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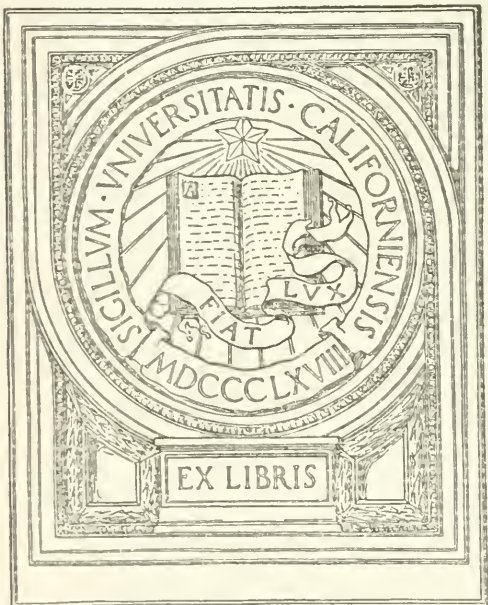


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S E L F.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL."

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

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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## CHAPTER 1.

Cœlum quid quærimus ultra ?

LUC.

A second hiccupped, " Our old master's dead,  
You'd better ask my mistress who's his heir."

" Our mistress!" quoth a third ; " our *mistress*?—Pooh!  
You mean our *master*, not the old, but new !"

BYRON.

THE first step taken by Philip Askham on the decease of his father, was to resign his appointment. Not because the probability of a change of ministry on the death of Fox, suggested scruples of conscience,—for its duties were unconnected with politics; but because he felt it impossible to dissolve too speedily the

bond of obligation that bound him to Lord Uppingham.

The fortune bequeathed him by his father amounted to little more than five thousand pounds, and his present noble income was precarious.—Still, while the Red Book contained his name inscribed by the hands of the Tories, he did not seem to breathe the breath of independence.—By the renunciation of a salary of eight hundred a year, he found himself all the richer; as a ship lightens itself in a storm by flinging overboard some precious freight.

It was well that his measures were so promptly taken;—for on the dissolution of parliament by the Whigs, a few weeks afterwards, he was able with a better grace to throw down a gauntlet of defiance to the head of the family. Armed with the authority of the new Lord Askham, whose political opinions were liberal as his own, he signified the impossibility of assigning to his brother Henry the representation of Edenbourne.

“ Since Lord Uppingham was so eager for

his return to parliament, his lordship could not do better than qualify him for some Tory seat. But Edenbourne was bespoken."

The little borough was of course a little surprised, and scarcely knew what it should make of itself as the advocate of liberal principles; having worn the Askham colours and opinions so long, as almost to fancy them its own. Even the consolation of finding its new-fangled arguments crammed into its mouth by the hand of the present representative of the family, was denied!—

Philip Askham steadily declined all entreaties that he would take its representation on himself. He had abjured London. His beloved Evelyn had no connexions there to necessitate her involvement in its perilous vortex; and though the allowance of five thousand a year, entailed by the former Lord Askham and secured to him by the present, would enable him to keep up Eden Castle according to the intentions of the testator, it would afford no surplus for the expenses of a London establishment. He requested the Edenbournians, there-



fore, to accept his best thanks and excuses, and the Honourable Robert Hardyng in his stead.

By this strong measure, the breach between himself and the family was complete; and the disgust with which the Marquis of Uppingham beheld the borough he considered *quasi* his own, given over to the most heinous Whiggery, was not greater than the contempt with which Henry apostrophised his brother's want of political ambition, and denounced his political apostacy; or the surprise expressed by the Middlemores, and still more loudly by his fashionable connexions, at his pitiful design of retiring from the gay world to rusticate in the once despised obscurity of Eden Castle. Not one of them understood what he was about!

He was *about* the happiest of created beings! Eden Castle, in spite of the achievement over its gates, was no longer the "dreary pile" of other days. The penitentiary system was at an end. The household bonds that governed it were of silk, instead of iron. A beaming spring replaced the pallid, humid, sunless,

hopeless autumn which constituted the atmosphere of its olden time.

Young and active servants officiated in place of the superannuated ones who had grown old, cold, and idle, under the rule of their late masters. A morning-room was relieved from its antique furniture, and the grim ancestral faces on its walls, to be enlivened by lightsome hangings,—companionable books,—and the musical instruments formerly banished, as in disgrace, to a chilly music-room; while on the southern lawn under its windows, extended a well-designed flower-garden, promising to rival, at some future time, the delicious fragrance of Eastfield.

To effect these transformations had been a pleasant task to Philip. As sometimes occurs in higher walks of government, the viceroy proved more efficient than a reigning sovereign. Though the income assigned to his use was specific, the revenues of the whole estate passed through his hands. At the marriage of his parents, a sum of fifty thousand pounds had been set apart by settlement for younger

children, (which, thanks to the fecundity so disrespectfully lamented by Percy, left little more than five thousand pounds to each!) and these portions, as well as his mother's jointure of four thousand per annum, were payable only by his order. For the late Lord Askham, like many others encumbered by settlements and deeds of entail, conceiving that all license of bequest was taken out of his hands, had died intestate; and, by the desire of Percy, Philip administered to the estate.

By all this, worlds of business were thrown upon his hands; and perhaps, like his father before him, he might have found little leisure to lament the thinness of the neighbourhood, or badness of the roads, even had not the limit of their visiting distance been increased by a circumference of at least twenty miles, by his more extended connexion and personal popularity.

The politics of Philip happened to be the prevailing politics of the county; and more than one agreeable family, who had not cared to fag themselves and their horses for the sake

of Lord Askham's bitter bread, and bitterer Toryism, now discovered that the hills near Edenbourne were less trying than of old. Nay, the quarter sessions took into their hands the improvement of the roads! So attractive was the surface of the new *ménage* at Eden Castle, that no obstacle ought to impede its approach.

Even the less acceptable neighbours did their best to promote the general desire for a change. Simprens, who, like Mithridates, had fattened on drugs, apprehensive that his recent blunders might tend to diminish his favour at the castle, took occasion, soon after the decease of his noble patron, to dispose of his business to a clever young Scotch practitioner, named Boswell, and retire to the "*otium sine dignitate*"—long whist, and long stories of his native town of Monmouth: thus conferring a double blessing; for Dr. Boswell having made himself and his draughts a little too palatable to the youngest of the Misses Gwatkin, the prudent mother instantly supplied an antidote, by removing her family to Bath.

Certain evil tongues of the Edenbourne

market-place decided that the measure arose from the dearth of eligible marrying men within reach of Hexham; while others suggested that Sir Erasmus, unable to support the spectacle of the domestic felicity of Eden Castle, had betaken himself for good to the city so renowned for the cure of gout, rheumatism, and celibacy, where he was more in need of sisterly protection than in the pristine innocence of the Lodge. But whatever the cause of their migration, the benefit was substantial.

“Mrs. Hacket informs me,” said Evelyn to her husband, (as they were returning home one balmy April day from a ride in Eden Chase, which had reconciled her to the paces of a somewhat overspirited mare, presented to her by Philip,) “that, from the letters she receives from Bath, it is probable, Hexham may be let. A pleasant neighbour there would be acceptable enough. You used to complain sadly of want of society at the castle.”

“You have not heard me find fault with it lately, I think,” replied he, with an affectionate smile. “For some months past, I have disco-



vered it to be the pleasantest as well as most beautiful spot in Great Britain !”

As he spoke, they turned their horses' heads towards the Castle ; irradiated at that moment by the western sun streaming on its multitude of windows, so that it seemed lighted for an entertainment. And as they wound their way towards the house, the pleasantness of its aspect was increased by the sight of little Edward Saville, driving his hoop along the terrace ; while at the drawing-room window, anxiously watching for their return, appeared the smiling face of Selina.

Philip Askham had made it his delight to instal the children in their new home, as though they were his own. No past recollections interfered with their obedience to their mother's intimation on her marriage, that their own dear Philip was henceforward to be greeted as “ Papa ;” and at their tender age, so easily are habits adopted, that (no jealous relatives being at hand to instil misgivings) they soon learned to consider him their father indeed ; and to feel their portion in Eden Castle as rightful as in

Eastfield. How were *they* to know but that other children received their papas by arrangements similar to those which had suddenly entitled them to participation in the luxuries and liberties of their new home?

For liberty as well as luxury was theirs. Philip had languished too long in the bondage of over-education, not to vote for abolition.—“The dear children were of an age to enjoy themselves.—Time enough in all conscience for samplers and Latin grammar!—The darlings of his sweetest Evelyn were *his* darlings, and must not be tormented.”

