the next day I was declared out of immediate danger; and the first proof I gave of my convalescence was to make Desmarais discharge four surgeons out of five; the remaining one I thought my youth and constitution might enable me to endure.

That very evening, as I was turning restlessly in my bed, and muttering with parched lips the name of "Isora," I saw by my side a figure covered from head to foot in a long veil; and a voice, low, soft, but thrilling through my heart like a new existence, murmured, "She is here!"

I forgot my wounds, I forgot my pain and my debility; I sprung upwards, — the stranger drew aside the veil from her countenance, and I beheld Isora!

“Yes!” said she, in her own liquid and honeyed accents, which fell like balm upon my wound and my spirit, — “yes, she whom *you* have hitherto tended is come, in her turn, to render some slight, but woman’s services to you. She has come to nurse and to soothe and to pray for you, and to be, till you yourself discard her, your handmaid and your slave!”

I would have answered, but raising her finger to her lips, she arose and vanished; but from that hour my wound healed, my fever slaked, and whenever I beheld her flitting round my bed or watching over me, or felt her cool fingers wiping the dew from my brow, or took from her hand my medicine or my food, in those moments the blood seemed to make a new struggle through my veins, and I felt palpably within me a fresh and delicious life — a life full of youth and passion and hope — replace the vaguer and duller being which I had hitherto borne.

There are some extraordinary incongruities in that very mysterious thing *sympathy*. One would imagine that in a description of things most generally interesting to all men, the most general interest would be found; nevertheless, I believe few persons would hang breathless over the progressive history of a sick-bed. Yet those gradual stages from danger to recovery, how delightfully interesting they are to all who have crawled from one to the other! and who at some time or other in his journey through that land of diseases — civilized life — has not taken that gentle excursion? “I would be ill any day for the pleasure of getting well,” said Fontenelle to me one morning with his usual *naïveté*;

but who would not be ill for the mere pleasure of being ill, if he could be tended by her whom he most loves?

I shall not therefore dwell upon that most delicious period of my life, — my sick-bed, and my recovery from it. I pass on to a certain evening in which I heard from Isora's lips the whole of her history, save what related to her knowledge of the real name of one whose persecution constituted the little of romance which had yet mingled with her innocent and pure life. That evening, — how well I remember it! we were alone, — still weak and reduced, I lay upon the sofa beside the window, which was partially open, and the still air of an evening in the first infancy of spring came fresh and fraught as it were with a prediction of the glowing woods and the reviving verdure, to my cheek. The stars, one by one, kindled, as if born of Heaven and Twilight, into their nightly being; and through the vapor and thick ether of the dense city streamed their most silent light, holy and pure, and resembling that which the Divine Mercy sheds upon the gross nature of mankind. But, shadowy and calm, their rays fell full upon the face of Isora, as she lay on the ground beside my couch, and with one hand surrendered to my clasp, looked upward till, as she felt my gaze, she turned her cheek blushing away. There was quiet around and above us; but beneath the window we heard at times the sounds of the common earth, and then insensibly our hands knit into a closer clasp, and we felt them thrill more palpably to our hearts; for those sounds reminded us both of our existence and of our separation from the great herd of our race!

What is love but a division from the world, and a blending of two souls, two immortalities divested of clay and ashes, into one? it is a severing of a thousand

ties from whatever is harsh and selfish, in order to knit them into a single and sacred bond! Who loves, hath attained the anchorite's secret; and the hermitage has become dearer than the world. O respite from the toil and the curse of our social and banded state, a little interval art thou, suspended between two eternities, — the past and the future, — a star that hovers between the morning and the night, sending through the vast abyss one solitary ray from heaven, but too far and faint to illumine, while it hallows the earth!

There was nothing in Isora's tale which the reader has not already learned or conjectured. She had left her Andalusian home in her early childhood; but she remembered it well, and lingeringly dwelt over it, in description. It was evident that little in our colder and less genial isle had attracted her sympathy or wound itself into her affection. Nevertheless, I conceive that her naturally dreamy and abstracted character had received from her residence and her trials here much of the vigor and the heroism which it now possessed. Brought up alone, music and books — few, though not ill-chosen, for Shakspeare was one, and the one which had made upon her the most permanent impression, and perhaps had colored her temperament with its latent but rich hues of poetry — constituted her amusement and her studies.

But who knows not that a woman's heart finds its fullest occupation within itself? There lies its real study, and within that narrow orbit the mirror of enchanted thought reflects the whole range of earth. Loneliness and meditation nursed the mood which afterwards, with Isora, became love itself. But I do not wish now so much to describe her character as to abridge her brief history. The first English stranger,

of the male sex, whom her father admitted to her acquaintance, was Barnard. This man was, as I had surmised, connected with him in certain political intrigues, the exact nature of which she did not know. I continue to call him by a name which Isora acknowledged was fictitious. He had not, at first, by actual declaration, betrayed to her his affections, though, accompanied by a sort of fierceness which early revolted her, they soon became visible. On the evening in which I had found her stretched insensible in the garden, and had myself made my first confession of love, I learned that he had divulged to her his passion and real name; that her rejection had thrown him into a fierce despair; that he had accompanied his disclosure with the most terrible threats against me, for whom he supposed himself rejected, and against the safety of her father, whom, he said, a word of his could betray; that her knowledge of his power to injure us — us — yes, Isora then loved me, and then trembled for my safety! — had terrified and overcome her; and that in the very moment in which my horse's hoofs were heard, and as the alternative of her non-compliance, the rude suitor swore deadly and sore vengeance against Alvarez and myself, she yielded to the oath he prescribed to her, — an oath that she would never reveal the secret he had betrayed to her, or suffer me to know who was my real rival.

This was all that I could gather from her guarded confidence! He heard the oath, and vanished, and she felt no more till she was in my arms; then it was that she saw in the love and vengeance of my rival a barrier against our union; and then it was that her generous fear for me conquered her attachment, and she renounced me. Their departure from the cottage, so shortly after-

wards, was at her father's choice, and at the instigation of Barnard, for the furtherance of their political projects; and it was from Barnard that the money came which repaid my loan to Alvarez. The same person, no doubt, poisoned her father against me, for henceforth Alvarez never spoke of me with that partiality he had previously felt. They repaired to London; her father was often absent, and often engaged with men whom she had never seen before! He was absorbed and uncommunicative, and she was still ignorant of the nature of his schemings and designs.

At length, after an absence of several weeks, Barnard reappeared, and his visits became constant; he renewed his suit to her father as well as herself. Then commenced that domestic persecution, so common in this very tyrannical world, which makes us sicken to bear, and which, had Isora been wholly a Spanish girl, she in all probability would never have resisted: so much of custom is there in the very air of a climate. But she did resist it, partly because she loved me, — and loved me more and more for our separation, — and partly because she dreaded and abhorred the ferocious and malignant passions of my rival, far beyond any other misery with which fortune could threaten her. "Your father, then, shall hang or starve!" said Barnard, one day, in uncontrollable frenzy, and left her. He did not appear again at the house. The Spaniard's resources, fed, probably, alone by Barnard, failed. From house to house they removed, till they were reduced to that humble one in which I had found them. There Barnard again sought them; there, backed by the powerful advocate of want, he again pressed his suit, and at that exact moment her father was struck with the numbing curse of his disease. "There and then," said Isora,

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candidly, "I might have yielded at last, for my poor father's sake, if you had not saved me."

Once only (I have before recorded the time) did Barnard visit her in the new abode I had provided for her, and the day after our conversation on that event Isora watched and watched for me, and I did not come. From the woman of the house she at last learned the cause. "I forgot," she said timidly and in conclusion, — "I forgot womanhood and modesty and reserve; I forgot the customs of your country, the decencies of my own; I forgot everything in this world but you, — you suffering and in danger; my very sense of existence seemed to pass from me, and to be supplied by a breathless, confused, and overwhelming sense of impatient agony, which ceased not till I was in your chamber and by your side! And — and now, Morton, do not despise me for not having considered more and loved you less."

"Despise you!" I murmured; and I threw my arms around her, and drew her to my breast. I felt her heart beat against my own: those hearts spoke, though our lips were silent, and in their language seemed to say, "We are united now, and we will not part."

The starlight, shining with a mellow and deep stillness, was the only light by which we beheld each other, — it shone, the witness and the sanction of that internal voice which we owned, but heard not. Our lips drew closer and closer together, till they met! and in that kiss was the type and promise of the after ritual which knit two spirits into one. Silence fell around us like a curtain; and the eternal Night, with her fresh dews and unclouded stars, looked alone upon the compact of our hearts, — an emblem of the eternity, the freshness, and the unearthly though awful brightness of the love which it hallowed and beheld!

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

Wherein the History makes great Progress, and is marked by one important Event in Human Life.

SPINOSA is said to have loved, above all other amusements, to put flies into a spider's web; and the struggles of the imprisoned insects were wont to bear, in the eyes of this grave philosopher, so facetious and hilarious an appearance that he would stand and laugh thereat until the tears "coursed one another down his innocent nose." Now it so happeneth that Spinosa, despite the general (and, in my most meek opinion, the just) condemnation of his theoretical tenets,¹ was, in character and in nature, according to the voices of all who knew him, an exceedingly kind, humane, and benevolent biped; and it doth, therefore, seem a little strange unto us grave, sober members of the unphilosophical Many, that the struggles and terrors of these little winged creatures should strike the good subtleist in a point of view so irresistibly ludicrous and delightful. But, for my part, I

¹ One ought, however, to be very cautious before one condemns a philosopher. The master's opinions are generally pure, — it is the conclusions and corollaries of his disciples that "draw the honey forth that drives men mad." Schlegel seems to have studied Spinosa *de fonte*, and vindicates him very earnestly from the charges brought against him, — atheism, etc. — Ed.

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believe that that most imaginative and wild speculator beheld in the entangled flies nothing more than a living simile — an animated illustration — of his own beloved vision of necessity; and that he is no more to be considered cruel for the complacency with which he gazed upon those agonized types of his system than is Lucan for dwelling, with a poet's pleasure, upon the many ingenious ways with which that grand inquisitor of verse has contrived to vary the simple operation of dying. To the bard, the butchered soldier was only an epic ornament; to the philosopher, the murdered fly was only a metaphysical illustration. For, without being a Fatalist, or a disciple of Baruch de Spinoza, I must confess that I cannot conceive a greater resemblance to our human and earthly state than the penal predicament of the devoted flies. Suddenly do we find ourselves plunged into that vast web, — the world; and even as the insect, when he first undergoeth a similar accident of necessity, standeth amazed and still, and only, by little and little, awakeneth to a full sense of his situation; so also at the first abashed and confounded, we remain on the mesh we are urged upon, ignorant as yet of the toils around us, and the sly, dark, immitigable foe, that lieth in yonder nook, already feasting her imagination upon our destruction. Presently we revive: we stir, we flutter, — and Fate, that foe, — the old archspider, that hath no moderation in her maw, — now fixeth one of her many eyes upon us, and giveth us a partial glimpse of her laidly and grim aspect. We pause in mute terror; we gaze upon the ugly spectre, so imperfectly beheld, — the net ceases to tremble, and the wily enemy draws gently back into her nook. Now we begin to breathe again; we sound the strange footing on which we tread; we move tenderly along it, and

again the grisly monster advances on us; again we pause, — the foe retires not, but remains still, and surveyeth us; we see every step is accompanied with danger, — we look round and above in despair; suddenly we feel within us a new impulse and a new power, — we feel a vague sympathy with *that* unknown region which spreads *beyond* this great net, — *that limitless beyond* hath a mystic affinity with a part of our own frame; we unconsciously extend our wings (for the soul to us is as the wings to the fly!); we attempt to rise, — to soar above this perilous snare, from which we are unable to crawl. The old spider watcheth us in self-hugging quiet, and, looking up to our native air, we think, now shall we escape thee. Out on it! We rise not a hair's breadth, — we have the *wings*, it is true, but the *feet* are fettered. We strive desperately again, — the whole web vibrates with the effort; it will break beneath our strength. Not a jot of it! — we cease, we are more entangled than ever! wings, feet, frame, — the foul slime is over all! — where shall we turn? every line of the web leads to the one den, — we know not, we care not; we grow blind, confused, lost. The eyes of our hideous foe gloat upon us, — she whetteth her insatiate maw; she leapeth towards us; she fixeth her fangs upon us, — and so endeth my parallel!

But what has this to do with my tale? Ay, reader, that is thy question; and I will answer it by one of mine. When thou hearest a man moralize and preach of Fate, art thou not sure that he is going to tell thee of some one of his peculiar misfortunes? Sorrow loves a parable as much as mirth loves a jest. And thus already and from afar I prepare thee, at the commencement of this the third of these portions into which the history of my various and wild life will be divided, for

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that event with which I purpose that the said portion shall be concluded.

It is now three months after my entire recovery from my wounds, and I am married to Isora! — married, — yes, but *privately* married, and the ceremony is as yet closely concealed. I will explain.

The moment Isora's anxiety for me led her across the threshold of my house it became necessary for her honor that our wedding should take place immediately on my recovery: so far I was decided on the measure, — now for the method. During my illness I received a long and most affectionate letter from Aubrey, who was then at Devereux Court, — *so* affectionate was the heart-breathing spirit of that letter, so steeped in all our old household remembrances and boyish feelings, that, coupled as it was with a certain gloom when he spoke of himself and of worldly sins and trials, it brought tears to my eyes whenever I recurred to it; and many and many a time afterwards, when I thought his affections seemed estranged from me, I did recur to it to convince myself that I was mistaken. Shortly afterwards I received also a brief epistle from my uncle; it was as kind as usual, and it mentioned Aubrey's return to Devereux Court. "That unhappy boy," said Sir William, "is more than ever devoted to his religious duties; nor do I believe that any priest-ridden poor devil in the dark ages ever made such use of the scourge and the penance."

Now, I have before stated that my uncle would, I knew, be averse to my intended marriage; and on hearing that Aubrey was then with him, I resolved, in replying to his letter, to entreat the former to sound Sir William on the subject I had most at heart, and ascertain the exact nature and extent of the opposition

I should have to encounter in the step I was resolved to take. By the same post I wrote to the good old knight in as artful a strain as I was able, dwelling at some length upon my passion, upon the high birth as well as the numerous good qualities of the object, but mentioning not her name; and I added everything that I thought likely to eulist my uncle's kind and warm feelings on my behalf. These letters produced the following ones:—

FROM SIR WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

'Sdeath! nephew Morton, — but I won't scold thee, though thou deservest it. Let me see, thou art now scarce twenty, and thou talkest of marriage, which is the exclusive business of middle age, as familiarly as "girls of thirteen do of puppy dogs." Marry! — go hang thyself rather. Marriage, my dear boy, is at the best a treacherous proceeding; and a friend — a true friend — will never counsel another to adopt it rashly. Look you, — I have had experience in these matters; and I think, the moment a woman is wedded, some terrible revolution happens in her system: all her former good qualities vanish, *hey presto*, like eggs out of a conjurer's box, — 't is true, they appear on t' other side of the box, tke side turned to other people, but for the poor husband they are gone forever. Od's fish, Morton, go to! I tell thee again that I have had experience in these matters, which thou never hast had, clever as thou thinkest thyself. If now it were a good marriage thou wert about to make, — if thou wert going to wed power and money and places at court, — why, something might be said for thee. As it is, there is no excuse, — none. And I am astonished how a boy of thy sense could think of such nonsense. Birth, Morton, what the devil does that signify, so long as it is birth in another country? A foreign damsel, and a Spanish girl, too, above all others! 'Sdeath, man, as if there was not quicksilver enough in the English women for you, you must make a mercurial exportation from Spain, must you! Why,

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Morton, Morton, the ladies in that country are proverbial. I tremble at the very thought of it. But, as for my consent, I never will give it, — never ; and though I threaten thee not with disinheritance and such like, yet I do ask something in return for the great affection I have always borne thee ; and I make no doubt that thou wilt readily oblige me in such a trifle as giving up a mere Spanish donna. So think of her no more. If thou wantest to make love, there are ladies in plenty whom thou needest not to marry. And for my part, I thought that thou wert all in all with the Lady Hasselton, — Heaven bless her pretty face ! Now don't think I want to scold thee ; and don't think thine old uncle harsh, — God knows he is not ; but, my dear, dear boy, this is quite out of the question, and thou must let me hear no more about it. The gout cripples me so, that I must leave off.