The Honourable Mr. and Mrs. Askham, in short, could not be too distinct in habits and principles, from the Right Honourable Lord and Lady, their predecessors.

In all but the title, however, their worldly position was the same. Nor would Philip have changed places with the present peer; whose post obits and embarrassments left him at command something less than the dotation settled on the castle by the first Baron, out of the nominal fifteen thousand a-year to which, all incum-

branches apart, he succeeded on the death of his father.

Still, in France, such an income was princely. The release of the Earl of Yarmouth having left him without a competitor, Lord Askham was understood to possess the best table in Verdun, the best box in its theatre, and the best actress of its theatre to do the honours of both. The life he led was the best of the worst kind; as well as without prospect of change or amendment. The announcement of his brother's marriage meanwhile, had been received by him in the usual cordial spirit of his reckless nature.

“ I heartily wish you joy, dear Philip,” replied his letter of acknowledgment; “ and with a due sense of my own unworthiness, sincerely thank you for thus providing respectability for two!—Honour, moreover, to the manes of that very wiggy old gentleman, William Lord Askham; (at the star in whose frightful portrait by Kneller, at the end of the East gallery, I remember being detected by my father in the act of shooting peas, as well as the heavy imposition set me for the same!) who, though in his

picture he looks no conjuror, seems to have anticipated the disjointed state of our family representation.

“ You have now only to increase my obligations by supplying half-a-dozen sturdy little Askhams, to supersede the possibility of our honours merging once more into a Tory line ;— for I cannot stand the notion of Henry !—He writes me, every now and then, a prize essay, which he mistakes for a letter ;—enlivened occasionally by a little abuse of *you* ;—and now that, to their other sins, his epistles add that of being dated from Uppingham Manor, I can scarcely read them without a fratricidal desire to visit upon young Master Adrian the sins of his Trajan.

“ To return, however, to the pleasanter subject of your pretty wife, (whom pretty I know to be, thanks to certain former animadversions of my lady-mother.) Pray place at her feet the sincere good wishes of the poor prisoner of Verdun ! Had I been free, and in England, on your wedding-day, I should have taxed my account at Coutts’s to the amount of five hundred

guineas, to offer her some token of brotherly regard; and in this, as in all else, I entreat you to be my delegate. — But say to Mrs. Askham in addition, that she would do me a great favour by letting the family diamonds, which you tell me are deposited at the banker's, see the light on her fair person. It is a pity they should sparkle unseen, while so lovely a representative of the family is at hand to enhance their lustre.

“ You will perhaps tax me with having become *complimenteur* in France!—Alas! I have become many worse things!—But in all I have said, dear Phil, though my phrases may have been lengthy as Henry's, trust me they are as sincere as every other assurance made you by

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ A.”

At this pointed manifestation of Lord Askham's partiality towards Philip and his wife, the family in all its branches waxed exceeding wroth. The transfer of the heir-loom diamonds was as great an insult as the transfer of the heir-loom borough had been an injury. But



what cared Philip in his happy home, for the grumbling of aunts or cousins? His dearest Evelyn,—his lovely and loving Evelyn,—could not be too richly repaid for the harsh usage she had formerly received at the contumelious hands of Eden Castle!

The change of ministry, too truly foretold by Hardyng, soon assigned to Lord and Lady Uppingham higher duties than the discussion of such petty grievances. To the influential post in the cabinet formerly occupied by the Marquis, was added a place in the household for his wife; and one of his earliest acts in office, was to fulfil his pledges to Henry Askham, by securing him a profitable appointment and the representation of a government borough.

Compelled by the adjustment of Percy's complicated difficulties to visit London for a day or two, early in the spring, the first thing Philip had to listen to from Bob Hardyng, was a piquant account of the anguish experienced by the "rising young man" in *forbearing* to rise during some dozen or more initiatory debates, in obedience to the instructions of his brother-in-law.

“Like a newly-caught bird,” said Bob, “Henry’s restlessness is painful to behold! If Lord Uppingham keeps him much longer beating against the wires, every bone in his skin will be broken!”

News of greater interest, however, were in store for the rustic. Hardyng, who, on visiting Edenbourne for his election, had received so pleasing an impression of Philip’s gentle bride, (in whom he was unspeakably surprised to discover the widow of Edward Saville,) that, on his return to town, his enthusiasm in her favour exposed him to the quizzing of their whole set,—had now to relate the strange consequences of his revelations.

“I should like to know what you deserve,” said he, (when, after dining with Askham at Brookes’s, they sat gossiping together in Philip’s old snugery in St. James’s Place, to which Hardyng had succeeded,) “for exposing me, last year, to the danger of losing my heart to one whose own was so completely in your keeping as that of Lady Anastasia Grandison?”

“Absurd !” ejaculated his friend, to whom the very name of the Grandisons had become a matter of unconcern. “As if girls in *her* position were susceptible of attachment !” —

“Ay, ay !—Having drawn the thirty thousand pounds’ prize, you choose to fancy the wheel filled up with blanks ! But, however disparagingly, you may class ‘dear Stasy,’ or whatever you mean by ‘girls in her position,’ I can tell you that your happy marriage was very near costing her life !”

“You may as well tell me that it killed the Empress of Austria, whose death the newsmen’s horns are now braying in our ears !” rejoined Askham.—“Lady Anastasia Grandison in love ? —Why she would have married Middlemore,—Lenitive,—Robert de Lacy,—Norcliffe,—anybody in a decent position in life,—only to escape from home !”

“And from *their* homes, she would have felt as little scruple in escaping,” retorted Hardyng, “had you held up your finger to invite her ! And so she will from De Bayhurst’s,—to whom she has at last promised her hand.”

“Going to be married to Sir Hugh de Bayhurst?” cried Askham, with suddenly-enkindled curiosity;—“surely *that* was talked of last year?”—

“I scarcely know the match in London that has not been talked of for her, at one time or other,” replied Hardyng. “I happen to know, however, that, *last* season, De Bayhurst was no favourite. He left town in despair, soon after poor Lord Askham’s seizure; and I could have sworn,—so wounded was his pride,—that not even Lady Grandison’s most artful machinations would bring him a second time to the scratch!”

“You are mistaken, you see;—as *much* mistaken as in supposing *me* an object of predilection to Lady Anastasia!”

“No Tartuffeism, my dear fellow, I beseech you!” retorted his friend, laughing.—“Do not, because you led me like a lamb to the slaughter at Grandison House, to become the most jilted of lovers or injured of husbands for love of your anything but bright eyes, attempt to deny a fact which is as well known as if published like the Empress’s death, per horn

of newsman ! I tell you it was *I* myself, who, little guessing the pain I was to inflict, acquainted the poor girl with your marriage !—It was into *my* arms she fell, senseless as a stone ; and to *me* did Lady Grandison address a private entreaty that for the love of Heaven’s mercy, I would not mention to any living soul the subject on which we were conversing, when ‘ dear Stasy’s’ secret betrayed itself !”

“ I trust and believe you are mistaken !” rejoined Philip, more seriously. “ At all events, I have nothing to reproach myself with. I paid Lady Anastasia no attentions, but such as were paid her by twenty other men,—yourself among the number. Never for a moment did I exceed the bounds of common acquaintanceship !”

“ For my part, I never know what *are* the bounds of acquaintanceship between girls of eighteen and men of four-and-twenty !” cried Hardyng ; “ and often thank Heaven I have no sisters, to have the question tangibly brought home to me. One understands one’s ground with the fellows with whom one rides to covert, or walks down to the House,—scrupulous not to



offer a hand to those with whom one is only on a bowing acquaintance. But, according to our English system, (for I can tell you they do these things better in France,) with young ladies, the most unceremonious intimacy appears allowable. Our idle hours cannot be more pleasantly thrown away, than in attentions to any pretty girl who has idle hours to dispose of; precisely because, if in the marrying vein, we may call our civilities courtship, and propose without offence at any moment; or, if laxer in our conscience, as ten millions to one is the case, may slip out of town and divert ourselves elsewhere,—because, forsooth,—as in the case of Mr. Askham and Lady Anastasia Grandison,—we have ‘never exceeded the bounds of acquaintanceship!’”

“I do not wince! *My* withers are unwrung!” cried Philip, “for I swear to you that I never tried to recommend myself to Lady Anastasia, nor would at any moment have given a rush for her preference!”

“Not for her *preference* perhaps, but cer-

tainly, for the credit of it. You liked to know, on entering a ball-room, that those who saw you first, turned mechanically to Lady Anastasia, to watch her change colour !”

“ No, on my soul !—I never thought of her otherwise than as a flirting girl,—open to the attentions of all London,—and eager for those of any fellow who happened to be the fashion.”