Ever thine own old uncle,

WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

P. S. Upon consideration, I think, my dear boy, that thou must want money, and thou art ever too sparing. Messrs. Child, or my goldsmiths in Aldersgate, have my orders to pay to thy hand's-writing whatever thou mayst desire ; and I do hope that thou wilt now want nothing to make thee merry withal. Why dost thou not write a comedy ? Is it not the mode still ?

LETTER FROM AUBREY DEVEREUX.

I have sounded my uncle, dearest Morton, according to your wishes ; and I grieve to say that I have found him inexorable. He was very much hurt by your letter to him, and declared he should write to you forthwith upon the subject. I represented to him all that you have said upon the virtues of your intended bride ; and I also insisted upon your clear judgment and strong sense upon most points being a sufficient surety for your prudence upon this. But you know the libertine opinions, and the depreciating judgment of women, entertained by my poor uncle ; and he would, I believe, have been less displeas'd with the heinous crime of an illicit connection

than the amiable weakness of an imprudent marriage, — I might say of any marriage, — until it was time to provide heirs to the estate.

Here Aubrey, in the most affectionate and earnest manner, broke off, to point out to me the extreme danger to my interests that it would be to disoblige my uncle; who, despite his general kindness, would, upon a disagreement on so tender a matter as his sore point and his most cherished hobby, consider my disobedience as a personal affront. He also recalled to me all that my uncle had felt and done for me; and insisted, at all events, upon the absolute duty of my delaying, even though I should not break off, the intended measure. Upon these points he enlarged much and eloquently; and this part of his letter certainly left no cheering or comfortable impression upon my mind.

Now my good uncle knew as much of love as L. Mummius did of the fine arts,¹ and it was impossible to persuade him that if one wanted to indulge the tender passion, one woman would not do exactly as well as another, provided she were equally pretty. I knew therefore that he was incapable, on the one hand, of understanding my love for Isora, or, on the other, of acknowledging her claims upon me. I had not, of course, mentioned to him the generous imprudence which, on the news of my wound, had brought Isora to my house; for if I had done so, my uncle, with the eye of a courtier of Charles II., would only have seen the advantage to be derived from the impropriety, not

¹ A Roman consul, who, removing the most celebrated remains of Grecian antiquity to Rome, assured the persons charged with conveying them that if they injured any, they should make others to replace them.

the gratitude due to the devotion; neither had I mentioned this circumstance to Aubrey, — it seemed to me too delicate for any written communication; and therefore, in his advice to delay my marriage, he was unaware of the necessity which rendered the advice unavailing. Now then was I in this dilemma, either to marry, and that *instanter*, and so, seemingly, with the most hasty and the most insolent indecorum, incense, wound, and in his interpretation of the act, condemn one whom I loved as I loved my uncle, — or to delay the marriage, to separate from Isora, and to leave my future wife to the malignant consequences that would necessarily be drawn from a sojourn of weeks in my house. This fact there was no chance of concealing; servants have more tongues than Argus had eyes, and my youthful extravagance had filled my whole house with those pests of society. The latter measure was impossible, the former was most painful. Was there no third way? — there was that of a private marriage. This obviated not every evil, but it removed many: it satisfied my impatient love, it placed Isora under a sure protection, it secured and established her honor the moment the ceremony should be declared, and it avoided the seeming ingratitude and indelicacy of disobeying my uncle, without an effort of patience to appease him. I should have time and occasion then, I thought, for soothing and persuading him, and ultimately winning that consent which I firmly trusted I should sooner or later extract from his kindness of heart. . .

That some objections existed to this mediatory plan, was true enough; those objections related to Isora rather than to myself, and she was the first, on my hinting at the proposal, to overcome its difficulties. The leading

feature in Isora's character was generosity; and, in truth, I know not a quality more dangerous, either to man or woman. Herself was invariably the last human being whom she seemed to consider; and no sooner did she ascertain what measure was the most prudent for me to adopt, than it immediately became that upon which she insisted. Would it have been possible for me, man of pleasure and of the world as I was thought to be, — no, my good uncle, though it went to my heart to wound thee so secretly, it would *not* have been possible for me, even if I had not coined my whole nature into love; even if Isora had not been to me what one smile of Isora's really was, — it would not have been possible to have sacrificed so noble and so divine a heart, and made myself in that sacrifice a wretch forever. No, my good uncle, I could not have made that surrender to thy reason, much less to thy prejudices. But if I have not done great injustice to the knight's character, I doubt whether even the youngest reader will not forgive him for a want of sympathy with one feeling, when they consider how susceptible that charming old man was to all others.

And herewith I could discourse most excellent wisdom upon that most mysterious passion of love. I could show, by tracing its causes and its inseparable connection with the imagination, that it is only in certain states of society as well as in certain periods of life that love — real, pure, high love — can be born. Yea, I could prove, to the nicety of a very problem that in the court of Charles II. it would have been as impossible for such a feeling to find root as it would be for myrtle-trees to effloresce from a Duvillier periwig. And we are not to expect a man, however tender and affectionate he may be, to sympathize with that sentiment

in another, which, from the accidents of birth and position, nothing short of a miracle could ever have produced in himself.

We were married, then, in private by a Catholic priest. St. John, and one old lady who had been my father's godmother — for I wished for a female assistant in the ceremony, and this old lady could tell no secrets, for, being excessively deaf, nobody ever talked to her, and indeed she scarcely ever went abroad — were the sole witnesses. I took a small house in the immediate neighborhood of London; it was surrounded on all sides with a high wall which defied alike curiosity and attack. This was, indeed, the sole reason which had induced me to prefer it to many more gaudy or more graceful dwellings; but within I had furnished it with every luxury that wealth, the most lavish and unsparing, could procure. Thither, under an assumed name, I brought my bride, and there was the greater part of my time spent. The people I had placed in the house believed I was a rich merchant, and this accounted for my frequent absences (absences which prudence rendered necessary), for the wealth which I lavished, and for the precautions of bolt, bar, and wall which they imagined the result of commercial caution.

Oh, the intoxication of that sweet Elysium, that Tadmor in life's desert, — the possession of the one whom we have first loved! It is as if poetry and music and light, and the fresh breath of flowers, were all blent into one being, and from that being rose our existence! It is content made rapture, — nothing to wish for, yet everything to feel! Was that air the air which I had breathed hitherto, that earth the earth which I had hitherto beheld? No, my heart dwelt in a new world, and all these motley and restless

senses were melted into one sense, — deep, silent, fathomless delight!

Well, too much of this species of love is not fit for a worldly tale, and I will turn, for the reader's relief, to worldly affections. From my first reunion with Isora, I had avoided all the former objects and acquaintances in which my time had been so charmingly employed. Tarleton was the first to suffer by my new pursuit. "What has altered you?" said he; "you drink not, neither do you play. The women say you are grown duller than a Norfolk parson, and neither the Puppet-Show nor the Water-Theatre, the Spring Gardens nor the Ring, Wills's nor the Kit-Cat, the Mulberry Garden nor the New Exchange, witness any longer your homage and devotion. What has come over you? — speak!"

"Apathy!"

"Ah! I understand, — you are tired of these things. Pish, man! go down into the country; the green fields will revive thee, and send thee back to London a new man! One would indeed find the town intolerably dull, if the country were not, happily, a thousand times duller, — go to the country, Count, or I shall drop your friendship."

"Drop it!" said I, yawning; and Tarleton took pet, and did as I desired him. Now had I got rid of my friend as easily as I had found him, — a matter that would not have been so readily accomplished had not Mr. Tarleton owed me certain moneys, concerning which, from the moment he had "dropped my friendship," good-breeding effectually prevented his saying a single syllable to me ever after. There is no knowing the blessings of money until one has learned to manage it properly.

So much, then, for the friend; now for the mistress. Lady Hasselton had, as Tarleton hinted before, resolved to play me a trick of spite; the reasons of our rupture really were, as I had stated to Tarleton, the mighty effects of little things. She lived in a sea of trifles, and she was desperately angry if her lover was not always sailing a pleasure-boat in the same ocean. Now, this was expecting too much from me; and after twisting our silken strings of attachment into all manner of fantastic forms, we fell fairly out one evening and broke the little ligatures in two. No sooner had I quarrelled with Tarleton, than Lady Hasselton received him in my place; and a week afterwards I was favored with an anonymous letter, informing me of the violent passion which a certain *dame de la cour* had conceived for me, and requesting me to meet her at an appointed place. I looked twice over the letter, and discovered in one corner of it two *g*'s peculiar to the calligraphy of Lady Hasselton, though the rest of the letter (bad spelling excepted) was pretty decently disguised. Mr. Fielding was with me at the time. "What disturbs you?" said he, adjusting his knee-buckles.

"Read it!" said I, handing him the letter.

"Body of me, you are a lucky dog!" cried the beau. "You will hasten thither on the wings of love."

"Not a whit of it," said I; "I suspect that it comes from a rich old widow whom I hate mortally."

"A rich old widow!" repeated Mr. Fielding, to whose eyes there was something very piquant in a jointure, and who thought, consequently, that there were few virginal flowers equal to a widow's weeds. "A rich old widow, — you are right, Count, you are right. Don't go, don't think of it. I cannot abide

those depraved creatures. Widow, indeed, — quite an affront to your gallantry!”

“Very true,” said I. “Suppose you supply my place?”

“I’d sooner be shot first,” said Mr. Fielding, taking his departure, and begging me for the letter to wrap some sugar-plums in.

Need I add that Mr. Fielding repaired to the place of assignation, where he received, in the shape of a hearty drubbing, the kind favors intended for me? The story was now left for me to tell, not for the Lady Hasselton, — and that makes all the difference in the manner a story is told: *me* narrante, it is *de te* fabula narratur, — *te* narrante, and it is *de me* fabula, etc. Poor Lady Hasselton! to be laughed at, and have Tarleton for a lover!

I have gone back somewhat in the progress of my history, in order to make the above honorable mention of my friend and my mistress, thinking it due to their own merits, and thinking it may also be instructive to young gentlemen who have not yet seen the world, to testify the exact nature and the probable duration of all the loves and friendships they are likely to find in that Great Monmouth Street of glittering and of damaged affections! I now resume the order of narration.

I wrote to Aubrey, thanking him for his intercession, but concealing, till we met, the measure I had adopted. I wrote also to my uncle, assuring him that I would take an early opportunity of hastening to Devereux Court, and conversing with him on the subject of his letter. And after an interval of some weeks, I received the two following answers from my correspondents; the latter arrived several days after the former: —

FROM AUBREY DEVEREUX.

I am glad to understand from your letter, unexplanatory as it is, that you have followed my advice. I will shortly write to you more at large ; at present I am on the eve of my departure for the North of England, and have merely time to assure you of my affection.

AUBREY DEVEREUX.

P. S. Gerald is in London ; have you seen him ? Oh, this world ! this world ! how it clings to us, despite our education, — our wishes, our conscience, our knowledge of the Dread Hereafter !

LETTER FROM SIR WILLIAM DEVEREUX.

MY DEAR NEPHEW, — Thank thee for thy letter, and the new plays thou sentest me down, and that droll new paper, the “Spectator ;” it is a pretty shallow thing enough, though it is not so racy as Rochester or little Sid would have made it ; but I thank thee for it, because it shows thou wast not angry with thine old uncle for opposing thee on thy love whimsies (in which most young men are dreadfully obstinate), since thou didst provide so kindly for his amusement. Well, but, Morton, I hope thou hast got that crotchet clear out of thy mind, and prithee now *don't* talk of it when thou comest down to see me. I hate conversations on marriage more than a boy does flogging, — od's fish, I do. So you must humor me on that point !

Aubrey has left me again, and I am quite alone, — not that I was much better off when he was here, for he was wont, of late, to shun my poor room like a “lazar-house ;” and when I spoke to his mother about it, she muttered something about “example” and “corrupting.” 'Sdeath, Morton, is your poor old uncle, who loves all living things, down to poor Ponto, the dog, the sort of man whose example corrupts youth ? As for thy mother, she grows more solitary every day ; and I don't know how it is, but I am not so fond of strange faces as I used to be. 'T is a new thing for me to be avoided and alone.

Why, I remember even little Sid, who had as much venom as most men, once said it was impossible to — Fie now, see if I was not going to preach a sermon from a text in favor of myself! But come, Morton, come, I long for your face again; it is not so soft as Aubrey's nor so regular as Gerald's, but it is twice as kind as either. Come, before it is too late: I feel myself going; and, to tell thee a secret, the doctors tell me I may not last many months longer. Come and laugh once more at the old knight's stories. Come, and show him that there is still some one not too good to love him. Come, and I will tell thee a famous thing of old Rowley, which I am too ill and too sad to tell thee now.

WM. DEVEREUX.

Need I say that, upon receiving this letter, I resolved, without any delay, to set out for Devereux Court? I summoned Desmarais to me; he answered not my call: he was from home, — an unfrequent occurrence with the necessitarian valet. I awaited his return, which was not for some hours, in order to give him sundry orders for my departure. The exquisite Desmarais hemmed thrice. “Will Monsieur be so very kind as to excuse my accompanying him?” said he, with his usual air and tone of obsequious respect.

“And why?” The valet explained. A relation of his was in England only for a few days; the philosopher was most anxious to enjoy his society, — a pleasure which Fate might not again allow him.

Though I had grown accustomed to the man's services, and did not like to lose him even for a time, yet I could not refuse his request; and I therefore ordered another of my servants to supply his place. This change, however, determined me to adopt a plan which I had before meditated, — namely, the conveying of my own person to Devereux Court on horseback, and send-

ing my servant with my luggage in my post-chaise. The equestrian mode of travelling is, indeed, to this day, the one most pleasing to me; and the reader will find me pursuing it many years afterwards, and to the same spot.

I might as well observe here that I had never intrusted Desmarais, no, nor one of my own servants, with the secret of my marriage with, or my visits to, Isora. I am a very fastidious person on those matters, and of all confidants, even in the most trifling affairs, I do most eschew those by whom we have the miserable honor to be served.