“ *Mentis gratissimus error !*—She was staking hard money, poor girl, against your counters ! I never saw a creature more cut up than she was by your infidelity,—*not* infidelity ?—well then,—by your marriage ; and I was almost afraid I should have to fall in love with her myself, as an act of expiation, when one fine day the papers announced her match with De Bayhurst ; and Lady Grandison, all smiles, and fidgets, and flutter, received my congratulations with those of the rest of London, as coolly as though she had not admitted to me a fortnight before, that the girl was heart-broken for your sake !”

“ You are so gross an exaggerator when the

fit takes you," cried Askham, a little moved, "that one never knows what to believe of your stories!"

"Be assured I never exaggerate unless where decency requires that the naked truth should receive a little clothing! In this instance, I am trustworthy as the gazette. For, feeling myself accountant for as great a sin towards Lady Anastasia as your sinful self, I brought myself seriously to book on seeing the poor girl so wretched; and the result of my deliberations was a verdict that half the unhappy marriages in England, and *all* our divorce cases, (a national blot that calls loudly for extirpation!) *arise from the silly habits of flirtation authorised by the customs of society.* Scarcely a girl marries, but has some scar upon her heart. And just conceive, my dear Philip, the bitterness of discovering that the wife one is pressing to one's bosom, is haunted by the memory of another!"

The habitually pale cheek of Askham became suddenly flushed. To *such* a proposition, it was impossible for *him*—the successor of Edward Saville—to say "amen!"

“By heavens, I think I should cut my throat under such circumstances!” cried Hardyng, more occupied with his own feelings than those of his friend. “However, De Bayhurst marries Lady Anastasia with his eyes open.”

“Since your conscience was so qualmish about her, you should have made atonement by marrying her yourself!” said Askham,—not *very* charitably disposed, at that moment, towards his friend.

“You think, then, that in matrimony, *two* pre-engaged hearts are safer than one?”

“I think *your* temper and sense of equity would prevent your being a brute to your wife;—which is more than I infer from the countenance of De Bayhurst! But what do you mean by *two* pre-engaged hearts? Have you, as I once thought likely, fallen a victim to the smiles of my cousin Helen,—which, like the wings of a bat, have a hook at every junction?”

“Helen Middlemore!”—cried Hardyng, with a gesture of contempt.

“All I know is that at the end of last season, you never left her side.”

“It is NOT *all* you know,—for you are perfectly aware of the motive of my attention.”

“To throw off the Grandisons?”—

“To obtain tidings of her cousin!”

“Her *cousin*?”—repeated Askham, with an air of such genuine amazement, that mistrust was impossible.

“Can you *really* be in earnest,” said his friend, “in pleading ignorance of my admiration of your sister?—or is it a civil mode of reproving my presumption, for having attached myself to a daughter of the house of Askham?”

“*My sister!*—You attached to my sister Emma!”—cried Philip, starting forward in his chair. “What further surprise, my dear Bob, have you in store for me?—I thought myself pretty clear-sighted on such points; yet I seem to have been walking in my sleep!”

“And so you *have!*—You were in love yourself; and (letting concealment like the worm in the jenneting apple, feed on your rosy cheek,) knew no more than the blind what was passing around you!”

“But how little you saw of Emma!”

“How little you saw of my seeings!—After our helter-skelter visit to Mansfield Street, I contrived to meet her at every ball and party; and dull indeed must be the dog who cannot manage to improve his acquaintance with such a girl, without alarming the heads of a family so true to the whist-table as Lord and Lady Askham!”

“But they left town so shortly afterwards!”

“Not soon enough to forestal my discovery that, though I may never obtain the consent of the family to my proposals, I should be the most miserable of men as the husband of any other woman than your sister.”

“*Did* you ever propose for Emma?”—cried Philip, ceasing to think anything improbable.

“*Why* expose myself to the ignominy of rejection, when you were all openly in favour of Lord Middlemore?”—

“All, except Emma herself. *She* never wavered; and by Jove, I am beginning to suspect *you* were the cause of her firmness.

But why did you never explain yourself to me?"

"I fancied you fully aware of my attachment, and as thoroughly opposed to it."

"On what grounds? My personal liking for you was pretty evident; and, according to the Grandison mode of judging such matters, you are a very good match for my sister.—Emma has only five thousand pounds."

"If she had not five *pence*, she might make the most brilliant marriage; whereas—"

"Leave *whereases* to your father, my dear Bob!" cried Askham, delighted with the new prospect suddenly unfolding before him.—"For if you still entertain the same feelings and views in this affair—"

"Alas!"—interrupted Hardyng,—(and from the tone and countenance of his friend, Philip began to fear he had been precipitate!)

"The altered position of our party has wrought a grievous change in my prospects," continued Hardyng. "So long as the Whigs were in power, I was justified in forming high ambitions. As it is, my place, my father's pen-

sion, and private fortune united, would form an insufficient provision for one accustomed to the splendours of Eden Castle."

"When they suffice for the luxurious comfort of Eske Hill?—Ridiculous!—But Lord Hardyng perhaps requires you to make a more advantageous match?"

"On the contrary, my father and mother, from whom I have no concealments, were delighted at my choice; more especially as it relieved them from their fears of Grandison House."

"Then why, in heaven's name, have you never referred your suit to Emma?"

"You are walking in your sleep *again*, my dear Askham!" cried Hardyng, enchanted at the unhoped-for readiness with which his friend entered into his projects. "Miss Askham is just now as closely secluded as the house of widowhood can make her. How and where am I to approach her?"—

"By letter."

"And what would she think of my presumption in hazarding, after nearly a year's separation, so sudden a declaration?"



“Leave that to *me*, if you have really made up your mind.—Though I believe I am as welcome in Mansfield Street as if I brought the plague in my pocket, my mother’s interests compel her to avoid any positive rupture. I will not conceal from you, however, that you have much to apprehend from her objections against any friend of mine; as well as from those of the Uppinghams against any son of your father. But Emma is not the girl to be scolded out of her likings. The more I think of all this, the better I am able to interpret a thousand mysteries in her recent letters to Evelyn!”

“By which you infer that my case is not altogether desperate?”—cried Bob, his face radiant with hope.

“*Far* from desperate,—if you have courage to confront my mother’s ill-humour and the prejudices of one of the most bigoted families extant, short of the grandees of Spain. Think it over, however, my dear Hardyng.—Marriage is too grave a thing to be risked on a sudden impulse. —To-morrow, let me know your conclusions, and command my utmost services.

In amore hæc omnia in sunt vitia : Injuriae  
Suspiciones, inimicitiae, induciae ;

but they signify little, (*experto crede !*) if you  
are brought off conqueror at last !”

## CHAPTER II.

*Γάμος γὰρ ἀνθρώποιον εἰκταῖον κακόν.*

“A son premier amour ; une femme n’ a jamais peur d’être oubliée ; mais à l’aurore du second amour, une femme tremble déjà.”—OURLIAC.

PHILIP Askham made proof of his usual short-sightedness in expecting opposition from his mother. The dowager of Mansfield Street was a very different person from the haughty lady paramount of Eden Castle ; and though, in the inmost closeness of her close heart, she probably placed the Hardynges in the same category with Simprems and the Hackets, (“all professional people together,”) her answer to the proposals placed before her by her son, was, that “Emma might decide for herself. She

should neither promote nor oppose the match."

Emma had already decided. On finding that Philip had received from Lord and Lady Hardyng the most flattering overtures for her hand, she no longer attempted to conceal from their son with what joy that hand was accorded; and neither the young people nor the old thought it necessary to examine *very* curiously the motives of Lady Askham's condescension.—Whether she anticipated with satisfaction a release from the presence of one who had fulfilled towards her late lord the duties *she* had neglected, and before whom she could neither parade the broad hems of her post-dated affliction, nor give vent to her jealous animosities against Philip and his wife,—or whether, with three daughters and four sons to provide for, she felt unentitled to reject a settlement of eighty thousand pounds, supported by the prospects of one of the ablest young men of the day,—mattered little to those who asked only as much conciliation at her hands, as was due to the decencies of society.

Family mourning afforded sufficient pretext for a private wedding; and the anxiety of the Hardynges for the settlement in life of their only son, for some haste in the preparations. The awkwardness arising from the coldness between Lord Uppingham and Philip, was consequently diminished; and on the single occasion of a meeting between the families, so stiff were the formalities observed, as to leave no room for unfriendly demonstrations.

Though to Philip naturally devolved the duty of giving away the bride, fain would he have avoided the occasion for absenting himself a second time from home. But the bridegroom-expectant, having been forced to visit Edenbourne for his re-election, managed to enlist the voice of Mrs. Askham in his favour: and, thus supported, the friend of his boyhood who had proved so much the friend of his manhood, consented to escort him to the altar. Sorely against his will, therefore, Philip accompanied the new member back to town, to resume, once more, his old quarters in St. James's Place.