In order, then, to avoid having my horse brought me to Isora's house by any of these menial spies, I took the steed which I had selected for my journey, and rode to Isora's with the intention of spending the evening there, and thence commencing my excursion with the morning light.

CHAPTER II.

Love. — Parting. — A Death-bed. — After all, Human Nature is a beautiful Fabric; and even its Imperfections are not odious to him who has studied the Science of its Architecture, and formed a reverent Estimate of its Creator.

It is a noticeable thing how much fear increases love. I mean — for the aphorism requires explanation — how much we love, in proportion to our fear of losing (or even to our fear of injury done to) the beloved object. 'T is an instance of the reaction of the feelings, — the love produces the fear, and the fear reproduces the love. This is one reason, among many, why women love so much more tenderly and anxiously than we do; and it is also one reason, among many, why frequent absences are, in all stages of love, the most keen excitors of the passion. I never breathed, away from Isora, without trembling for her safety. I trembled lest this Barnard, if so I should still continue to call her persecutor, should again discover and again molest her. Whenever (and that was almost daily) I rode to the quiet and remote dwelling I had procured her, my heart beat so vehemently, and my agitation was so intense, that on arriving at the gate I have frequently been unable, for several minutes, to demand admittance. There was, therefore, in the mysterious danger which ever seemed to hang over Isora, a perpetual irritation to a love otherwise but little inclined to slumber; and this constant excitement took away from the torpor into which domestic affection

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too often languishes, and increased my passion even while it diminished my happiness.

On my arrival now at Isora's, I found her already stationed at the window, watching for my coming. How her dark eyes lit into lustre when they saw me! How the rich blood mantled up under the soft cheek, which feeling had refined of late into a paler hue than it was wont, when I first gazed upon it, to wear! Then how sprang forth her light step to meet me! How trembled her low voice to welcome me! How spoke, from every gesture of her graceful form, the anxious, joyful, all-animating gladness of her heart! It is a melancholy pleasure to the dry, harsh after-thoughts of later life, to think one has been thus loved; and one marvels, when one considers what one is now, how it could have ever been! That love *of ours* was never made for after years! It could never have flowed into the common and cold channel of ordinary affairs! It could never have been mingled with the petty cares and the low objects with which the loves of all who live long together in this sordid and most earthly earth, are sooner or later blended! We could not have spared to others an atom of the great wealth of our affection. We were misers of every coin in that boundless treasury. It would have pierced me to the soul to have seen Isora smile upon another. I know not even, had we had children, if I should not have been jealous of my child! Was this selfish love? Yes, it was intensely, wholly selfish; but it was a love made so only by its excess; nothing selfish on a smaller scale polluted it. There was not on earth that which the one would not have forfeited at the lightest desire of the other. So utterly were happiness and Isora entwined together, that I could form no idea of the one with which the other

was not connected. Was this love made for the many and miry roads through which man must travel? Was it made for age, or worse than age, — for those cool, ambitious, scheming years that we call mature, in which all the luxuriance and verdure of things are pared into tamed shapes and mimic life, but a life that is estranged from nature, in which art is the only beauty, and regularity the only grace? No, in my heart of hearts, I feel that our love was not meant for the stages of life through which I have already passed; it would have made us miserable to see it fritter itself away, and to remember what it once was. Better as it is! better to mourn over the green bough than to look upon the sapless stem. You who now glance over these pages, are you a mother? If so, answer me one question, — would you not rather that the child whom you have cherished with your soul's care; whom you have nurtured at your bosom; whose young joys your eyes have sparkled to behold; whose lightest grief you have wept to witness, as you would have wept not for your own; over whose pure and unvexed sleep you have watched and prayed, and, as it lay before you thus still and unconscious of your vigil, have shaped out, oh, such bright hopes for its future lot, — would you not rather that, while thus young and innocent, not a care tasted nor a crime incurred, it went down at once into the dark grave? Would you not rather suffer this grief, bitter though it be, than watch the predestined victim grow and ripen, and wind itself more and more around your heart, and when it is of full and mature age, and you yourself are stricken by years, and can form no new ties to replace the old that are severed, — when woes have already bowed the darling of your hope, whom woe never was to touch, — when sins have already darkened

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the bright, seraph, unclouded heart which sin never was to dim, — behold it sink day by day altered, diseased, decayed, into the tomb which its childhood had in vain escaped? Answer me: would not the earlier fate be far gentler than the last? And if you *have* known and wept over that early tomb; if you have seen the infant flower fade away from the green soil of your affections; if you have missed the bounding step and the laughing eye and the winning mirth which made this sterile world a perpetual holiday, — Mother of the Lost, if you have known, and you still pine for these, answer me yet again! — Is it not a comfort, even while you mourn, to think of all that that breast, now so silent, has escaped? The cream, the sparkle, the elixir of life, it had already quaffed: is it not sweet to think it shunned the wormwood and the dregs? Answer me, even though the answer be in tears! Mourner, your child was to you what my early and only love was to me; and could you pierce down, down through a thousand fathom of ebbing thought, to the far depths of my heart, you would there behold a sorrow *and a consolation* that have something in unison with your own.

When the light of the next morning broke into our room, Isora was still sleeping. Have you ever observed that the young, seen asleep and by the morning light, seem much younger even than they are? Partly because the air and light sleep of dawn bring a fresher bloom to the cheek, and partly because the careless negligence and the graceful postures exclusively appropriated to youth, are forbidden by custom and formality through the day, and, developing themselves unconsciously in sleep, they strike the eye like the ease and freedom of childhood itself. There, as I looked upon Isora's tranquil and most youthful beauty, over which circled

and breathed an ineffable innocence, — even as the finer and subtler air, which was imagined by those dreamy bards who kindled the soft creations of naiad and of nymph, to float around a goddess, — I could not believe that aught evil awaited one for whom infancy itself seemed to linger, — linger as if no elder shape and less delicate hue were meet to be the garment of so much guilelessness and tenderness of heart. I felt, indeed, while I bent over her, and her regular and quiet breath came upon my cheek, that feeling which is exactly the reverse to a presentiment of ill. I felt as if, secure in her own purity, she had nothing to dread, so that even the pang of parting was lost in the confidence which stole over me as I then gazed.

I rose gently, went to the next room, and dressed myself. I heard my horse neighing beneath, as the servant walked him lazily to and fro. I re-entered the bedchamber, in order to take leave of Isora. She was already up. “What!” said I, “it is but three minutes since I left you asleep, and I stole away as gently as time does when with you.”

“Ah!” said Isora, smiling and blushing too, “but for my part, I think there is an instinct to know, even if all the senses were shut up, whether the one we love is with us or not. The moment you left me, I felt it at once, even in sleep, and I woke. But you will not — no, you will not leave me yet!”

I think I see Isora now, as she stood by the window which she had opened, with a woman’s minute anxiety, to survey even the aspect of the clouds, and beseech caution against the treachery of the skies. I think I see her now, as she stood the moment after I had torn myself from her embrace, and had looked back, as I reached the door, for one parting glance, — her eyes all

tenderness; her lips parted and quivering with the attempt to smile; the long, glossy ringlets (through whose raven hue the *purpureum lumen* broke like an imprisoned sunbeam) straying in dishevelled beauty over her transparent neck; the throat bent in mute despondency; the head drooping; the arms half extended, and dropping gradually as my steps departed; the sunken, absorbed expression of face, form, and gesture, so steeped in the very bitterness of dejection, — all are before me now, sorrowful, and lovely in sorrow, as they were beheld years ago, by the gray, cold, comfortless light of morning!

“God bless you, my own, own love!” I said; and as my look lingered, I added, with a full but an assured heart, “and He will!” I tarried no more. I flung myself on my horse, and rode on as if I were speeding *to*, and not *from*, my bride.

The noon was far advanced, as, the day after I left Isora, I found myself entering the park in which Devereux Court is situated. I did not enter by one of the lodges, but through a private gate. My horse was thoroughly jaded, for the distance I had come was great, and I had ridden rapidly; and as I came into the park, I dismounted, and, throwing the rein over my arm, proceeded slowly on foot. I was passing through a thick, long plantation, which belted the park, and in which several walks and rides had been cut, when a man crossed the same road which I took, at a little distance before me. He was looking on the ground, and appeared wrapped in such earnest meditation that he neither saw nor heard me. But I had seen enough of him, in that brief space of time, to feel convinced that it was Montreuil whom I beheld. What brought him hither, — him whom I believed in London,

immersed with Gerald in political schemes, and for whom these woods were not only interdicted ground, but to whom they must have also been but a tame field of interest, after his audiences with ministers and nobles? I did not, however, pause to consider on his apparition. I rather quickened my pace towards the house, in the expectation of there ascertaining the cause of his visit.

The great gates of the outer court were open as usual. I rode unheedingly through them, and was soon at the door of the hall. The porter, who unfolded to my summons the ponderous door, uttered, when he saw me, an exclamation that seemed to my ear to have in it more of sorrow than welcome.

“How is your master?” I asked.

The man shook his head, but did not hasten to answer; and, impressed with a vague alarm, I hurried on without repeating the question. On the staircase I met old Nicholls, my uncle's valet. I stopped and questioned him. My uncle had been seized on the preceding day with gout in the stomach. Medical aid had been procured, but it was feared ineffectually; and the physicians had declared, about an hour before I arrived, that he could not, in human probability, outlive the night. Stifling the rising at my heart, I waited to hear no more. I flew up the stairs. I was at the door of my uncle's chamber. I stopped there and listened: all was still. I opened the door gently. I stole in, and, creeping to the bedside, knelt down and covered my face with my hands, for I required a pause for self-possession before I had courage to look up. When I raised my eyes, I saw my mother on the opposite side. She sat on a chair, with a draught of medicine in one hand, and a watch in the other. She caught my eye,

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but did not speak. She gave me a sign of recognition, and looked down again upon the watch. My uncle's back was turned to me, and he lay so still that for some moments I thought he was asleep. At last, however, he moved restlessly.

"It is past noon!" said he to my mother, "is it not?"

"It is three minutes and six seconds after four," replied my mother, looking closer at the watch.

My uncle sighed. "They have sent an express for the dear boy, madam?" said he.

"Exactly at half-past nine last evening," answered my mother, glancing at me.

"He could scarcely be here by this time," said my uncle; and he moved again in the bed. "Pish, — how the pillow frets one!"

"Is it too high?" said my mother.

"No," said my uncle, faintly, "no, no, — the discomfort is not in the pillow, after all: 't is a fine day, is it not?"

"Very!" said my mother; "I wish you could go out."

My uncle did not answer: there was a pause. "Od's fish, madam, are those carriage-wheels?"

"No, Sir William; but —"

"There *are* sounds in my ear, — my senses grow dim," said my uncle, unheeding her. "Would that I might live another day! — I should not like to die without seeing him. 'Sdeath, madam, I do hear something behind! Sobs, as I live! Who sobs for the old knight?" and my uncle turned round and saw me.

"My dear, dear uncle!" I said, and could say no more.

"Ah! Morton," cried the kind old man, putting his hand affectionately upon mine. "Beshrew me, but I think I have conquered the grim enemy now that you

are come. But what 's this, my boy? — tears, tears! Why, little Sid — no, nor Rochester either, would ever have believed this, if I had sworn it! Cheer up, cheer up!”

But, seeing that I wept and sobbed the more, my uncle, after a pause, continued in the somewhat figurative strain which the reader has observed he sometimes adopted, and which perhaps his dramatic studies had taught him.

“Nay, Morton, what do you grieve for? That age should throw off its fardel of aches and pains, and no longer groan along its weary road, meeting cold looks and unwilling welcomes, as both host and comrade grow weary of the same face, and the spendthrift heart has no longer quip or smile wherewith to pay the reckoning? No, no; let the poor pedler shuffle off his dull pack, and fall asleep. But I am glad you are come. I would sooner have one of your kind looks at your uncle's stale saws or jests than all the long faces about me, saving only the presence of your mother;” and with his characteristic gallantry, my uncle turned courteously to her.

“Dear Sir William!” said she, “it is time you should take your draught; and then would it not be better that you should see the chaplain? He waits without.”

“Od's fish,” said my uncle, turning again to me, “'t is the way with them all, — when the body is past hope, comes the physician; and when the soul is past mending, comes the priest. No, madam, no; 't is too late for either. Thank ye, Morton, thank ye” (as I started up, took the draught from my mother's hand, and besought him to drink it), “'t is of no use; but if it pleases thee, I must;” and he drank the medicine.

My mother rose, and walked towards the door. It was ajar; and as my eye followed her figure, I per-

ceived, through the opening, the black garb of the chaplain.

"Not yet," said she, quietly; "wait;" and then, gliding away, she seated herself by the window in silence, and told her beads.

My uncle continued: "They have been at me, Morton, as if I had been a pagan; and I believe, in their hearts they are not a little scandalized that I don't try to win the next world by trembling like an ague. Faith, now, I never could believe that Heaven was so partial to cowards; nor can I think, Morton, that Salvation is like a soldier's muster-roll, and that we may play the devil between hours, so that at the last moment we whip in, and answer to our names. Od's fish, Morton, I could tell thee a tale of that; but 't is a long one, and we have not time now. Well, well, for my part, I deem reverently and gratefully of God, and do not believe He will be very wrath with our past enjoyment of life, if we have taken care that others should enjoy it too; nor do I think, with thy good mother, and Aubrey, dear child! that an idle word has the same weight in the Almighty's scales as a wicked deed."

"Blessed, blessed are they," I cried, through my tears, "on whose souls there is as little stain as there is on yours!"

"Faith, Morton, that 's kindly said; and thou knowest not how strangely it sounds, after their exhortations to repentance. I know I have had my faults, and walked on to our common goal in a very irregular line; but I never wronged the living nor slandered the dead, nor ever shut my heart to the poor, — 't were a burning sin if I had; and I have loved all men and all things, and I never bore ill-will to a creature. Poor Ponto,

Morton, thou wilt take care of poor Ponto, when I'm dead. Nay, nay, don't grieve so. Go, my child, go, — compose thyself while I see the priest, for 't will please thy poor mother; and though she thinks harshly of me now, I should not like her to do so *to-morrow*! Go, my dear boy, go."

I went from the room, and waited by the door till the office of the priest was over. My mother then came out, and said Sir William had composed himself to sleep. While she was yet speaking, Gerald surprised me by his appearance. I learned that he had been in the house for the last three days; and when I heard this, I involuntarily accounted for the appearance of Montreuil. I saluted him distantly, and he returned my greeting with the like pride. He seemed, however, though in a less degree, to share in my emotions; and my heart softened to him for it. Nevertheless we stood apart, and met not as brothers should have met by the death-bed of a mutual benefactor.

"Will you wait without?" said my mother.

"No," answered I, "I will watch over him." So I stole in, with a light step, and seated myself by my uncle's bedside. He was asleep, and his sleep was as hushed and quiet as an infant's. I looked upon his face, and saw a change had come over it, and was increasing sensibly; but there was neither harshness nor darkness in the change, awful as it was. The soul, so long nurtured on benevolence, could not, in parting, leave a rude stamp on the kindly clay which had seconded its impulses so well.

The evening had just set in, when my uncle woke; he turned very gently, and smiled when he saw me.

"It is late," said he; and I observed with a wrung heart that his voice was fainter.

"No, sir; not very," said I.

"Late enough, my child; the warm sun has gone down; and 't is a good time to close one's eyes, when all without looks gray and chill; methinks it is easier to wish thee farewell, Morton, when I see thy face indistinctly. I am glad I shall not die in the daytime. Give me thy hand, my child, and tell me that thou art not angry with thine old uncle for thwarting thee in that love business. I have heard tales of the girl, too, which make me glad, for thy sake, that it is all off, though I might not tell thee of them before. 'T is very dark, Morton. I have had a pleasant slecp. Od's fish, I do not think a bad man would have slept so well. The fire burns dim, Morton, — it is very cold. Cover me up, — double the counterpane over the legs, Morton. I remember once walking in the Mall, — little Sid said 'Devereux' — it is colder and colder, Morton, — raise the blankets more over the back. 'Devereux,' said little Sid — faith, Morton, 't is ice now: where art thou? is the fire out, that I can't see thee? Remember thine old uncle, Morton, and — and — don't forget poor — Ponto. Bless thee, my child, — bless you all!"

And my uncle died.

CHAPTER III.

A great Change of Prospects.

I SHUT myself up in the apartments prepared for me (they were not those I had formerly occupied), and refused all participation in my solitude, till, after an interval of some days, my mother came to summon me to the opening of the will. She was more moved than I had expected. "It is a pity," said she, as we descended the stairs, "that Aubrey is not here, and that we should be so unacquainted with the exact place where he is likely to be that I fear the letter I sent him may be long delayed, or, indeed, altogether miscarried."

"Is not the abbé here?" said I, listlessly.

"No!" answered my mother; "to be sure not."

"He has *been* here," said I, greatly surprised. "I certainly saw him on the day of my arrival."

"Impossible!" said my mother, in evident astonishment; and seeing that at all events she was unacquainted with the circumstance, I said no more.

The will was to be read in the little room where my uncle had been accustomed to sit. I felt it as a sacrilege to his memory to choose that spot for such an office, but I said nothing. Gerald and my mother, the lawyer (a neighboring attorney, named Oswald) and myself, were the only persons present; Mr. Oswald hemmed thrice, and broke the seal. After a preliminary, strongly characteristic of the testator, he came to the disposition of the estates. I had never once, since my poor uncle's

death, thought upon the chances of his will, — indeed, knowing myself so entirely his favorite, I could not, if I had thought upon them, have entertained a doubt as to their result. What then was my astonishment when, couched in terms of the strongest affection, the whole bulk of the property was bequeathed to Gerald? To Aubrey, the sum of forty, to myself that of twenty thousand pounds (a capital considerably less than the yearly income of my uncle's princely estates), was allotted. Then followed a list of minor bequests: to my mother an annuity of three thousand a year, with the privilege of apartments in the house during her life; to each of the servants legacies sufficient for independence; to a few friends, and distant connections of the family, tokens of the testator's remembrance; even the horses to his carriage, and the dogs that fed from his menials' table, were not forgotten, but were to be set apart from work, and maintained in indolence during their remaining span of life. The will was concluded, — I could not believe my senses: not a word was said as a reason for giving Gerald the priority.

I rose calmly enough. "Suffer me, sir," said I to the lawyer, "to satisfy my own eyes." Mr. Oswald bowed, and placed the will in my hands. I glanced at Gerald as I took it: his countenance betrayed, or feigned, an astonishment equal to my own. With a jealous, searching, scrutinizing eye, I examined the words of the bequest; I examined especially (for I suspected that the names must have been exchanged) the place in which my name and Gerald's occurred. In vain: all was smooth and fair to the eye, not a vestige of possible erasure or alteration was visible. I looked next at the wording of the will; it was evidently

my uncle's: no one could have feigned or imitated the peculiar turn of his expressions; and, above all, many parts of the will (the affectionate and personal parts) were in his own handwriting.

"The date," said I, "is, I perceive, of very recent period; the will is signed by two witnesses beside yourself. Who and where are they?"

"Robert Lister, the first signature, my clerk, he is since dead, sir."

"Dead!" said I; "and the other witness, George Davis?"

"Is one of Sir William's tenants, and is below, sir, in waiting."

"Let him come up;" and a middle-sized, stout man, with a blunt, bold, open countenance, was admitted.

"Did you witness this will?" said I.

"I did, your honor!"

"And this is your handwriting?" pointing to the scarcely legible scrawl.

"Yees, your honor," said the man, scratching his head. "I think it be; they are my *ees* and *G* and *D*, sure enough."

"And do you know the purport of the will you signed?"

"Anan?"

"I mean, do you know to whom Sir William — stop, Mr. Oswald: suffer the man to answer me — to whom Sir William left his property?"

"Noa, to be sure, sir; the will was a woundy long one, and Maister Oswald there told me it was no use to read it over to me, but merely to sign, as a witness to Sir William's handwriting."

"Enough, — you may retire;" and George Davis vanished.

"Mr. Oswald," said I, approaching the attorney, "I may wrong you, and, if so, I am sorry for it, but I suspect there has been foul practice in this deed. I have reason to be convinced that Sir William Devereux could never have made this devise. I give you warning, sir, that I shall bring the business immediately before a court of law, and that, if guilty — ay, tremble, sir — of what I suspect, you will answer for this deed at the foot of the gallows."

I turned to Gerald, who rose while I was yet speaking. Before I could address him, he exclaimed, with evident and extreme agitation, —

"You cannot, Morton, — you cannot; you dare not insinuate that I, your brother, have been base enough to forge, or to instigate the forgery of, this will?"

Gerald's agitation made me still less doubtful of his guilt.

"The case, sir," I answered coldly, "stands thus: my uncle could not have made this will; it is a devise that must seem incredible to all who knew aught of our domestic circumstances. Fraud has been practised, — how, I know not; by whom, I do know."

"Morton, Morton, this is insufferable, — I cannot bear such charges, even from a brother."

"Charges! — your conscience speaks, sir, — not I: no one benefits by this fraud but you; pardon me if I draw an inference from a fact."

So saying, I turned on my heel, and abruptly left the apartment. I ascended the stairs, which led to my own; there I found my servant preparing the paraphernalia in which that very evening I was to attend my uncle's funeral. I gave him, with a calm and collected voice, the necessary instructions for following me to town immediately after that event, and then I passed on to

the room where the deceased lay in state. The room was hung with black; the gorgeous pall, wrought with the proud heraldry of our line, lay over the coffin, and by the lights which made, in that old chamber, a more brilliant yet more ghastly day, sat the hired watchers of the dead.

I bade them leave me, and kneeling down beside the coffin, I poured out the last expressions of my grief. I rose, and was retiring once more to my room, when I encountered Gerald.

"Morton," said he, "I own to you, I myself am astounded by my uncle's will. I do not come to make you offers, — you would not accept them; I do not come to vindicate myself, — it is beneath me; and we have never been as brothers, and we know not their language; but I *do* come to demand you to retract the dark and causeless suspicions you have vented against me, and also to assure you that, if you have doubts of the authenticity of the will, so far from throwing obstacles in your way I myself will join in the inquiries you institute, and the expenses of the law."

I felt some difficulty in curbing my indignation while Gerald thus spoke. I saw before me the persecutor of Isora, the fraudulent robber of my rights, and I heard this enemy speak to me of aiding in the inquiries which were to convict himself of the basest if not the blackest of human crimes; there was something too in the reserved and yet insolent tone of his voice which, reminding me as it did of our long aversion to each other, made my very blood creep with abhorrence. I turned away, that I might not break my oath to Isora, for I felt strongly tempted to do so; and said, in as calm an accent as I could command, "The case will, I trust, require no king's evidence, and, at least, I will

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not be beholden to the man whom my reason condemns for any assistance in bringing upon himself the ultimate condemnation of the law."

Gerald looked at me sternly. "Were you not my brother," said he, in a low tone, "I would, for a charge so dishonoring my fair name, strike you dead at my feet."

"It is a wonderful exertion of fraternal love," I rejoined, with a scornful laugh, but an eye flashing with passions a thousand times more fierce than scorn, "that prevents your adding that last favor to those you have already bestowed on me."

Gerald, with a muttered curse, placed his hand upon his sword; my own rapier was instantly half drawn, when, to save us from the great guilt of mortal contest against each other, steps were heard, and a number of the domestics, charged with melancholy duties at the approaching rite, were seen slowly sweeping in black robes along the opposite gallery. Perhaps that interruption restored both of us to our senses, for we said, almost in the same breath and nearly in the same phrase, "This way of terminating strife is not for us;" and, as Gerald spoke, he turned slowly away, descended the staircase, and disappeared.

The funeral took place at night: a numerous procession of the tenants and peasantry attended. My poor uncle! there was not a dry eye for thee but those of thine own kindred. Tall, stately, erect in the power and majesty of his unrivalled form, stood Gerald, already assuming the dignity and lordship which, to speak frankly, so well became him; my mother's face was turned from me, but her attitude proclaimed her utterly absorbed in prayer. As for myself, my heart seemed hardened: I could not betray to the gaze of a

hundred strangers the emotions which I would have hidden from those whom I loved the most; wrapped in my cloak, with arms folded on my breast, and eyes bent to the ground, I leaned against one of the pillars of the chapel, apart, and apparently unmoved.

But when they were about to lower the body into the vault, a momentary weakness came over me. I made an involuntary step forward, a single but deep groan of anguish broke from me, and then, covering my face with my mantle, I resumed my former attitude, and all was still. The rite was over; in many and broken groups the spectators passed from the chapel, — some to speculate on the future lord, some to mourn over the late, and all to return the next morning to their wonted business, and let the glad sun teach them to forget the past, until for themselves the sun should be no more, and the forgetfulness eternal.

The hour was so late that I relinquished my intention of leaving the house that night; I ordered my horse to be in readiness at daybreak, and, before I retired to rest, I went to my mother's apartments: she received me with more feeling than she had ever testified before.

"Believe me, Morton," said she, and she kissed my forehead, — "believe me, I can fully enter into the feelings which you must naturally experience on an event so contrary to your expectations. I cannot conceal from you how much I am surprised. Certainly Sir William never gave any of us cause to suppose that he liked either of your brothers — Gerald less than Aubrey — so much as yourself; nor, poor man, was he in other things at all addicted to conceal his opinions."

"It is true, my mother," said I, — "it is true. Have you not, therefore, some suspicions of the authenticity of the will?"

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"Suspicions!" cried my mother. "No! — impossible! — suspicions of whom? You could not think Gerald so base, and who else had an interest in deception? Besides, the signature is undoubtedly Sir William's handwriting, and the will was regularly witnessed; suspicions, Morton, — no, impossible! Reflect, too, how eccentric and humorsome your uncle always was: suspicions! — no, impossible!"

"Such things have been, my mother, nor are they uncommon: men will hazard their souls — ay, and what to some is more precious still, their lives too — for the vile clay we call money. But enough of this now: the Law — that great arbiter, that eater of the oyster and divider of its shells — the Law will decide between us, and if against me, as I suppose and fear the decision will be, — why, I must be a suitor to fortune, instead of her commander. Give me your blessing, my dearest mother. I cannot stay longer in this house; to-morrow I leave you."

And my mother did bless me, and I fell upon her neck and clung to it. "Ah!" thought I, "this blessing is almost worth my uncle's fortune."

I returned to my room; there I saw on the table the case of the sword sent me by the French king. I had left it with my uncle, on my departure to town, and it had been found among his effects and reclaimed by me. I took out the sword, and drew it from the scabbard.

"Come," said I; and I kindled with a melancholy yet a deep enthusiasm, as I looked along the blade, — "come, my bright friend, with thee through this labyrinth which we call the world will I carve my way! Fairest and speediest of earth's levellers, thou makest the path from the low valley to the steep hill, and

shapest the soldier's axe into the monarch's sceptre! The laurel and the fasces, and the curule car, and the emperor's purple, — what are these but thy playthings, alternately thy scorn and thy reward? Founder of all empires, propagator of all creeds, thou leddest the Gaul and the Goth, and the gods of Rome and Greece crumbled upon their altars! Beneath thee, the fires of the Gheber waved pale, and on thy point the badge of the camel-driver blazed like a sun over the startled East! Eternal arbiter and unconquerable despot, while the passions of mankind exist! Most solemn of hypocrites, circling blood with glory as with a halo, and consecrating homicide and massacre with a hollow name, which the parched throat of thy votary, in the battle and the agony, shouteth out with its last breath! Star of all human destinies! I kneel before thee, and invoke from thy bright astrology an omen and a smile.”

CHAPTER IV.

An Episode. — The Son of the Greatest Man who (one only excepted) *ever rose to a Throne*, but by no means of the Greatest Man (save one) *who ever existed*.

BEFORE sunrise the next morning, I had commenced my return to London. I had previously intrusted to the *locum tenens* of the sage Desmarais the royal gift and (singular conjunction!) poor Ponto, my uncle's dog. Here let me pause, as I shall have no other opportunity to mention him, to record the fate of the canine bequest. He accompanied me some years afterwards to France, and he died there in extreme age. I shed tears, as I saw the last relic of my poor uncle expire; and I was not consoled even though he was buried in the garden of the gallant Villars, and immortalized by an epitaph from the pen of the courtly Chaulieu.

Leaving my horse to select his own pace, I surrendered myself to reflection upon the strange alteration that had taken place in my fortunes. There did not, in my own mind, rest a doubt but that some villany had been practised with respect to the will. My uncle's constant and unvarying favor towards me; the unequivocal expressions he himself from time to time had dropped indicative of his future intentions on my behalf; the easy and natural manner in which he had seemed to consider, as a thing of course, my heritage and succession to his estates, — all, coupled with his own frank and kindly character, so little disposed to

raise hopes which he meant to disappoint, might alone have been sufficient to arouse my suspicions at a devise so contrary to all past experience of the testator. But when to these were linked the bold temper and the daring intellect of my brother, joined to his personal hatred to myself; his close intimacy with Montreuil, whom I believed capable of the darkest designs; the sudden and evidently concealed appearance of the latter on the day my uncle died; the agitation and paleness of the attorney; the enormous advantages accruing to Gerald, and to no one else, from the terms of the devise, — when these were all united into one focus of evidence, they appeared to me to leave no doubt of the forgery of the testament, and the crime of Gerald. Nor was there anything in my brother's bearing and manner calculated to abate my suspicions. His agitation was real; his surprise might have been feigned; his offer of assistance in investigation was an unmeaning bravado; his conduct to myself testified his continued ill-will towards me, — an ill will which might possibly have instigated him in the fraud, scarcely less than the whispers of interest and cupidity.