At Philip's age, however great to a man the

effort of tearing himself from a happy fireside, no sooner has he crossed his threshold, than the pang is forgotten. The London world was at its brightest ; and it was a pleasant thing to be hailed a thousand times a day with congratulations, and find his hand shaken by friends, instead of having to raise it to touch his hat to greasy bagmen. In his comfortable dressing-room in St. James's Place, moreover, he was secure from having to defend his razors and shaving-brush against the incursions of little Edward Saville.

“ It is really a relief to get rid of that riotous boy !” thought he, the morning after his arrival. “ The best brought up children are bores, when always about one.—They derange one's habits, and pull about one's things.—I am not naturally fond of children.”

In all other respects, his sojourn in town was equally pleasant. It was gratifying to see the warmth of heart with which Lord and Lady Hardyng entered into the approaching happiness of their son, and prepared to do honour to his bride. They seemed to think they could

not devote too much time and money to perfect her comfort; and Philip, who had a commission to execute for his wife in procuring a *cadeau* for her dear Emma, was not a little amused, on accompanying Lady Hardyng to the choicest of the fashionable vanity-shops, (to chide tardy jewellers, and inspect new toys and devices for the frivolification of human life,) to discern on all sides testimony to the extent and grandeur of those family connexions of the Grandisons, so often insisted upon by the Countess.

Not a shop they entered, but contained wedding-gifts for Lady Anastasia, ordered by some royal godmother or duchess-aunt. Her ladyship's approaching nuptials seemed to have given a fillip to trade; and the generosity of her bridegroom was almost rendered superfluous by the multiplicity of her wealthy relationships.

“After all, it is pleasant to see one's wife an object of universal interest!” thought Philip, while surveying a gorgeous dressing-box, a present to “dear Stasy” from her uncle, the Duke of Sandbeck. “A serious advantage too to one's children, to be supported, on their entrance into

life, by the strength of a well-connected family!"

To remain indifferent concerning the nuptials for which he witnessed these complicated preparations, would have been difficult, even had the parties been strangers. But with the bridegroom a brother of Edward Saville, and the bride (if Hardynges were to be believed) a victim piqued into matrimony by his misusage, indifference was impossible. Had not his sympathy been somewhat bespoken by the frantic joy of his friend, and the quiet subdued happiness of Emma, (who foresaw among the Hardynges a far more home-ish home than she left behind,) it would have been difficult for Philip to resist his desire to clear up the mysteries surrounding Grandison House, by a visit of congratulation to the Countess. He was curious to see Lady Grandison and Anastasia in their present attitude of triumph.

Chance favoured his desire, though neither in the time nor place he could have wished. In deference to the mourning of Lady Askham, who chose to be present at her daughter's mar-



riage, in her pew, unobserved, and apart from the wedding party, the ceremony was performed, at an early hour in St. James's Church, the family alone present. But by a mistake concerning the door at which the carriages were to be ordered, on emerging from the vestry after the copious signature of witnesses suggested by the professional experience of Lord Hardyng, they found themselves obliged to retrace the body of the church.

To the surprise and annoyance of the quiet family party, it had become filled, in the interim, by the crowd escorting another wedding, resplendent with the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious fashion; and as the eye of Philip glanced along that gay assemblage, each individual of which was intent upon the display of his own vanities and graces,—instead of, as in the preceding wedding, the happy pair,—he perceived that it comprehended all his more intimate associates; the very existence of whom had been, of late, half obliterated from his remembrance.

*Those* wedding guests were evidently selected

by a hand accustomed to the arduous task of culling friends, at its own good pleasure, among the *élite* of society.—There was royalty—or rather royal highnesshood, with its ladies in waiting, to impart dignity to the scene—There were the beautiful, but somewhat knowing ladies of the sporting lords of the Newmarket *clique*.—There were the showy exotics of the *corps diplomatique*, the beaux of White's, the belles of Carlton House;—and among them, Helen Middlemore, evidently intent upon marking her resentment against Emma, by attending another bridal on the day of her wedding.—

—Facies non omnibus una—  
Nec diversa tamen,—

It was a gorgeous spectacle. All that white satin, mechlin, point, and orange flowers, could effect in honour of the solemn institution of matrimony, was brought into play. The Bishop stood ready at the altar,—the royal party advanced its right flank;—and the mob of dukes, duchesses, and cabinet ministers, was sorely pressed upon by certain ambitious beaux and conceited belles, who, having neither stars nor

garters to distinguish them, relied for attraction on the sheen of their satin or fit of their buckskins.

Fain would Philip have escaped from the gaudy *mélée* into which he was thus provokingly betrayed. But his sister Susan, who was hanging on his arm, enchanted by so new and brilliant a scene, did her utmost to detain him; and ere he could interdict her cousinly greetings with Helen Middlemore, a general movement of the fashionable throng announcing some important arrival, probably the bride for whom they were still waiting, compelled him to keep his place.

It was the Prince of Wales, then in the full zenith of the social favour which succeeded his wilder popularity; the Prince,—ere rendered morose by the cares of state, pompous by the factitious dignities of Hertford House, or peevish by subsequent immurement; the Prince,—as he was when surrounded by friends instead of parasites; and when his *maitresse en titre* was not a woman of title!

The face of Philip soon caught his eye, in the

lane formed for his Royal Highness to reach the altar; and with the good-nature which formed the golden foundation of his good breeding, he paused a moment to offer gracious congratulations on his marriage.

At that moment, a second stir announced a new arrival; and *this* time it was the bride indeed;—Lady Anastasia, dimly perceptible through lace and orange blossoms, like a star through a summer cloud; leaning on the arm of the radiant Lady Grandison, and followed by six bridesmaids, selected among the fairest daughters of the nobility.

Impossible to see a lovelier creature, or a prettier group!—Beauty, youth, elegance, distinction, united.—A murmur of admiration saluted them as they entered the church; as if forming a well-bred echo to the enthusiastic cheers of the populace without.

As they approached that part of the aisle where Philip stood detained by his royal companion, Lady Grandison had to cede the arm of her daughter to that of his Royal Highness, which was instinctively extended to conduct her to the

altar ; and in the movement occasioned by this flattering displacement, the eyes of the lovely bride suddenly encountered those of the embarrassed Philip.

*Et neque jam color est misto candore rubori !*

The paleness that overspread her features was equalled in intensity only by the scarlet suffusing his own ! Impossible to explain the accident which had brought him to the spot where his presence, uninvited, might be deemed an insult ; and as she passed on, while the crowd closing joyously behind the bridal procession concealed him from view, the involuntary delinquent became as confused and breathless as herself.

Having hazarded a parting glance towards the altar, as he prepared to quit the church before the commencement of the ceremony, Philip beheld the bridegroom advance to receive from the hands of royalty one of the choicest gifts they had ever conferred ; and never was he so struck by the sinister expression of De Bayhurt's handsome face, or the haughty altitude of his fine figure, as when thrown, at that mo-

ment, into relief, by the graceful and courteous deportment of the Prince of Wales. For some time after he regained the happy family party awaiting him in Mansfield Street, his thoughts involuntarily recurred to that saturnine bridegroom !

On the morrow, indeed, the scandalous chronicle of the clubs asserted that the collision of the two weddings had been expressly devised by the malice of Lady Grandison,—indignant at the secession from her circle of two such favoured votaries as Philip and his friend ; in the hope that the splendour of her daughter's *entourage* might cast into the shade the modest nuptials of one whom she no longer considered otherwise than as “the lawyer's son.”—For though, in truth, she would have given much to avoid an encounter so trying to the feelings of “dear Stasy,” at a moment when she found it inconvenient that dear Stasy should have feelings at all, she enjoyed all the benefit of an indifferent reputation in the paltry motives assigned for her conduct.

“ I wonder whether Anastasia recognised

me!—I wonder whether I was noticed by that surly brute De Bayhurst!—I wonder to what motive they attributed my seeming intrusion into their wedding party!”—meditated the perplexed man, on his way back the following day to Eden Castle; and though not a particular of the scene had escaped him, and he was fain to admit that nothing could have been more imposing than the arrangement of those brilliant hymeneals, not a syllable did he breathe on the subject to his wife, when answering, on his return home, her numberless questions concerning the bridal of her dear Emma.

“What a charming wedding!” said she, after listening to his abridged account of the sober little family assemblage of Askhams and Hardynges. “Lord and Lady Uppingham being on duty at Windsor, their absence can have excited no attention.—It was almost as quiet and happy a wedding as our own!”