But while this was the natural and indelible impression on my mind, I could not disguise from myself the extreme difficulty I should experience in resisting my brother's claim. So far as my utter want of all legal knowledge would allow me to decide, I could perceive nothing in the will itself which would admit of a lawyer's successful cavil: my reasons for suspicion, so conclusive to myself, would seem nugatory to a judge. My uncle was known as a humorist; and prove that a man differs from others in one thing, and the world will believe that he differs from them in a thousand. His favor to me would be, in the popular eye, only an

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eccentricity, and the unlooked-for disposition of his will only a caprice. Possession, too, gave Gerald a proverbial vantage-ground, which my whole life might be wasted in contesting; while his command of an immense wealth might more than probably exhaust my spirit by delay and my fortune by expenses. Precious prerogative of law to reverse the attribute of the Almighty, — to fill the *rich* with good things, but to send the poor empty away! *In corruptissimâ republicâ plurimæ leges.* Legislation perplexed is synonymous with crime unpunished, — a reflection, by the way, I should never have made if I had never had a lawsuit: sufferers are ever reformers.

Revolving, then, these anxious and unpleasing thoughts, interrupted at times by regrets of a purer and less selfish nature for the friend I had lost, and wandering at others to the brighter anticipations of rejoining Isora, and drinking from her eyes my comfort for the past and my hope for the future, I continued and concluded my day's travel.

The next day, on resuming my journey, and on feeling the time approach that would bring me to Isora, something like joy became the most prevalent feeling on my mind. So true it is that misfortunes little affect us so long as we have some ulterior object, which, by arousing hope, steals us from affliction. Alas! the pang of a moment becomes intolerable when we know of nothing *beyond* the moment which it soothes us to anticipate! Happiness lives in the light of the future: attack the present, she defies you! darken the future, and you destroy her!

It was a beautiful morning: through the vapors, which rolled slowly away beneath his beams, the sun broke gloriously forth; and over wood and hill, and the

low plains, which, covered with golden corn, stretched immediately before me, his smile lay in stillness, but in joy. And ever from out the brake and the scattered copse, which at frequent intervals beset the road, the merry birds sent a fitful and glad music to mingle with the sweets and freshness of the air.

I had accomplished the greater part of my journey, and had entered into a more wooded and garden-like description of country, when I perceived an old man, in a kind of low chaise, vainly endeavoring to hold in a little but spirited horse, which had taken alarm at some object on the road, and was running away with its driver. The age of the gentleman and the lightness of the chaise gave me some alarm for the safety of the driver; so, tying my own horse to a gate, lest the sound of his hoofs might only increase the speed and fear of the fugitive, I ran with a swift and noiseless step along the other side of the hedge, and coming out into the road just before the pony's head, I succeeded in arresting him at rather a critical spot and moment. The old gentleman very soon recovered his alarm; and, returning me many thanks for my interference, requested me to accompany him to his house, which he said was two or three miles distant.

Though I had no desire to be delayed in my journey for the mere sake of seeing an old gentleman's house, I thought my new acquaintance's safety required me, at least, to offer to act as his charioteer till we reached his house. To my secret vexation at that time, though I afterwards thought the petty inconvenience was amply repaid by a conference with a very singular and once noted character, the offer was accepted. Surrendering my own steed to the care of a ragged boy, who promised to lead it with equal judgment and zeal, I entered the

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little car, and, keeping a firm hand and constant eye on the reins, brought the offending quadruped into a very equable and sedate pace.

"Poor Pob," said the old gentleman, apostrophizing his horse, — "poor Pob, like thy betters, thou knowest the weak hand from the strong; and when thou art not held in by power, thou wilt chafe against love; so that thou renewest in my mind the remembrance of its favorite maxim, namely, 'The only preventative to rebellion is restraint!'"

"Your observation, sir," said I, rather struck by this address, "makes very little in favor of the more generous feelings by which we ought to be actuated. It is a base mind which always requires the bit and bridle."

"It is, sir," answered the old gentleman; "I allow it; but though I have some love for human nature, I have no respect for it; and while I pity its infirmities, I cannot but confess them."

"Methinks, sir," replied I, "that you have uttered in that short speech more sound philosophy than I have heard for months. There is wisdom in not thinking too loftily of human clay, and benevolence in not judging it too harshly, and something, too, of magnanimity in this moderation; for we seldom condemn mankind till they have hurt us, and when they have hurt us we seldom do anything but detest them for the injury."

"You speak shrewdly, sir, for one so young," returned the old man, looking hard at me; "and I will be sworn you have suffered some cares: for we never begin to think till we are a little afraid to hope."

I sighed as I answered, "There are some men, I fancy, to whom constitution supplies the office of care;

who, naturally melancholy, become easily addicted to reflection, and reflection is a soil which soon repays us for whatever trouble we bestow upon its culture."

"True, sir!" said my companion, — and there was a pause. The old gentleman resumed: "We are not far from my home now (or rather my temporary residence, for my proper and general home is at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire); and as the day is scarcely half spent, I trust you will not object to partake of a hermit's fare. Nay, nay, no excuse; I assure you that I am not a gossip in general, or a liberal dispenser of invitations; and I think, if you refuse me now, you will hereafter regret it."

My curiosity was rather excited by this threat; and, reflecting that my horse required a short rest, I subdued my impatience to return to town, and accepted the invitation. We came presently to a house of moderate size and rather antique fashion. This, the old man informed me, was his present abode. A servant, almost as old as his master, came to the door, and, giving his arm to my host, led him, for he was rather lame and otherwise infirm, across a small hall into a long, low apartment. I followed.

A miniature of Oliver Cromwell, placed over the chimney-piece, forcibly arrested my attention.

"It is the only portrait of the Protector I ever saw," said I, "which impresses on me the certainty of a likeness: that resolute, gloomy brow; that stubborn lip; that heavy yet not stolid expression, — all seem to warrant resemblance to that singular and fortunate man, to whom folly appears to have been as great an instrument of success as wisdom, and who rose to the supreme power, perhaps, no less from a pitiable fanaticism than an admirable genius. So true is it that great men often

soar to their height by qualities the least obvious to the spectator, and (to stoop to a low comparison) resemble that animal¹ in which a common ligament supplies the place and possesses the property of wings."

The old man smiled very slightly, as I made this remark. "If this be true," said he, with an impressive tone, "though we may wonder less at the talents of the Protector, we must be more indulgent to his character, nor condemn him for insincerity when at heart he himself was deceived."

"It is in that light," said I, "that I have always viewed his conduct. And though myself, by prejudice, a cavalier and a Tory, I own that Cromwell (hypocrite as he is esteemed) appears to me as much to have exceeded his royal antagonist and victim, in the virtue of sincerity, as he did in the grandeur of his genius and the profound consistency of his ambition."

"Sir," said my host, with a warmth that astonished me, "you seem to have known that man, so justly do you judge him. Yes," said he, after a pause, — "yes, perhaps no one ever so varnished to his own breast his designs; no one so covetous of glory was ever so duped by conscience; no one ever rose to such a height through so few acts that seemed to himself worthy of remorse."

At this part of our conversation the servant, entering, announced dinner. We adjourned to another room, and partook of a homely yet not uninviting repast. When men are pleased with each other, conversation soon gets beyond the ordinary surfaces to talk; and an exchange of deeper opinions is speedily effected by what old Barnes² quaintly enough terms, "The Gentleman Usher of all Knowledge, — Sermocination!"

¹ The flying squirrel.

² In the "Gerania."

It was a pretty though small room where we dined, and I observed that in this apartment, as in the other into which I had been first ushered, there were several books scattered about, in that confusion and number which show that they have become to their owner both the choicest luxury and the least dispensable necessary. So, during dinner-time, we talked principally upon books, and I observed that those which my host seemed to know the best were of the elegant and poetical order of philosophers, who, more fascinating than deep, preach up the blessings of a solitude which is useless, and a content which, deprived of passion, excitement, and energy, would, if it could ever exist, only be a dignified name for vegetation.

“So,” said he, when, the dinner being removed, we were left alone with that substitute for all society, wine! — “so you are going to town: in four hours more you will be in that great focus of noise, falsehood, hollow joy, and real sorrow. Do you know that I have become so wedded to the country that I cannot but consider all those who leave it for the turbulent city, in the same light, half wondering, half compassionating, as that in which the ancients regarded the hardy adventurers who left the safe land and their happy homes, voluntarily to expose themselves in a frail vessel to the dangers of an uncertain sea. Here, when I look out on the green fields and the blue sky, the quiet herbs, basking in the sunshine or scattered over the unpolluted plains, I cannot but exclaim with Pliny, ‘This is the true *Μουσείον*!’ this is the source whence flow inspiration to the mind and tranquillity to the heart! And in my love of Nature — more confiding and constant than ever is the love we bear to woman — I cry with the tender and sweet Tibullus, —

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‘Ego composito securus acervo
Despiciam dites, despiciamque famem.’”¹

“These,” said I, “are the sentiments we all (perhaps the most restless of us the most passionately) at times experience. But there is in our hearts some secret but irresistible principle, that impels us, as a rolling circle, onward, onward, in the great orbit of our destiny; nor do we find a respite until the wheels on which we move are broken, — at the tomb.”

“Yet,” said my host, “the internal principle you speak of can be arrested before the grave; at least stilled and impeded. You will smile incredulously, perhaps (for I see you do not know who I am), when I tell you that I might once have been a monarch, and that obscurity seemed to me more enviable than empire; I resigned the occasion: the tide of fortune rolled onward, and left me safe but solitary and forsaken upon the dry land. If you wonder at my choice, you will wonder still more when I tell you that I have never repented it.”

Greatly surprised and even startled, I heard my host make this strange avowal. “Forgive me,” said I, “but you have powerfully excited my interest; dare I inquire from whose experience I am now deriving a lesson?”

“Not yet,” said my host, smiling, — “not till our conversation is over, and you have bid the old anchorite adieu, in all probability, forever: you will then know that you have conversed with a man perhaps more universally neglected and contemned than any of his contemporaries. Yes,” he continued, — “yes, I resigned power, and I got no praise for my moderation, but con-

¹ “Satisfied with my little hoard, I can despise wealth, and fear not hunger.”

tempt for my folly; no human being would believe that I could have relinquished that treasure through a disregard for its possession which others would only have relinquished through an incapacity to retain it; and that which, had they seen it recorded in an ancient history, men would have regarded as the height of philosophy, they despised when acted under their eyes, as the extremest abasement of imbecility. Yet I compare my lot with that of the great man whom I was expected to equal in ambition, and to whose grandeur I might have succeeded; and am convinced that in this retreat I am more to be envied than he in the plenitude of his power and the height of his renown; yet, is not happiness the aim of wisdom? If my choice is happier than his, is it not wiser?"

"Alas!" thought I, "the wisest men seldom have the loftiest genius, and perhaps happiness is granted rather to mediocrity of mind than to mediocrity of circumstance;" but I did not give so uncourteous a reply to my host an audible utterance; on the contrary, "I do not doubt," said I, as I rose to depart, "the wisdom of a choice which has brought you self-gratulation. And it has been said by a man both great and good, a man to whose mind was open the lore of the closet and the experience of courts, — that in wisdom or in folly 'the only difference between one man and another is whether a man governs his passions or his passions him.' According to this rule, which, indeed, is a classic and a golden aphorism, Alexander, on the throne of Persia, might have been an idiot to Diogenes in his tub. And now, sir, in wishing you farewell, let me again crave your indulgence to my curiosity."

"Not yet, not yet," answered my host; and he led me once more into the other room. While they were

preparing my horse, we renewed our conversation. To the best of my recollection, we talked about Plato; but I had now become so impatient to rejoin Isora that I did not accord to my worthy host the patient attention I had hitherto given him. When I took leave of him, he blessed me, and placed a piece of paper in my hand. "Do not open this," said he, "till you are at least two miles hence; your curiosity will then be satisfied. If ever you travel this road again, or if ever you pass by Cheshunt, pause and see if the old philosopher is dead. Adieu!"

And so we parted.

You may be sure that I had not passed the appointed distance of two miles very far, when I opened the paper and read the following words:—

Perhaps, young stranger, at some future period of a life which I venture to foretell will be adventurous and eventful it may afford you a matter for reflection or a resting-spot for a moral, to remember that you have seen, in old age and obscurity, the son of Him who shook an Empire, avenged a people, and obtained a throne, only to be the victim of his own passions and the dupe of his own reason. I repeat now the question I before put to you,— Was the fate of the great Protector fairer than that of the despised and forgotten

RICHARD CROMWELL?

"So," thought I, "it is indeed with the son of the greatest ruler of England, or perhaps in modern times, Europe has ever produced, that I have held this conversation upon content! Yes, perhaps your fate is more to be envied than that of your illustrious father, but who *would* envy it more? Strange, that while we pretend that happiness is the object of all desire, happiness is the last thing which we covet. Love and wealth and pleasure and honor,— these are the roads

which we take, so long that, accustomed to the mere travel, we forget that it was first undertaken, not for the course, but the goal; and, in the common infatuation which pervades all our race, we make the toil the meed, and in following the means forsake the end."

I never saw my host again; very shortly afterwards he died:¹ and Fate, which had marked with so strong a separation the lives of the father and the son, united in that death — as its greatest, so its only universal blessing — the philosopher and the recluse with the warrior and the chief!

¹ Richard Cromwell died in 1712. — ED.

CHAPTER V.

In which the Hero shows Decision on more points than one. — More of Isora's character is developed.

To use the fine image in the "Arcadia," it was "when the sun, like a noble heart, began to show his greatest countenance in his lowest estate," that I arrived at Isora's door. I had written to her once, to announce my uncle's death and the day of my return; but I had not mentioned in my letter my reverse of fortunes: I reserved that communication till it could be softened by our meeting. I saw by the countenance of the servant who admitted me that all was well; so I asked no question: I flew up the stairs, — I broke into Isora's chamber, and in an instant she was in my arms. Ah, Love, Love! wherefore art thou so transitory a pilgrim on the earth, — an evening cloud which hovers on our horizon, drinking the hues of the sun, that grows ominously brighter as it verges to the shadow and the night, and which, the moment that sun is set, wanders on in darkness, or descends in tears?

"And now, my bird of Paradise," said I, as we sat alone in the apartment I had fitted up as the banqueting-room, and on which, though small in its proportions, I had lavished all the love of luxury and of show which made one of my most prevailing weaknesses, — "and now, how has time passed with you since we parted?"

"Need you ask, Morton? Ah, have you ever noted a poor dog deserted by its master, or rather not deserted,

for that you know is not my case yet," added Isora, playfully, "but left at home while the master went abroad? Have you noted how restless the poor animal is, — how it refuses all company and all comfort; how it goes a hundred times a day into the room which its master is wont mostly to inhabit; how it creeps on the sofa or the chair which the same absent idler was accustomed to press; how it selects some article of his very clothing; and curls jealously around it, and hides and watches over it as I have hid and watched over this glove, Morton? Have you ever noted that humble creature whose whole happiness is the smile of one being, when the smile was away? — then, Morton, you can tell how my time has passed during your absence."

I answered Isora by endearments and by compliments. She turned away from the latter.

"Never call me those fine names, I implore you," she whispered; "call me only by those pretty pet words by which I know you will never call any one else. Bee and bird are my names, and mine only; but beauty and angel are names you have given, or may give, to a hundred others! Promise me, then, to address me only in our own language."

"I promise, and lo! the seal to the promise. But tell me, Isora, do you not love these rare scents that make an Araby of this unmellowed clime? Do you not love the profusion of light which reflects so dazzling a lustre on that soft cheek, — and those eyes, which the ancient romancer¹ must have dreamed of when he wrote so prettily of 'eyes that seemed a temple where love and beauty were married'? Does not yon fruit take

¹ Sir Philip Sidney, who, if we may judge from the number of quotations from his works scattered in this book, seems to have been an especial favorite with Count Devereux. — Ed.

a more tempting hue, bedded as it is in those golden leaves? Does not sleep seem to hover with a downier wing over those sofas on which the limbs of a princess have been laid? In a word, is there not in luxury and in pomp a spell which no gentler or wiser mind would disdain?"

"It may be so!" said Isora, sighing; "but the splendor which surrounds us chills and almost terrifies me. I think that every proof of your wealth and rank puts me farther from you; then, too, I have some remembrance of the green sod, and the silver rill, and the trees upon which the young winds sing and play, — and I own that it is with the country, and not the town, that all my ideas of luxury are wed."

"But the numerous attendants; the long row of liveried hirelings, through which you may pass, as through a lane; the caparisoned steeds; the stately equipage; the jewelled tiara; the costly robe which matrons imitate and envy; the music, which lulls you to sleep; the lighted show; the gorgeous stage, — all these, the attributes or gifts of wealth, all these that you have the right to hope you will one day or other command, you will own are what you could very reluctantly forego!"

"Do you think so, Morton? Ah, I wish you were of my humble temper; the more we limit and concentrate happiness, the more certain, I think, we are of securing it, — they who widen the circle encroach upon the boundaries of danger; and they who freight their wealth upon an hundred vessels are more liable, Morton, are they not, to the peril of the winds and the waves than they who venture it only upon one?"

"Admirably reasoned, my little sophist; but if the one ship sink?"

"Why, I would embark myself in it as well as my wealth, and should sink with it."

"Well, well, Isora, your philosophy will perhaps soon be put to the test. I will talk to you to-morrow of business."

"And why not to-night?"

"To-night, when I have just returned! No, to-night I will only talk to you of love!"

As may be supposed, Isora was readily reconciled to my change of circumstances; and indeed that sum which seemed poverty to me appeared positive wealth to her. But perhaps few men are by nature and inclination more luxurious and costly than myself; always accustomed to a profuse expenditure at my uncle's, I fell insensibly and *con amore*, on my *début* in London, into all the extravagances of the age. Sir William, pleased rather than discontented with my habits, especially as they were attended with some *éclat*, pressed upon me proofs of his generosity which, since I knew his wealth and considered myself his heir, I did not scruple to accept; and at the time of my return to London after his death, I had not only spent to the full the princely allowance I had received from him, but was above half my whole fortune in debt. However, I had horses and equipages, jewels and plate, and I did not long wrestle with my pride before I obtained the victory, and sent all my valuables to the hammer. They sold pretty well, all things considered, for I had a certain reputation in the world for taste and munificence; and when I had received the produce and paid my debts, I found that the whole balance in my favor, including, of course, my uncle's legacy, was fifteen thousand pounds.

It was no had younger brother's portion, perhaps;

but I was in no humor to be made a younger brother without a struggle. So I went to the lawyers; they looked at the will, considered the case, and took their fees. Then the honestest of them, with the coolest air in the world, told me to content myself with my legacy, for the cause was hopeless: the will was sufficient to exclude a wilderness of elder sons. I need not add that I left this lawyer with a very contemptible opinion of his understanding. I went to another; he told me the same thing, only in a different manner, and I thought him as great a fool as his fellow practitioner. At last I chanced upon a little brisk gentleman, with a quick eye and a sharp voice, who wore a wig that carried conviction in every curl; had an independent, upright mien, and such a logical, emphatic way of expressing himself that I was quite charmed with him. This gentleman scarce heard me out before he assured me that I had a famous case of it; that he liked making quick work and proceeding with vigor; that he hated rogues, and delay, which was the sign of a rogue but not the necessary sign of law; that I was the most fortunate man imaginable in coming to him, and, in short, that I had nothing to do but commence proceedings, and leave all the rest to him. I was very soon talked into this proposal, and very soon embarked in the luxurious ocean of litigation.

Having settled this business so satisfactorily, I went to receive the condolence and sympathy of St. John. Notwithstanding the arduous occupations both of pleasure and of power in which he was constantly engaged, he had found time to call upon me very often, and to express by letter great disappointment that I had neither received nor returned his visits. Touched by the phenomenon of so much kindness in a statesman, I

paid him in return the only compliment in my power; namely, I asked his advice, — with a view of taking it.

“ Politics, politics, my dear Count,” said he, in answer to that request, — “ nothing like it; I will get you a seat in the House by next week, — you are just of age, I think, — Heavens! a man like you, who has learning enough for a German professor, assurance that would almost abash a Milesian, a very pretty choice of words, and a pointed way of consummating a jest, — why, with you by my side, my dear Count, I will soon — ”

“ St. John,” said I, interrupting him, “ you forget I am a Catholic! ”

“ Ah, I did forget that,” replied St. John, slowly. “ Heaven help me, Count, but I’m sorry your ancestors were not converted; it was a pity they should bequeath you their religion without the estate to support it, for Papaey has become a terrible tax to its followers.”

“ I wonder,” said I, “ whether the earth will ever be governed by Christians, not cavillers; by followers of our Saviour, not by co-operators of the devil; by men who obey the former, and ‘ love one another,’ not by men who walk about with the latter (that roaring lion), ‘ seeking whom they may devour.’ Intolerance makes us acquainted with strange nonsense, and folly is never so ludicrous as when associated with something sacred; it is then like Punch and his wife in Powell’s puppet-show, *dancing in the Ark*. For example, to tell those who differ from us that they are in a delusion, and yet to persecute them for that delusion, is to equal the wisdom of our forefathers, who, we are told, in the *Dæmonologie* of the Scottish Solomon, ‘ burnt a whole monasterie of nunnes for being misled, not by men, but *dreames!*’ ”

And being somewhat moved, I ran on for a long time in a very eloquent strain, upon the disadvantages of intolerance; which, I would have it, was a policy as familiar to Protestantism now as it had been to Popery in the dark ages; quite forgetting that it is not the vice of a peculiar sect, but of a ruling party.

St. John, who thought, or affected to think, very differently from me on these subjects, shook his head gently, but with his usual good breeding deemed it rather too sore a subject for discussion.

"I will tell you a discovery I have made," said I.

"And what is it?"

"Listen: that man is wisest who is happiest, — granted. What does happiness consist in? Power, wealth, popularity, and above all, content! Well, then, no man ever obtains so much power, so much popularity, and, above all, such thorough self-content as a fool; a fool, therefore (this is no paradox), is the wisest of men. Fools govern the world in purple, — the wise laugh at them; but they laugh in rags. Fools thrive at court; fools thrive in state chambers; fools thrive in boudoirs; fools thrive in rich men's legacies. Who is so beloved as a fool? Every man seeks him, laughs at him, and hugs him. Who is so secure in his own opinion, so high in complacency, as a fool, *suâ virtute involvit*. Hark ye, St. John, let us turn fools, — they are the only potentates, the only philosophers of earth. Oh, motley, 'motley's your only wear'!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed St. John; and, rising, he insisted upon carrying me with him to the rehearsal of a new play, in order, as he said, to dispel my spleen, and prepare me for ripe decision upon the plans to be adopted for bettering my fortune.

But, in good truth, nothing calculated to advance so comfortable and praiseworthy an end seemed to present itself. My religion was an effectual bar to any hope of rising in the state. Europe now began to wear an aspect that promised universal peace, and the sword which I had so poetically apostrophized was not likely to be drawn upon any more glorious engagement than a brawl with the Mohawks, any incautious noses appertaining to which fraternity I was fully resolved to slit whenever they came conveniently in my way. To add to the unpromising state of my worldly circumstances, my uncle's death had removed the only legitimate barrier to the acknowledgment of my marriage with Isora, and it became due to her to proclaim and publish that event. Now, if there be any time in the world when a man's friends look upon him most coldly, when they speak of his capacities of rising the most despondingly, when they are most inclined, in short, to set him down as a silly sort of fellow, whom it is no use inconveniencing one's self to assist, it is at that moment when he has made what the said friends are pleased to term an imprudent marriage! It was, therefore, no remarkable instance of good luck that the express time for announcing that I had contracted that species of marriage was the express time for my wanting the assistance of those kind-hearted friends. Then, too, by the pleasing sympathies in worldly opinion, the neglect of one's friends is always so damnably neighbored by the exultation of one's foes! Never was there a man who, without being very handsome, very rude, or very much in public life, had made unto himself more enemies than it had been my lot to make. How the rascals would all sneer and coin dull jests when they saw me so down in the world! The very old maids, who, so long as they thought me

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single, would have declared that the will was a fraud, would, directly they heard I was married, ask if Gerald was handsome, and assert, with a wise look, that my uncle knew well what he was about. Then the joy of the Lady Hasselton, and the curled lip of the haughty Tarleton! It is a very odd circumstance, but it is very true that the people we most despise have the most influence over our actions: a man never ruins himself by giving dinners to his father, or turning his house into a palace in order to feast his bosom friend: on the contrary, 't is the poor devil of a friend who fares the worst, and starves on the family joint, while mine host beggars himself to banquet "that disagreeable Mr. A., who is such an insufferable ass," and mine hostess sends her husband to the Fleet by vying with "that odious Mrs. B., who was always her aversion!"

Just in the same manner, no thought disturbed me, in the step I was about to take, half so sorely as the recollection of Lady Hasselton the coquette, and Mr. Tarleton the gambler. However, I have said, somewhere or other, that nothing selfish on a small scale polluted my love for Isora; nor did there. I had resolved to render her speedy and full justice; and if I sometimes recurred to the disadvantages to myself, I always had pleasure in thinking that they were *sacrifices* to her. But to my great surprise, when I first announced to Isora my intention of revealing our marriage, I perceived in her countenance, always such a traitor to her emotions, a very different expression from that which I had anticipated. A deadly paleness spread over her whole face, and a shudder seemed to creep through her frame. She attempted, however, to smile away the alarm she had created in me; nor was I able to penetrate the cause of an emotion so unlooked for.

But I continued to speak of the public announcement of our union as of a thing decided; and at length she listened to me while I arranged the method of making it, and sympathized in the future projects I chalked out for us to adopt. Still, however, when I proposed a definite time for the re-celebration of our nuptials, she ever drew back, and hinted the wish for a longer delay.

“Not so soon, dear Morton,” she would say tearfully, — “not so soon; we are happy now, and perhaps when you are with me always, you will not love me so well!”

I reasoned against this notion and this reluctance, but in vain; and day passed on day, and even week on week, and our marriage was still undeclared. I now lived, however, almost wholly with Isora, for busy tongues could no longer carry my secret to my uncle; and, indeed, since I had lost the fortune which I was expected to inherit, it is astonishing how little people troubled their heads about my movements or myself. I lived then almost wholly with Isora, — and did familiarity abate my love? Strange to say, it did not abate even the romance of it. The reader may possibly remember a conversation with St. John recorded in the Second Book of this history. “The deadliest foe to love,” said he (he who had known all love, — that of the senses and that also of the soul!) “is not change, nor misfortune, nor jealousy, nor wrath, nor anything that flows from passion or emanates from fortune. The deadliest foe to love is CUSTOM!”

Was St. John right? — I believe that in most instances he was; and perhaps the custom was not continued in my case long enough for me to refute the maxim. But as yet the very gloss upon the god’s wings was fresh as on the first day when I had acknowledged his power. Still was Isora to me the light and

the music of existence! — still did my heart thrill and leap within me when her silver and fond voice made the air a blessing. Still would I hang over her, when her beautiful features lay hushed in sleep, and watch the varying hues of her cheek, and fancy, while she slept, that in each low, sweet breath that my lips drew from hers, was a whisper of tenderness and endearment! Still when I was absent from her, my soul seemed to mourn a separation from its better and dearer part, and the joyous senses of existence saddened and shrunk into a single want! Still was her presence to my heart as a breathing atmosphere of poesy which circled and tinted all human things; still was my being filled with that delicious and vague melancholy which the very excess of rapture alone produces, — the knowledge we dare not breathe to ourselves that the treasure in which our heart is stored is not above the casualties of fate. The sigh that mingles with the kiss; the tear that glistens in the impassioned and yearning gaze; the deep tide in our spirit, over which the moon and the stars have power; the chain of harmony within the thought, which has a mysterious link with all that is fair and pure and bright in Nature, knitting as it were loveliness with love! — all this, all that I cannot express; all that to the young for whom the real world has had few spells and the world of visions has been a home, who love at last and for the first time, — all that to them are known were still mine.

In truth, Isora was one well calculated to sustain and to rivet romance. The cast of her beauty was so dream-like and yet so varying, — her temper was so little mingled with the common characteristics of woman; it had so little of caprice, so little of vanity, so utter an absence of all jealous and all angry feeling; it was so

made up of tenderness and devotion, and yet so imaginative and fairy-like in its fondness, that it was difficult to bear only the sentiments of earth for one who had so little of earth's clay. She was more like the women whom one imagines are the creations of poetry, and yet of whom no poetry, save that of Shakespeare's, reminds us; and to this day, when I go into the world, I never see aught of our own kind which recalls her, or even one of her features, to my memory. But when I am alone with Nature, methinks a sweet sound or a newborn flower has something of a familiar power over those stored and deep impressions which do make her image, and it brings her more vividly before my eyes than any shape or face of her own sex, however beautiful it may be.

There was also another trait in her character which, though arising in her weakness, not her virtues, yet perpetuated the more dream-like and imaginary qualities of our passion: this was a melancholy superstition, developing itself in forebodings and omens which interested, because they were steeped at once in the poetry and in the deep sincerity of her nature. She was impressed with a strong and uncontrollable feeling that her fate was predestined to a dark course and an early end; and she drew from all things around her something to feed the pensive character of her thoughts. The stillness of noon; the holy and eloquent repose of twilight, — its rosy sky and its soft air, its shadows and its dews, — had equally for her heart a whisper and a spell. The wan stars, where from the eldest time man has shaped out a chart of the undiscoverable future; the mysterious moon, to which the great ocean ministers from its untrodden shrines; the winds, which traverse the vast air, pilgrims from an eternal home to

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an unpenetrated bourn; the illimitable heavens, on which none ever gazed without a vague craving for something that the earth cannot give, and a vague sense of a former existence in which that something was enjoyed; the holy night, — that solemn and circling sleep which seems in its repose to image our death and in its living worlds to shadow forth the immortal realms which only through that death we can survey, — all had, for the deep heart of Isora, a language of omen and of doom. Often would we wander alone, and for hours together, by the quiet and wild woods and streams that surrounded her retreat, and which we both loved so well; and often, when the night closed over us with my arm around her, and our lips so near that our atmosphere was our mutual breath, would she utter, in that voice which “made the soul plant itself in the ears,” the predictions which had nursed themselves at her heart.