A moment afterwards, Philip, who had not listened to a word of her comments, carelessly observed, that the solemn words of the ritual did not impress him so much from the lips of

his sister Emma, as from those of Lady Uppingham.

“ I suppose I looked upon Margaret’s happiness as less secure,” said he ; “ and the number of persons present, and the imposing dignity of the scene, certainly rendered in that instance the service more august. Too much consequence cannot be assigned to such solemnizations, in families whose connexions justify publicity. As Lord Hardynge truly observed, there cannot be too many witnesses.—Something suspicious in a marriage ceremony slurred over in a corner !”—

Mrs. Askham had every right to feel mortified, under the impression that he was thinking of his own ; or perhaps of her first run-away match. He was, in truth, thinking only of Lady Anastasia’s !—But it was not with Edward Saville’s widow he could discuss the wedding of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst.

That day, Philip felt for the first time importuned by having to carry little Edward on his back into the drawing-room, after dinner, according to a custom he had himself established ;



and when the knock of the nurse was heard at the door to summon Miss Selina to bed, instead of supporting her usual petition for a reprieve, he agreed with mamma and the judicious old Susan, that “it was a sad thing for little girls to sit up late.”

Perhaps he wished to be alone with Evelyn. Perhaps he desired to confide to her, more fully, the lights and shadows of his trip to town,—the bridal gifts he had seen preparing—the grateful acceptance of her affectionate offering; or, dismissing from his mind the frivolous particulars of which, during the last few days, he had “supped full,” as well as breakfasted sufficiently, he might be anxious to communicate some of those items of political rumour over which he had found Brookes’s wrangling, like a mastiff over its chain.

Scarcely!—For within ten minutes of the children’s departure for bed, he was extended on the sofa, fast asleep!—

Evelyn was not a little startled on perceiving that the gift with which she had greeted him on his arrival,—a moss rose-bud, of which she had

walked every day to the conservatory to watch the progress, and culled at the last moment, that it might be the freshest as well as first of the season,—had fallen from his button-hole, and was lying crushed upon the floor!

It requires, perhaps, somewhat more than the philosophy of five-and-twenty, to find the country as pleasant on returning to it from London, as London appears on visiting it from the country. In spring, London is more the country,—that is, the country of fine ladies and gentlemen,—than the country itself. Forced flowers and fruit abound in the metropolis, when the country exhibits only a few precocious starvelings, reared in its scattered hot-houses; and when, after luxuriating in this fragrance and profusion at some charming London fête, amid strains of the choicest music and smiles of the fairest faces, one is called upon for wonder and gratitude for a simple moss-rose bud, such as the flower-carts and flower-girls of Bond Street have vulgarized in our eyes, it is difficult to set due value on the treasure, unless at the instigation of what it is

somewhat questionable that Philip Askham really possessed,—a heart.

The attention of Evelyn was not long engrossed by her rejected flower. Her eyes fixed themselves wistfully upon the manly form and handsome features only too powerfully impressed upon her heart; and having laid aside her work for the indulgence, she seemed to fancy that, by interrogating the countenance of her sleeping husband, she might obtain indications of all he had been seeing, thinking, feeling, and frequenting, in the great city to which she was so much a stranger.

The result was far from satisfactory. She discovered at once upon his brow a care-worn expression,—an expression such as it used to wear when, harassed by his worries at Eden Castle, he repaired to *her* society for comfort and repose!—What could have annoyed him in town?—Had Lord Askham been disgracing himself by some new excess?—or had the dowager insulted her son by fresh sarcasms upon his marriage?

Poor Evelyn was the more anxious in her

conjectures, because, during his absence, a circumstance had occurred likely to excite his displeasure. With the sure instinct of her sex, she dreaded the first open difference of opinion between them. The first dispute between a newly-married pair is the first gray hair amid the golden curls of Cupid: and if it have been quoted millions of times from Rousseau, that “Love is born with the first sigh, and dies with the first kiss,” be it henceforward added that the love which survives the first domestic quarrel, becomes thenceforward limping and graceless as a Chelsea pensioner.

The grounds on which Mrs. Askham felt the evil to be impending over her, were not, however, very alarming. On the day after Philip's departure, the Shetland pony, so long promised to little Edward by poor Sir Erasmus, had made its appearance. Aware that it had been bespoke the preceding year from the Highlands, she fancied that, during the absence of the old gentleman from the lodge, it might have been unadvisedly dispatched by the servants to its original destination.

But no !—A new saddle and bridle had been forwarded at the same time from Bath, with express directions from Sir Erasmus that the gift should be carefully conveyed to his little friend, by an old Indian servant named Moutiar, to whose care the boy had often been entrusted at the lodge.

To reject a present previously accepted, Mrs. Saville felt to be impossible, even had not her delighted boy's enjoyment been so much at stake. Yet she suspected,—she *feared*,—that Philip might feel vexed that a pleasure should have been accorded to the child by any hand but his own,—most of all, by that of Sir Erasmus !

In this surmise, however, she was guided by a knowledge of particulars undreamed of by her husband.

To Philip, the old bachelor was still only a ridiculous personage, who had magnified the absurdity of his habits and appearance, by pretending to recommend himself to the favour of a woman young and lovely. But in the estimation of Philip's wife, he had established him-

self on a far different footing!—Sir Erasmus was the only person who had remonstrated with her on the imprudence of her second marriage.

“Do not imagine, madam,” said he, having made his way to Eastfield one cheerless afternoon, soon after the death of Lord Askham, “do not imagine that I am actuated by resentment of your indifference, or jealousy of your favour to another. I admit the folly of my past pretensions. Your disdain has opened my eyes to many things; and I am fain to acknowledge that an ill-favoured whimsical old man, would have been an inadequate partner for one so gifted as yourself.—Still, I have the power to secure the welfare of your children,—I am richer than the world or my habits of life would lead you to suppose:—and all—*all* would have been for Edward and Selina!”

A few embarrassed words, indicating that, under any circumstances, it would have been impossible for her to invade the rights of his sister and nieces, encouraged the old man to resume his expostulation.

“ My sister and nieces are amply provided for,” said he. “ I have a right to gratify my own feelings in the bequeathment of my property ; and forgive me if I once fondly fancied that your affection for your little ones might induce you to overlook, in *their* behalf, my demerits of age and person. Bear witness for me, however, madam, that from the moment you undeceived me, I ceased to importune you with my attentions. Not from sullenness,—not from resentment ;—but from feelings such as the years which render me disgusting, ought to have enabled me to survive !”

Through the twilight obscuring the room, Evelyn could not discern the features of her guest. In his voice only was the struggle of his feelings perceptible.

“ But though I have latterly abstained from your society,” continued he, “ my heart has never been absent from this chamber ! From a distance have I carefully watched over you and yours. Not a movement has escaped me. While avoiding to expose my grotesque person to the sneers and mimicry of the object of

your preference, I have marked with fear and trembling his progress in your affections:—*not* as regards my own peace of mind, but *yours*! I know him better than *you do*,—I know *you* better than you know yourself,—and trust me, that when his prepossessing exterior has ceased to charm, you will admit that you did wrong to place your happiness in the keeping of a cold-hearted egotist, and the welfare of your children at the mercy of one who, bred in the school of tyranny, will eventually prove a tyrant!—Philip Askham, madam, has suffered persecution without learning mercy.—The frosts of such a home as his destroyed the early germs of humanity in his heart!”

Against such an accusation, Philip Askham's affianced wife naturally raised her voice to remonstrate. But the old man insisted, at once so mildly and earnestly, on being heard to an end, that she resigned herself to listen.

“And when the illusions of love are at an end,” said he, “as will be the case far sooner than you foresee,—what will remain to console you for having given a harsh father to your



children, and diminished your own care of them by the claims of a second family? Nothing—absolutely *nothing*! The patrimony of this favoured man consists of five thousand pounds,—a princely provision, truly, to be divided among future children of his own! So that, reared in the enjoyment of luxuries secured by his present income, your boy and girl will contract tastes and ambitions wholly unjustifiable. For them, he can do nothing;—except what, as sure as there is a God above us, do he will,—*loathe* them, as the offspring of another man,—and oppress them, as his rivals in your heart!”

The conscience-stricken widow of Edward Saville made no further attempt to silence him. Her utterance was impeded by tears.

“I forewarn you of all this, madam,” resumed he, “*not* with the slightest expectation of detaching you from Philip Askham. You are pledged too deeply. Things have gone too far. You have placed your own happiness too completely at his mercy, to leave you free for the consideration of your children’s! I have

laid the case before you, rather for the clearance of my conscience, (*you*, fatherless,—brotherless,—friendless!) than from the hope of bringing you to reason.—But this is not all.—I am about to leave this place. The happiness of Eden Castle,—the abandonment of Eastfield,—would be too trying to me to witness. And before I—go,—I wish,—I could desire,—I——”

His voice, hitherto sustained by a strong resolution, became almost inarticulate with sobs.—For a moment there was a painful pause.