I remember one evening in especial. The rich twilight had gathered over us, and we sat by a slender and soft rivulet, overshadowed by some stunted yet aged trees. We had both, before she spoke, been silent for several minutes; and only when, at rare intervals, the birds sent from the copse that backed us a solitary and vesper note of music, was the stillness around us broken. Before us, on the opposite bank of the stream, lay a valley, in which shadow and wood concealed all trace of man’s dwellings, save at one far spot, where from a single hut rose a curling and thin vapor, — like a spirit released from earth, and losing gradually its earthier particles, as it blends itself with the loftier atmosphere of heaven.

It was then that Isora, clinging closer to me, whispered her forebodings of death. “You will remember,”

said she, smiling faintly, — “ you will remember me, in the lofty and bright career which yet awaits you; and I scarcely know whether I would not sooner have that memory, — free as it will be from all recollection of my failings and faults, and all that I have cost you, than incur the chance of your future coldness or decrease of love.”

And when Isora turned, and saw that the tears stood in my eyes, she kissed them away and said, after a pause, —

“ It matters not, my own guardian angel, what becomes of me; and now that I am near you, it is wicked to let my folly cost you a single pang. But why should you grieve at my forebodings? There is nothing painful or harsh in them to me, and I interpret them thus: ‘ If my life passes away before the common date, perhaps it will be a sacrifice to yours.’ And it will, Morton, — it will. The love I bear to you I can but feebly express now; all of us wish to prove our feelings, and I would give one proof of mine for you. It seems to me that I was made only for one purpose, — to love you; and I would fain hope that my death may be some sort of sacrifice to you, some token of the ruling passion and the whole object of my life.”

As Isora said this, the light of the moon, which had just risen, shone full upon her cheek, flushed as it was with a deeper tint than it usually wore; and in her eye, her features, her forehead, the lofty nature of her love seemed to have stamped the divine expression of itself.

Have I lingered too long on these passages of life? They draw near to a close, and a more adventurous and stirring period of manhood will succeed. Ah, little

could they who in after years beheld in me but the careless yet stern soldier, the wily and callous diplomatist, the companion alternately so light and so moodily reserved, — little could they tell how soft and weak and doting my heart was once!

CHAPTER VI.

An unexpected Meeting. — Conjecture and Anticipation.

THE day for the public solemnization of our marriage was at length appointed. In fact, the plan for the future that appeared to me most promising was to proffer my services to some foreign court, and that of Russia held out to me the greatest temptation. I was therefore anxious, as soon as possible, to conclude the rite of a second or public nuptials, and I purposed leaving the country within a week afterwards. My little lawyer assured me that my suit would go on quite as well in my absence, and whenever my presence was necessary, he would be sure to inform me of it. I did not doubt him in the least; it is a charming thing to have confidence in one's man of business.

Of Montreuil I now saw nothing; but I accidentally heard that he was on a visit to Gerald, and that the latter had already made the old walls ring with premature hospitality. As for Aubrey, I was in perfect ignorance of his movements; and the unsatisfactory shortness of his last letter, and the wild expressions so breathing of fanaticism in the postscript, had given me much anxiety and alarm on his account. I longed above all to see him, — to talk with him over old times and our future plans, and to learn whether no new bias could be given to a temperament which seemed to lean so strongly towards a self-punishing superstition. It

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was about a week before the day fixed for my public nuptials that I received at last from him the following letter: —

MY DEAREST BROTHER, — I have been long absent from home, — absent on affairs on which we will talk hereafter. I have not forgotten you, though I have been silent, and the news of my poor uncle's death has shocked me greatly. On my arrival here, I learned your disappointment and your recourse to law. I am not so much surprised, though I am as much grieved as yourself, for I will tell you now what seemed to me unimportant before. On receiving your letter, requesting consent to your designed marriage, my uncle seemed greatly displeased as well as vexed, and afterwards he heard much that displeased him more. From what quarter came his news I know not, and he only spoke of it in innuendos and angry insinuations. As far as I was able, I endeavored to learn his meaning, but could not, and to my praises of you I thought latterly he seemed to lend but a cold ear; he told me at last, when I was about to leave him, that you had acted ungratefully to him, and that he should alter his will. I scarcely thought of this speech at the time, or rather I considered it as the threat of a momentary anger. Possibly, however, it was the prelude to that disposition of property which has so wounded you. I observe, too, that the will bears date about that period. I mention this fact to you, — you can draw from it what inference you will; but I do solemnly believe that Gerald is innocent of any fraud towards you.

I am all anxiety to hear whether your love continues. I beseech you to write to me instantly and inform me on that head as on all others. We shall meet soon.

Your ever affectionate Brother,

AUBREY DEVEREUX.

There was something in this letter that vexed and displeased me. I thought it breathed a tone of unkindness and indifference which my present circumstances rendered peculiarly inexcusable. So far, therefore,

from answering it immediately, I resolved not to reply to it till after the solemnization of my marriage. The anecdote of my uncle startled me a little when I coupled it with the words my uncle had used towards myself on his deathbed, — namely, in hinting that he had heard some things unfavorable to Isora, unnecessary then to repeat; but still if my uncle had altered his intentions towards me, would he not have mentioned the change and its reasons? Would he have written to me with such kindness, or received me with such affection? I could not believe that he would; and my opinions of the fraud and the perpetrator were not a whit changed by Aubrey's epistle. It was clear, however, that he had joined the party against me; and as my love for him was exceedingly great, I was much wounded by the idea.

“ All leave me,” said I, “ upon this reverse, — all but Isora!” and I thought with renewed satisfaction on the step which was about to insure to her a secure home and an honorable station. My fears lest Isora should again be molested by her persecutor were now pretty well at rest. Having no doubt in my own mind as to that persecutor's identity, I imagined that in his new acquisition of wealth and pomp, a boyish and unreturned love would easily be relinquished; and that, perhaps, he would scarcely regret my obtaining the prize himself had sought for, when in my altered fortunes it would be followed by such worldly depreciation. In short, I looked upon him as possessing a characteristic common to most bad men, who are never so influenced by love as they are by hatred; and imagined, therefore, that if he had lost the object of the love, he could console himself by exulting over any decline of prosperity in the object of the hate.

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As the appointed day drew near, Isora's despondency seemed to vanish, and she listened, with her usual eagerness in whatever interested me, to my continental schemes of enterprise. I resolved, that our second wedding, though public, should be modest and unostentatious, suitable rather to our fortunes than our birth. St. John and a few old friends of the family constituted all the party I invited, and I requested them to keep my marriage secret until the very day for celebrating it arrived. I did this from a desire of avoiding compliments intended as sarcasms, and visits rather of curiosity than friendship. On flew the days, and it was now the one preceding my wedding. I was dressing to go out upon a matter of business connected with the ceremony, and I then, as I received my hat from Desmarais, for the first time thought it requisite to acquaint that accomplished gentleman with the rite of the morrow. Too well bred was Monsieur Desmarais to testify any other sentiment than pleasure at the news; and he received my orders and directions for the next day with more than the graceful urbanity which made one always feel quite honored by his attentions.

"And how goes on the philosophy?" said I, — "faith, since I am about to be married, I shall be likely to require its consolations."

"Indeed, Monsieur," answered Desmarais, with that expression of self-conceit which was so curiously interwoven with the obsequiousness of his address, — "indeed, Monsieur, I have been so occupied of late in preparing a little powder very essential to dress, that I have not had time for any graver though not perhaps more important avocations."

"Powder, — and what is it?"

"Will Monsieur condescend to notice its effect?"

answered Desmarais, producing a pair of gloves which were tinted of the most delicate flesh-color. The coloring was so nice, that, when the gloves were on, it would have been scarcely possible at any distance to distinguish them from the naked flesh.

"'T is a rare invention," said I.

"Monsieur is very good, but I flatter myself it is so," rejoined Desmarais; and he forthwith ran on far more earnestly on the merits of his powder than I had ever heard him descant on the beauties of Fatalism. I cut him short in the midst of his harangue. Too much eloquence in any line is displeasing in one's dependant.

I had just concluded my business abroad, and was returning homeward with downcast eyes and in a very abstracted mood, when I was suddenly startled by a loud voice that exclaimed in a tone of surprise: "What! — Count Devereux, — how fortunate!"

I looked up, and saw a little, dark man, shabbily dressed. His face did not seem unfamiliar to me, but I could not at first remember where I had seen it. My look, I suppose, testified my want of memory, for he said, with a low bow, —

"You have forgotten me, Count, and I don't wonder at it. So please you, I am the person who once brought you a letter from France to Devereux Court."

At this I recognized the bearer of that epistle which had embroiled me with the Abbé Montreuil. I was too glad of the meeting to show any coolness in my reception of the gentleman, and, to speak candidly, I never saw a gentleman less troubled with *mauvaise honte*.

"Sir!" said he, lowering his voice to a whisper, "it is most fortunate that I should thus have met you; I only came to town this morning, and for the sole purpose of seeking you out. I am charged with a packet,

which I believe will be of the greatest importance to your interests. But," he added, looking round, "the streets are no proper place for my communication; *parbleu!* there are those about who hear whispers through stone walls, — suffer me to call upon you to-morrow."

"To-morrow! it is a day of great business with me, but I can possibly spare you a few moments, if that will suffice; or, on the day after, your own pleasure may be the sole limit of our interview."

"*Parbleu*, Monsieur, you are very obliging, — very; but I will tell you in one word who I am, and what is my business. My name is Marie Oswald. I was born in France, and I am the half-brother of that Oswald who drew up your uncle's will."

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "is it possible that you know anything of that affair?"

"Hush, — yes, all! my poor brother is just dead; and, in a word, I am charged with a packet given me by him on his death-bed. Now, will you see me if I bring it to-morrow?"

"Certainly. Can I not see you to-night?"

"To-night? — No, not well; *parbleu!* I want a little consideration as to the reward due to me for my eminent services to your lordship. No; let it be to-morrow."

"Well! at what hour? I fear it must be in the evening."

"Seven, *s'il vous plait*, Monsieur."

"Enough! be it so."

And Mr. Marie Oswald, who seemed during the whole of this short conference to have been under some great apprehension of being seen or overheard, bowed, and vanished in an instant, leaving my mind in a most motley state of incoherent, unsatisfactory, yet sanguine conjecture.

CHAPTER VII.

The events of a Single Night. — Moments make the Hues in which
Years are colored.

MEN of the old age! what wonder that in the fondness of a dim faith, and in the vague guesses which from the frail ark of reason we send to hover over a dark and unfathomable abyss, — what wonder that ye should have wasted hope and life in striving to penetrate the future! What wonder that ye should have given a language to the stars, and to the night a spell, and gleaned from the uncomprehended earth an answer to the enigmas of Fate! We are like the sleepers who, walking under the influence of a dream, wander by the verge of a precipice, while in their own deluded vision they perchance believe themselves surrounded by bowers of roses, and accompanied by those they love. Or, rather like the blind man, who can retrace every step of the path he has *once* trodden, but who can guess not a single inch of that which he has not yet travelled, our reason can reguide us over the roads of past experience with a sure and unerring wisdom, even while it recoils, baffled and bewildered, before the blackness of the very moment whose boundaries we are about to enter.

The few friends I had invited to my wedding were still with me, when one of my servants, not Desmarais, informed me that Mr. Oswald waited for me. I went out to him.

"*Parbleu!*" said he, rubbing his hands, "I perceive it is a joyous time with you, and I don't wonder you can only spare me a few moments."

The estates of Devereux were not to be risked for a trifle; but I thought Mr. Marie Oswald exceedingly impertinent. "Sir," said I, very gravely, "pray be seated; and now to business. In the first place, may I ask to whom I am beholden for sending you with that letter you gave me at Devereux Court? and, secondly, what that letter contained, — for I never read it?"

"Sir," answered the man, "the history of the letter is perfectly distinct from that of the will, and the former (to discuss the least important first) is briefly this: you have heard, sir, of the quarrels between Jesuit and Jansenist?"

"I have."

"Well — But first, Count, let me speak of myself. There were three young men of the same age, born in the same village in France, of obscure birth each, and each desirous of getting on in the world. Two were deuced clever fellows; the third nothing particular. One of the two at present shall be nameless; the third, who 'was nothing particular' (in his own opinion, at least, though his friends may think differently), was Marie Oswald. We soon separated: I went to Paris, was employed in different occupations, and at last became secretary and (why should I disavow it?) valet to a lady of quality and a violent politician. She was a furious Jansenist; of course I adopted her opinions. About this time there was much talk among the Jesuits of the great genius and deep learning of a young member of the order, — Julian Montreuil. Though not residing in the country, he had sent one or two books to France, which had been published, and had created a

great sensation. Well, sir, my mistress was the greatest intriguante of her party: she was very rich, and tolerably liberal; and, among other packets of which a messenger from England was *carefully* robbed, between Calais and Abbeville (you understand me, sir, *carefully* robbed: *parbleu!* I wish I were robbed in the same manner every day in my life!), was one from the said Julian Montreuil to a political friend of his. Among other letters in this packet — all of importance — was one descriptive of the English family with whom he resided. It hit them all, I am told, off to a hair; and it described, in particular, one, the supposed inheritor of the estates, a certain Morton, Count Devereux. Since you say you did not read the letter, I spare your blushes, sir, and I don't dwell upon what he said of your talent, energy, ambition, etc. I will only tell you that he dilated far more upon your prospects than your powers; and that he expressly stated what was his object in staying in your family and cultivating your friendship, — he expressly stated that £30,000 a year would be particularly serviceable to a certain political cause which he had strongly at heart."

"I understand you," said I; "the Chevalier's?"

"Exactly. 'This sponge,' said Montreuil, — I remember the very phrase, — 'this sponge will be well filled; and I am handling it softly now, in order to squeeze its juices hereafter according to the uses of the party we have so strongly at heart.'"

"It was not a metaphor very flattering to my understanding," said I.

"True, sir. Well, as soon as my mistress learned this, she remembered that your father, the marshal, had been one of her *plus chers amis*, — in a word, if scandal says true, he had been the *cher ami*. However, she

was instantly resolved to open your eyes and ruin the *maudit Jésuite*: she enclosed the letter in an envelope, and sent me to England with it. I came: I gave it you; and I discovered, in that moment when the abbé entered, that this Julian Montreuil was an old acquaintance of my own,— was one of the two young men who I told you were such deuced clever fellows. Like many other adventurers, he had changed his name on entering the world, and I had never till now suspected that Julian Montreuil was Bertrand Collinot. Well, when I saw what I had done, I was exceedingly sorry, for I had liked my companion well enough not to wish to hurt him; besides, I was a little afraid of him. I took horse, and went about some other business I had to execute, nor did I visit that part of the country again till a week ago (now I come to the other business), when I was summoned to the death-bed of my half-brother, the attorney, peace be with him! He suffered much from hypochondria in his dying moments,— I believe it is the way with people of his profession,— and he gave me a sealed packet, with a last injunction to place it in your hands, and your hands only. Scarce was he dead — (do not think I am unfeeling, sir; I had seen very little of him, and he was only my half-brother, my father having married, for a second wife, a foreign lady, who kept an inn, by whom he was blessed with myself) — scarce, I say, was he dead, when I hurried up to town: Providence threw you in my way, and you shall have the document upon two conditions.”

“ Which are, first to reward you; secondly, to — ”

“ To promise you will not open the packet for seven days.”

“ The devil! and why? ”

"I will tell you candidly. One of the papers in the packet I believe to be my brother's written confession, — nay, I know it is; and it will criminate one I have a love for, and who, I am resolved, shall have a chance of escape."

"Who is that one? — Montreuil?"

"No, I do not refer to him; but I cannot tell you more. I require the promise, Count, — it is indispensable. If you don't give it me, *parbleu*, you shall not have the packet."

There was something so cool, so confident, and so impudent about this man, that I did not well know whether to give way to laughter or to indignation. Neither, however, would have been politic in my situation; and as I said before, the estates of Devereux were not to be risked for a trifle.

"Pray," said I, however, with a shrewdness which I think did me credit, — "pray, Mr. Marie Oswald, do you expect the reward before the packet is opened?"

"By no means," answered the gentleman, who in his own opinion was nothing particular, — "by no means; nor until you and your lawyers are satisfied that the papers enclosed in the packet are sufficient fully to restore you to the heritage of Devereux Court and its demesnes."

There was something fair in this; and as the only penalty to me, incurred by the stipulated condition, seemed to be the granting escape to the criminals, I did not think it incumbent upon me to lose my cause from the desire of a prosecution. Besides, at that time I felt too happy to be revengeful; and so, after a moment's consideration, I conceded to the proposal, and gave my honor as a gentleman — Mr. Oswald obligingly dispensed with an oath — that I would not

open the packet till the end of the seventh day. Mr. Oswald then drew forth a piece of paper, on which sundry characters were inscribed, the purport of which was that, if through the papers given me by Marie Oswald, my lawyers were convinced that I could become master of my uncle's property, now enjoyed by Gerald Devereux, I should bestow on the said Marie £5,000, — half on obtaining this legal opinion, half on obtaining possession of the property. I could not resist a smile, when I observed that the word of a gentleman was enough surety for the safety of the man he had a love for, but that Mr. Oswald required a written bond for the safety of his reward. One is ready enough to trust one's friends to the conscience of another; but as long as a law can be had instead, one is rarely so credulous in respect to one's money.

"The reward shall be doubled if I succeed," said I, signing the paper; and Oswald then produced a packet, on which was writ, in a trembling hand, "For Count Morton Devereux, — private, and with haste." As soon as he had given me this precious charge, and reminded me again of my promise, Oswald withdrew. I placed the packet in my bosom, and returned to my guests.

Never had my spirit been so light as it was that evening. Indeed, the good people I had assembled thought matrimony never made a man so little serious before. They did not, however, stay long; and the moment they were gone, I hastened to my own sleeping-apartment, to secure the treasure I had acquired. A small escritoire stood in this room, and in it I was accustomed to keep whatever I considered most precious. With many a wistful look, and murmur at my promise, I consigned the packet to one of the drawers of this escritoire. As I was locking the drawer, the

sweet voice of Desmarais accosted me. Would Monsieur, he asked, suffer him to visit a friend that evening, in order to celebrate so joyful an event in Monsieur's destiny? It was not often that he was addicted to vulgar merriment, but on such an occasion he owned that he was tempted to transgress his customary habits, and he felt that Monsieur, with his usual good taste, would feel offended if his servant, within Monsieur's own house, suffered joy to pass the limits of discretion, and enter the confines of noise and inebriety, especially as Monsieur had so positively interdicted all outward sign of extra hilarity. He implored *mille pardons* for the presumption of his request.

"It is made with your usual discretion; there are five guineas for you: go and get drunk with your friend, and be merry instead of wise. But, tell me, is it not beneath a philosopher to be moved by anything, especially anything that occurs to another, much less to get drunk upon it?"

"Pardon me, Monsieur," answered Desmarais, bowing to the ground; "one ought to get drunk sometimes, because the next morning one is sure to be thoughtful; and, moreover, the practical philosopher ought to indulge every emotion, in order to judge how that emotion would affect another; at least, this is my opinion."

"Well, go."

"My most grateful thanks be with Monsieur; Monsieur's nightly toilet is entirely prepared."

And away went Desmarais, with the light yet slow step with which he was accustomed to combine elegance with dignity.

I now passed into the room I had prepared for Isora's boudoir. I found her leaning by the window, and I

perceived that she had been in tears. As I paused to contemplate her figure, so touchingly yet so unconsciously mournful in its beautiful and still posture, a more joyous sensation than was wont to mingle with my tenderness for her swelled at my heart. "Yes," thought I, "you are no longer the solitary exile, or the persecuted daughter of a noble but ruined race; you are not even the bride of a man who must seek in foreign climes, through danger and through hardship, to repair a broken fortune and establish an adventurer's name! At last the clouds have rolled from the bright star of your fate, — wealth, and pomp, and all that awaits the haughtiest of England's matrons shall be yours." And at these thoughts Fortune seemed to me a gift a thousand times more precious than — much as my luxuries prized it — it had ever seemed to me before.

I drew near and laid my hand upon Isora's shoulder, and kissed her cheek. She did not turn round, but strove, by bending over my hand and pressing it to her lips, to conceal that she had been weeping. I thought it kinder to favor the artifice than to complain of it. I remained silent for some moments, and I then gave vent to the sanguine expectations for the future which my new treasure entitled me to form. I had already narrated to her the adventure of the day before; I now repeated the purport of my last interview with Oswald; and, growing more and more elated as I proceeded, I dwelt at last upon the description of my inheritance, as glowingly as if I had already recovered it. I painted to her imagination its rich woods and its glassy lake, and the fitful and wandering brook that through brake and shade went bounding on its wild way; I told her of my early roamings, and dilated with a boy's rapture upon my favorite haunts. I brought visibly before her

glistening and eager eyes the thick copse where, hour after hour, in vague verse and still vaguer dreams, I had so often whiled away the day; the old tree which I had climbed to watch the birds in their glad mirth, or to listen unseen to the melancholy sound of the forest deer; the antique gallery and the vast hall, which by the dim twilights I had paced with a religious awe, and looked upon the pictured forms of my bold fathers, and mused high and ardently upon my destiny to be; the old gray tower which I had consecrated to myself, and the unwitnessed path which led to the yellow beach, and the wide gladness of the solitary sea; the little arbor which my earliest ambition had reared, that looked out upon the joyous flowers and the merry fountain, and through the ivy and the jessamine wooed the voice of the bird and the murmur of the summer bee; and when I had exhausted my description, I turned to Isora, and said in a lower tone, "And I shall visit these once more, and with you."

Isora sighed faintly, and it was not till I had pressed her to speak that she said, —

"I wish I could deceive myself, Morton, but I cannot; I cannot root from my heart an impression that I shall never again quit this dull city, with its gloomy walls and its heavy air. A voice within me seems to say, 'Behold from this very window the boundaries of your living wanderings!'"

Isora's words froze all my previous exaltation. "It is in vain," said I, after chiding her for her despondency, — "it is in vain to tell me that you have for this gloomy notion no other reason than that of a vague presentiment. It is time now that I should press you to a greater confidence upon all points consistent with your oath to our mutual enemy than you have hitherto

given me. Speak, dearest; have you not some yet unrevealed causes for alarm?"

It was but for a moment that Isora hesitated before she answered with that quick tone which indicates that we force words against the will.

"Yes, Morton, I *will* tell you now, though I would not before the event of this day. On the last day that I saw that fearful man, he said, 'I warn you, Isora D'Alvarez, that my love is far fiercer than hatred; I warn you that your bridal with Morton Devereux shall be stained with blood. Become his wife, and you perish! Yea, though I suffer hell's tortures forever and forever from that hour, my own hand shall strike you to the heart!' Morton, these words have thrilled through me again and again, as if again they were breathed in my very ear; and I have often started at night and thought the very knife glittered at my breast. So long as our wedding was concealed, and concealed so closely, I was enabled to quiet my fears till they scarcely seemed to exist. But when our nuptials were to be made public, when I knew that they were to reach the ears of that fierce and unaccountable being, I thought I heard my doom pronounced. This, mine own love, must excuse your Isora, if she seemed ungrateful for your generous eagerness to announce our union. And perhaps she would not have acceded to it so easily as she has done, were it not that, in the first place, she felt it was beneath your wife to suffer any terror so purely selfish to make her shrink from the proud happiness of being yours in the light of day; and if she had not felt" (here Isora hid her blushing face in my bosom) "that she was fated to give birth to another, and that the announcement of our wedded love had become necessary to your honor as to mine!"

Though I was in reality awed even to terror by learning from Isora's lips so just a cause for her forebodings, — though I shuddered with a horror surpassing even my wrath, when I heard a threat so breathing of deadly and determined passions, — yet I concealed my emotions, and only thought of cheering and comforting Isora. I represented to her how guarded and vigilant should ever henceforth be the protection of her husband; that nothing should again separate him from her side; that the extreme malice and fierce persecution of this man were sufficient even to absolve her conscience from the oath of concealment she had taken; that I would procure from the sacred head of our church her own absolution from that vow; that the moment concealment was over, I could take steps to prevent the execution of my rival's threats; that, however near to me he might be in blood, no consequences arising from a dispute between us could be so dreadful as the least evil to Isora; and moreover, to appease her fears, that I would solemnly promise he should never sustain personal assault or harm from my hand: in short, I said all that my anxiety could dictate, and at last I succeeded in quieting her fears, and she smiled as brightly as the first time I had seen her in the little cottage of her father. She seemed, however, averse to an absolution from her oath, for she was especially scrupulous as to the sanctity of those religious obligations; but I secretly resolved that her safety absolutely required it, and that at all events I would procure absolution from my own promise to her.

At last Isora, turning from that topic, so darkly interesting, pointed to the heavens, which, with their thousand eyes of light, looked down upon us. "Tell me, love," said she playfully, as her arm embraced me

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yet more closely, "if among yonder stars we could choose a home, which should we select?"

I pointed to one which lay to the left of the moon, and which, though not larger, seemed to burn with an intenser lustre than the rest. Since that night it has ever been to me a fountain of deep and passionate thought, a well wherein fears and hopes are buried, a mirror in which in stormy times I have fancied to read my destiny and to find some mysterious omen of my intended deeds, a haven which I believe others have reached before me, and a home immortal and unchanging, where, when my wearied and fettered soul is escaped, as a bird, it shall flee away, and have its rest at last.

"What think you of my choice?" said I. Isora looked upward, but did not answer; and as I gazed upon her (while the pale light of heaven streamed quietly upon her face), with her dark eyes, where the tear yet lingered, though rather to soften than to dim, with her noble yet tender features, over which hung a melancholy calm, with her lips apart, and her rich locks wreathing over her marble brow, and contrasted by a single white rose (that rose I have now; I would not lose one withered leaf of it for a kingdom!), — her beauty never seemed to me of so rare an order, nor did my soul ever yearn towards her with so deep a love.

It was past midnight. All was hushed in our bridal chamber. The single lamp, which hung above, burned still and clear; and through the half-closed curtains of the window the moonlight looked in upon our couch, quiet and pure and holy, as if it were charged with blessings.

"Hush!" said Isora, gently; "do you not hear a noise below?"

"Not a breath," said I; "I hear not a breath, save yours."

"It was my fancy, then!" said Isora, "and it has ceased now;" and she clung closer to my breast and fell asleep. I looked on her peaceful and childish countenance with that concentrated and full delight with which we clasp all that the universe holds dear to us, and feel as if the universe held naught beside, — and thus sleep also crept upon me.

I awoke suddenly; I felt Isora trembling palpably by my side. Before I could speak to her, I saw, standing at a little distance from the bed, a man wrapped in a long dark cloak, and masked; but his eyes shone through the mask, and they glared full upon me. He stood with his arms folded, and perfectly motionless; but at the other end of the room, before the escritoire in which I had locked the important packet, stood another man, also masked, and wrapped in a disguising cloak of similar hue and fashion. This man, as if alarmed, turned suddenly; and I perceived then that the escritoire was already opened, and that the packet was in his hand. I tore myself from Isora's clasp: I stretched my hand to the table by my bedside, upon which I had left my sword, — it was gone! No matter! I was young, strong, fierce, and the stake at hazard was great. I sprung from the bed, I precipitated myself upon the man who held the packet. With one hand I grasped at the important document, with the other I strove to tear the mask from the robber's face. He endeavored rather to shake me off than to attack me; and it was not till I had nearly succeeded in unmasking him that he drew forth a short poniard, and stabbed me in the side. The blow, which seemed purposely aimed to avoid a mortal part, staggered me, but only for an

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instant. I renewed my gripe at the packet, — I tore it from the robber's hand, and collecting my strength, now fast ebbing away, for one effort, I bore my assailant to the ground, and fell struggling with him.

But my blood flowed fast from my wound, and my antagonist, if less sinewy than myself, had greatly the advantage in weight and size. Now for one moment I was uppermost, but in the next his knee was upon my chest, and his blade gleamed on high in the pale light of the lamp and moon. I thought I beheld my death, — would to God that I had! With a piercing cry Isora sprang from the bed, flung herself before the lifted blade of the robber, and arrested his arm. This man had, in the whole contest, acted with a singular forbearance, — he did so now; he paused for a moment and dropped his hand. Hitherto the other man had not stirred from his mute position; he now moved one step towards us, brandishing a poniard like his comrade's. Isora raised her hand supplicatingly towards him, and cried out, "Spare him, spare *him!* Oh, mercy, mercy!" With one stride the murderer was by my side; he muttered some words which passion seemed to render inarticulate; and, half pushing aside his comrade, his raised weapon flashed before my eyes, now dim and reeling: I made a vain effort to rise, — the blade descended. Isora, unable to arrest it, threw herself before it; her blood, her heart's blood, gushed over me, — I saw and felt no more.

When I recovered my senses, my servants were round me; a deep red, wet stain upon the sofa on which I was laid brought the whole scene I had witnessed again before me, terrible and distinct. I sprang to my feet and asked for Isora; a low murmur caught my ear. I turned, and beheld a dark form stretched on the bed.

and surrounded, like myself, by gazers and menials. I tottered towards that bed, — my bridal bed; with a fierce gesture motioned the crowd away: I heard my name breathed audibly, — the next moment I was by Isora's side. All pain, all weakness, all consciousness of my wound, of my very self, were gone, — life seemed curdled into a single agonizing and fearful thought. I fixed my eyes upon hers; and though *there* the film was gathering dark and rapidly, I saw yet visible and unconquered the deep love of that faithful and warm heart which had lavished its life for mine.

I threw my arms around her; I pressed my lips wildly to hers. "Speak — speak!" I cried, and my blood gushed over her with the effort; "in mercy, speak!"

Even in death and agony, the gentle being who had been as wax unto my lightest wish, struggled to obey me. "Do not grieve for me," she said, in a tremulous and broken voice; "it is dearer to die for you than to live!"

Those were her last words. I felt her breath abruptly cease. The heart, pressed to mine, was still! I started up in dismay, — the light shone full upon her face. O God! that I should live to write that Isora was — no more!

END OF VOL. I.

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