“Those children are very dear to me,”—said he, at length, in faltering accents,—“very, *very* dear!—They are the only human beings saving *you*, to whom in my long life I ever attached myself. My feelings towards them are not altered,—*cannot* be altered by your disgust to me, or passion for another.—On the contrary, I love them better,—for I feel they will need compensation! If, therefore, madam,—if, therefore, my dear Evelyn,—at any future moment, the fulfilment of my evil auguries should necessitate the interposition of a friend,—bear in mind that you have one who will never fail you. Wherever

you may be, so long as I abide on this earth, shall I abide your bidding !”—

It was not difficult to make suitable acknowledgments to this only too feeling adjuration. The heart of the young mother was deeply touched. Still, displeasure at his accusations against Philip qualified her emotions of gratitude; and though, while Sir Erasmus was taking his last leave of her with a degree of stern solemnity that caused her very blood to thrill, she saw in his conduct only the strength of affection dictating his offers, no sooner was he gone,—no sooner had she dried the tears from her cheeks, and composed her demeanour to receive the usual visit of him, to whom she had pledged her heart and hand,—than she began to regard him anew as a jealous, peevish, disappointed old man. The banterings of Philip touching “her superannuated beau,” rendered him contemptible in her eyes; and as to his terrible charge against the temper of her future lord, she had no difficulty in persuading herself, that, according to his own mode of parlance, “there was nothing in it !”

In moments less infatuated, however, it was impossible not to recur with gratitude to his professions of attachment to her children. Edward and Selina were so destitute of friends, and so ill apportioned with the things of this world, that the good will of an affectionate and affluent protector, was not to be despised. In the event of her death, what was to become of them? Though, in his last illness, poor Saville had addressed to his family a letter placing his orphans under their protection, no notice had ever been vouchsafed to the application!

When, therefore, the pony made its appearance at Eden Castle, (the first indication of a relenting spirit given by Sir Erasmus since her marriage,) she felt that, to reject the proffered olive branch, would be unjustifiable. But how was she to induce Philip to forgive himself, and *her*,—that the little shaggy favourite enjoying itself in his pastures, and more beautiful in the eyes of Edward than either the pastures or the Castle they surrounded, was the gift of another!

These misgivings, and the apprehension that

the weariness of her husband arose from having forsaken greater pleasures in London than he expected to find in the country, rendered her cheeks so colourless, that, on opening his eyes and finding her watching over him, Philip could not refrain from a somewhat uncomplimentary exclamation.

“How pale and doleful you are looking, Evelyn!”—said he. “After the gay wedding cheer and wedding faces among which I have lately found myself, it seems like coming to a funeral!”—

But Evelyn was pale no longer. The sarcasm had already restored colour to her cheek.

Next day, she was careful to propose an early walk; desirous of being the first to point out to him the new favourite of the children; and, unused to manœuvres, it was astonishing how awkwardly she managed to bring him round to that part of the park where Elshie was installed, and how incoherently she related the story of its arrival.

She had expected his displeasure to burst

forth.—She soon found that a dead silence may convey a still stronger reproof!

“Is it not a pretty creature?”—said she, at last, as the pony, accustomed to be petted, came tossing its shaggy head towards them.

“*Very!*”—was the laconic reply; and to conceal her embarrassment, Mrs. Askham bestowed on poor Elshie more notice than her husband cared perhaps to see bestowed on any living object but himself.—For he turned away in moody silence.

A moment afterwards, little Edward, who had been watching their movements from a distance, came bounding towards the pony.

“*I may* come now, may’nt I?”—cried the boy, whom his mother had cautioned the preceding night to make no allusion to Elshie without her leave.

“You told me not to say a word about the pony before papa, till you had brought him to see it,” said Edward. “But now, surely I may get on my dear little Elshie again!”—

Philip appeared to turn a deaf ear to the con-

versation ; and his wife believed him to be too angry with her for accepting a present from a man so much the object of his scorn as Sir Erasmus L'Estrange, to take heed of what was passing. But she was soon undeceived. The gloomy silence he maintained as they returned arm-in-arm towards the house, was broken as they entered the hall by his observing, in a constrained voice,—“It is a pity ever to teach duplicity to children ! They despise those towards whom they are instructed to be artful, as well as those by whom the lesson is taught.”

The bosom of his wife swelled too proudly for reply. It was not till she reached her dressing-room that she gave vent to her tears. To be rebuked for hypocrisy, and rebuked by *him* !—him, to whom her whole heart was open. Or, if she reserved from his participation a few bitter feelings, it was only as a parent takes from the hands of an idolized child, some toy by which it may be endangered.

After the first ebullition of grief, however, she composed herself into a resolution to make no further allusion to what had passed. It would

be impolitic,—it would be *worse* than impolitic,—to render the children their first grounds of dissension. The warning of Sir Erasmus, on that point, recurred opportunely to her mind.

Alas! from the moment the word “policy” interferes between the unrestrained confidence of a wedded couple, half the happiness of married life is lost!

Luckily there was no occasion to revert to their disagreement. Philip met her again with a smiling countenance. He was in the highest spirits. He had received a letter from Hardyng. “Hardyng and Emma were about to visit Eden Castle.” The happy bride had profited by her present ascendancy to secure a glimpse of her old home, and beloved sister-in-law.

“I always fancied,—(blockhead that I was!)” wrote Bob,—“that a man was master of his own honey-moon; and consequently planned an excursion to the Isle of Wight. But my wife,—(I never placed the words in black and white before,—suffer me to pause a moment and contemplate the effect!) MY WIFE—(ahem!) in-



sists on shaking hands with your's, before we settle in town. For two days to come, we shall find our Hybla at Eske Hill; after which, prepare a corner of your hospitable mansion to receive the happiest of men!—I leave the happiest of women to announce her own intentions; concluding that, for this one single month of our lives, they will be synonymous.”

“How happy Mr. Hardyng seems, and how much in love!” said Evelyn, after perusing the letter placed by Philip in her hand.

“Yes! I never saw a fellow happier.—Why not?—There is no drawback to *his* happiness! He marries, with the approbation of his family, a girl deserving his choice; to whom he is the object of a first and only affection.”

“You think, then,” said his wife, trusting no tremulousness was discernible in her voice, “that Emma is as much in love as himself?”

“Quite as much! No man attaches himself as strongly as Hardyng has done, unless certain of possessing an *exclusive* hold over the woman to whom he pledges his affection!”

“It is strange,” pursued Evelyn, conscious

that wherever she set her foot must be tender ground,—“it is *very* strange that your two sisters, brought up under the same roof and same authority, should have formed such different notions of domestic happiness !”

“Their *dispositions* are different !” rejoined Philip. “Margaret has a sweet temper; but, like most of your very quiet people, is cold and calculating. Emma is wild and petulant. But there is neither art nor artifice in her nature.—Emma is all affection,—all heart !”

It was not long since Mrs. Askham had heard him assign the palm to the mild serenity of Lady Uppingham !—Had *all* his thoughts and feelings undergone a revolution ?—With whom had he been living in London, to have operated so sudden a change ? Was Sir Erasmus so soon justified in his forebodings ? Was Philip already susceptible to the jealousy of having a predecessor in her heart ?

Lucky that the arrangements about to be made for the expected visit of the Hardynges afforded a diversion to such painful reflections ! Nor could Philip long preserve towards his

gentle wife a countenance of resentment. Stern  
as he was growing,

Nature never made

A heart all marble ;—but in its fissures, sows  
The wild flower, Love, from whose rich seeds spring forth  
A world of mercies and sweet charities !

## CHAPTER III.

Alas! no prelate's lawn, with hair shirt lin'd,  
Is half so incoherent as his mind!

POPE.

Elle appartenait à ces natures, amies de la joie, qui la poursuivent partout, comme les hirondelles le printemps; gais oiseaux, vivant de soleil et de changement, traversant toute tristesse à tire d'ailes.

RIONEL.

Optimum vitæ genus eligito, nam consuetudo faciet jucundus.

PYTHAGORAS.

It was enough to make the old young again,—or rather, it might have converted Sir Erasmus L'Estrange into an Amadis,—to witness the happiness of the young couple that soon afterwards arrived at Eden Castle!

Philip was forced to admit that Hurstwood and fifteen thousand a year could have done nothing to enhance the smiles of his sister; and

as to Bob, though mercurial from his childhood, never till now had he seemed fully sensible of the elasticity of the earth he trod on, or the buoyancy of the atmosphere appointed him to breathe.—There was nothing,—no, not even the triumph of the Tory administration—which he did not view *en couleur de rose*!

“We shall gain all the more credit,” said he, “by turning them out!”

But at a moment when so many stirring interests prevailed in the metropolis, he could scarcely understand how a man in the prime of youth and intellect, like Philip, could tether himself for life among sheep and kine, and invest his ambitions in the manuring of land and fattening of cattle.

“Is it possible, my dear Askham, that you mean to dawdle away your days at Eden Castle?” cried he, after a long ride with him across the estate. “Why, you have not a creature to speak to! Were you ever so much in want of a quarrel to quicken your circulation, not a soul on whom to wreak your ill-humour! The few houses inhabited at the time of the election, are

now standing empty.—Eastfield,—‘to be let furnished;’—every window-shutter closed of yonder barrack at the top of the hill,—and the putty-coloured old *croquemitaine* belonging to that beautiful place near Edenbourne, either dead or *déménagé*. By Jove! I never saw such a neighbourhood. You might as well live at Tadmor in the Desert. And now there are no field-sports going on, by way of interlude to the tragedy, you and your wife will certainly be found dead of the dulls, some fine morning; and the jury bring in a verdict of ‘DIED for want of the common pastimes of life!’ recommending the case to the consideration of the stewards of the county races!”

“*My* capering days are past!”—said Philip, carelessly. “How often, my dear Bob, did we sigh in London last year, for the quiet of the country?”

“Because the country was just then the Elysium of the angels of our souls!—But now that we can transport them with us to the head quarters of civilization, *au diable les bleuets et les paquerettes!*—*Who* would not rather hear

Sheridan speak, than the brooks babble?—Who would not rather dine at Carlton House, than watch yonder oxen grazing,—like beasts as they are !”—

The “bucolical juvenal” of Eden Castle, tried to laugh off this home-thrusting attack ; but the attempt was abortive.

“ Even if you withstand *those* temptations, my dear fellow,” resumed Hardyng, “ how will you be able to deny yourself the luxury of your brother’s maiden speech? Think of Henry, with his prim self-satisfied air, convulsed by the throes of his first delivery !—Conceive how he will monster his nothings ; and how Lord Uppingham will go about, like a tender parent or guardian, protesting, with his *air capable*, that the nothings are like Caliban, very “ delicate monsters,” and *we* but drunken Trinculos, unworthy to do them homage !”—

“ I am content to take the absurdities of my family upon trust,” replied Philip. “ If Henry wants taking down, no doubt *you* will work him famously.”

“ But why not come and witness the sport ?

My father and mother have given up Eske Hill to us. Why not make it your home for the rest of the season !”

Firmly, though gratefully, Philip persisted in denial ; and the following day, when Emma, having borrowed Mrs. Askham’s mare, did the honours of her old neighbourhood to her husband, by pointing out to his art-educated eye the choicest landscapes of Eden Chase,—umbrageous nooks that Hobbima or Gainsborough might have painted,—or some ruined mill, or leaping brook, or new-felled copse, which Ruysdael or Constable would have transferred to canvas with scarcely less vivid reality,—he could not refrain from accusing the inertness of her brother.

“ Philip seems as bent on self-sacrifice,” said he, “ as some eastern dervise, who secures his salvation by standing for half a century upon one leg ; or St. Simon Slylites, on his column. He reminds me of the fellows who put out an eye or cut off a finger, in order to evade the militia that would take them from their *lares* and *penates*.”



“ Philip is so happy with Evelyn, that he no longer cares for London !”

“ Not happier than I am with Emma,—yet *I* do not make proof of my conjugal affection by renouncing the sacred ties of fellow-creatureship. Why can they not come and stay with us in town ?”

“ Because he would not like to bring the children, nor *she* to leave them behind.”

“ But is Philip always to sacrifice his pleasures and interests, to those confounded children ?” cried Hardyng with indignation.

“ Don’t confound the children, if you please ; for prettier or more promising never were seen !” was Emma’s good-humoured reply.

“ Nay, I have no fault to find with them, not being in Philip’s place ; though, by Jove, it would drive me out of my mind to see *my* wife bestow endearments on another man’s offspring, and be forced to study their convenience. My darling Emma !—I would as soon have married the witch of Endor, as a widow !”

“ Beware how you express that sentiment before Philip !” cried his wife. “ Beware of

even renewing your invitation ; for should it prove the means of rendering him less satisfied with his home, I would *never* forgive you !”

“ No man in his senses is talked out of his conjugal affection,” replied Hardyng. “ We swear by our wives—or *at* them,—at the suggestion of our wicked will. Philip takes the former line. But between ourselves, dear Emma, much as he is attached to Evelyn, I wish he had married a woman with a little more spice of the devil.”

“ Like myself ?”—interrupted his wife, laughing.

“ For Mrs. Askham’s gentle nature will sooner or later make a tyrant of him,” continued her husband. “ Philip requires some one who, when he protests that black is white, will not be bullied into adding—‘ as snow !’ ”

“ I am afraid he has not the best of tempers !” said Emma, patting her pretty barb, as it sidled away from a gigantic oak, the most ancient of the Chase, which still extended a few of the distorted branches said to have given shelter to Queen Elizabeth. “ But it is his only fault.”

“I never had any disagreement with him,” replied Hardyng.

“Because you disagree with nobody!”

“On the contrary,—at this moment, I disagree with my wife,—who describes a man’s temper as his ‘only fault;’—whereas ill-temper, darling of my heart, is but the varnish that brings out pre-existent evil qualities. What we call ill-temper, is the combination of a sanguine temperament with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. It is only when a man’s *selfishness* is ruffled, or his *jealousy* excited,—or his *vanity* wounded,—that he gives vent to the demonstrations we choose to call temper. Were a really amiable person as fiery as Hotspur, he could not be taxed as ill-tempered.”

“Hear, hear, hear, hear, hear!” cried his wife, delighted to find him betrayed into a lecture. “A cheer for the luminous exposition of the Hon. Member for Edenbourne!”

“What Philip’s friends ought never to forgive themselves,” added her husband, after reproving her saucy interruption with his uplifted whip,—“is having suffered him to resign his appointment.”

“Consider the terms he was on with Lord Uppingham, by whose interest it was procured!”

“*Will* you please to let a fellow finish his sentence? I was about to say resign his appointment at the eleventh hour, when it was no longer in the power of the Whigs to provide employment for his talents. Conceive what will be his situation when Lord Askham, sooner or later, returns from exile; and Philip finds himself *sans sou ni maille*,—with half a dozen children on his hands, (without counting the little Savilles,) and not even a dog-kennel for shelter!—Too late, then, for a profession!”

“I suspect Percy would gladly secure himself against Eden Castle, by continuing the income he now allows his brother!” said Mrs. Hardyng.

“*A d'autres, à d'autres!*—It was never Eden Castle he hated; it was the decency and subordination of the paternal roof. Men of Lord Askham's kind are content with any house, where they can have their own way.”

“Certain it is that Philip, whom we cannot

induce to quit the place, disliked it formerly as much as Percy."

"Never was the abdicated monarch yet, dearest Emma, who did not long to clutch back the sceptre he had abjured! Take my word for it, whenever your eldest brother returns, there will be an end to Philip's viceroyalty at Eden Castle."

"In that case, I agree with you," cried his wife, "that it is lamentable he should have blighted his prospects in life! He must *not* cut short his public connexions. I will do my best to induce him to visit us in town."

She might as well have tried her eloquence on one of the marble statues in the vestibule! Flattering himself he was only firm, Philip was obstinate as a mule. Independent of all other objections, his self-love could not bear that *his* wife should appear in town for the first time, in so undistinguished and undistinguishable a position, at a moment when the bride of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst was shining as a star of the first magnitude.

For already, the newspapers abounded in

flourishes concerning Lady Anastasia's new mansion and its embellishments. 'The injurious glare of the puff-preliminary, was of course lavished on the fashionable daughter of the fashionable Lady Grandison; her mother seeming to fancy, like the Chinese, that a prodigious drumming of drums and sounding of trumpets, would drive away the evil spirits menacing the tranquillity of her child.

"How much of the happiness of life, dear Stasy seems content to purchase in the upholsterer's shop!" cried Hardyng, after perusing one of these foolish paragraphs;—little surmising that, to the simple-minded Mrs. Askham, to whom his observation was addressed, his own ardent interest in politics, and Emma's in his political career, appeared quite as unaccountable.

Notwithstanding her sisterly attachment to Mrs. Hardyng, it was, in fact, a relief to Mrs. Askham, when she and her gay-hearted husband returned to town. When subdued by her dutiful attendance on her father, Emma was a far more congenial companion for the gentle Evelyn, than

the animated young woman who now entered into the energetic projects of her husband, with all the intenser eagerness that, from the quiet tenour of her early life, possessed for her the attraction of novelty.

Nor had Hardyng been able to conceal from the observant eye of a mother, what a nuisance he considered her children. In the first expansion of wedded happiness, Philip had insisted on having them always in the room, and conceding them a thousand indulgences to which they were unaccustomed. Especially to Selina ! To *her* he seemed to think peculiar compensation due, for the loss of the undivided tenderness of her mother ; and the little creatures being now habituated to the system, it would have been cruel to recur to more wholesome habits of discipline, because “ Papa ” was a less impassioned lover. The favour of the children having actually been *courted* by Philip to recommend him to that of their mother, he could not turn round upon them *now* !

At all events, he could not turn round upon them *yet* ; though more than once sorely

tempted, during the visit of the Hardynges. He too had noticed the impatient shrugs of Bob, when their noise after dinner interrupted the discussion of the great letters of the day's paper, or the still pleasanter chat in which his intelligent bride took so animated a part.

Conscious that the evil was of his own creation, Philip had not the injustice to complain; but the shrugs of Hardynges sank deep into his mind.

“I am afraid Edward will grow up a little turbulent, unless you occasionally make some effort to check him!” said he to his wife, some time after the departure of the Hardynges, (as though he had been brooding over the evil,)—on seeing the boy give chase to his nurse among, and over, the parterres of the new flower-garden,—rather than submit to have the nursery-lasso thrown over him, and be carried off with his sisters.—“He is getting *too* unruly!”

It was not for the mother to plead that this self-same unruliness had been heretofore termed “spirit,” and applauded accordingly.



“Edward is a manly little fellow of his age,” was her mild rejoinder; “and almost beyond nursery governance.”

The stepfather thought so too. But he also thought that for little boys beyond nursery governance, school was the safest place. Evelyn had, however, so constantly protested at Eastfield against preparatory schools, that it was hardly possible to ask her to recant, merely because translated to the higher see of Eden Castle!

He contented himself with observing that, for the boy's own sake, governance of some kind or other was indispensable.

“It would be unfair to the child,” said he, “to let him acquire habits of insubordination, that will be flogged out of him hereafter. He is very young certainly; but,

‘Just as the tree is bent, the twig's inclined!’

Of that dictum, however, his wife was inclined to dispute the wisdom.—And with reason.—For there are twigs both human and ligneous, wholly unsusceptible of training: nor can the rigid cedar or knotted holly be adapted to the same purposes as the supple osier.—A

thousand-horse power of education would never have subdued the vivacities of Percy Askham into the demure and pretentious gravity of Henry; or the recklessness of Edward Saville into the docility of Selina.

The gentle wife contented herself with repeating that, were the power of education infallible, the characters of his sisters would scarcely exhibit such striking dissimilarity.

“Perhaps not!” was the angry rejoinder of Philip, who, finding he had the worst of the argument, revenged himself by the cowardly act of removing the button from his foil;—“but I do not see why a difference of temper between Lady Uppingham and Mrs. Hardyng should render it impossible for Master Edward Saville to be sent to school, like other boys of his age.”

Mrs. Askham was silenced.—A sudden pang shot through her frame; and it was a relief when her husband, as much vexed with himself for having been provoked into this ungenerous thrust, as with *her* for provoking it, retired to his own study to chew the bitter cud of repentance.

The hint she had received, however, was not to be neglected. She lost no time in placing a discreet limitation to the freedom of the children. She saw that it was necessary to take precautions;—that they must be taught to behave as if in the house of a benefactor, not of a father;—and nursery discipline was once more stringently enforced.

But the fond mother repaid herself for the loss of their company in the drawing-room, by lingering longer beside their beds, when she repaired in secret to the nursery to give them her benediction. And after imprinting her nightly kiss on the forehead of the sleeping Selina, or parting the darkly-clustering curls of Edward the better to contemplate his noble countenance, old Susan often stole on tiptoe to the cribs of her nurslings after her mistress's departure, to ascertain whether those quiet earnest kisses were not intermingled with tears!

Unwilling to admit, even to the nurse who had attended the children from their infancy, and waited on her own girlhood when little more than a child, that her husband had already

discovered that all was not perfection in his *ménage*, she assumed to herself the blame; declaring “the noise of the children to be too much for her.” And when the kind-hearted old woman took their part somewhat wrathfully against this newly-acquired delicacy of nerves, Evelyn preferred admitting, as an excuse for her fastidiousness and a plea for indulgence, (what she had hitherto, through some inexplicable scruple kept a secret from her faithful attendant,) that she was likely to become again a mother;—rather than that Philip should incur a blame which he deserved too richly for the woman who loved him to hear applied without pain.

Meanwhile, the several instincts of their sex were apparent in the different modes in which the children adapted themselves to the new arrangements. To *them* could not be alleged the pretext suggested to Susan; and on finding himself required to desist from trampling on the flower-beds, and racing along corridors, because “papa disliked a noise,” Edward boldly and defyingly renewed the offence!

“He did not care for papa!—He had al-

ways made a noise at Eastfield.—He *would* make as much noise as he liked, unless it disturbed dear mamma.”

Dear mamma instantly issued a prohibitory decree; and the resistance of the little fellow was suspended. But Selina, who, though she had never resisted, listened with all her ears and all her heart to the admonitions provoked by her brother, seemed intuitively to understand the truth,—that “papa must not be disturbed because it made him angry with mamma;”—and from that moment, she attached herself silently to her mother’s side, as if conscious how much she needed consolation.

For even Evelyn herself now occasionally managed to give offence to the “dear Philip” who had so soon become “papa,”—almost as much papa as his father! Though timid to a fault, (if in a woman any amount of timidity can be excessive,) she had not retained for more than six years the independence of widowhood, without forming opinions of her own; always blameless ones; though she neglected the more valuable art of thinking twice ere she gave

them utterance. So slight, indeed, was her self-estimation, that she fancied it mattered little what *she* thought, or how she expressed it!—But after the visit of the Hardynges, her inadvertence often subjected her to reproof.

It happened that, one day, the key of the Eden Castle post-bag was mislaid; and Philip, its usual custodian, after wasting as many oaths on his carelessness as a corporal of dragoons, saw fit to despatch one of the stable-men to Edenbourne, at ten o'clock at night, to fetch the duplicate key from the postmaster.

Certain that, at that hour, the office would be closed, (the London mail arriving at eight,) Mrs. Askham suggested the prudence of first renewing their search for the missing key.

But Philip would not hear of it.—“If they lost more time, he might have to wait till the morrow!”

“And *can* you not wait till to-morrow, dear Askham?”—mildly inquired his wife, intending no offence. “We heard yesterday, you know, from Emma.—Surely there is nothing *very* urgent in the bag?”

“How can you tell!”—cried he. “I have other correspondents than the Hardynges.—Besides, there are the newspapers.”

“The *newspapers*?” repeated Evelyn, with a smile.—“Surely, dearest, we might wait for the newspapers? Nothing amazes me more,” added she,—incautiously, seeing that he was in a contradictory humour,—“than the excessive interest which men take in newspapers!”

“And nothing more surprises *me* than that there should exist a woman capable of wondering at it!” cried Philip, in his turn. “Newspapers contain the history of the world. You make it a matter of pride to study, under the name of history, the mere epitome of obsolete newspapers! Why be ashamed to interest yourself in what may be regarded as the moral bulletin of mankind?”

“I fear I am interested in very few persons out of this house,” replied Evelyn, with a sigh,—wondering what could thus excite his feelings.

“A singular matter of boast! The limitation of a person’s sympathies betokens only narrowness of mind, or coldness of heart.”

“ But in whom or what would you *have* me interest myself?”—remonstrated Evelyn, struggling against her growing emotions.

“ In all that is great and worthy among your countrymen ;—in the fate of nations, the prosperity of countries, the progress of mankind.”

“ I am not, I trust, devoid of interest in the welfare of my fellow-creatures,” said Evelyn, deeply wounded. “ But I have not been much in the way of hearing politics discussed. I have never lived among party people.”

“ I did not suppose you had. But why make a merit of the deplorable disconnexion from society, which renders you insensible to the present stirring march of public events ?”

Mrs. Askham, finding herself on the verge of tears, determined that this taunt should pass unnoticed. She was aware that it is a trying thing to a man to lose the key of the post-bag ! Great allowances were to be made for the irritability of Philip. Instead, therefore, of attempting a rejoinder, she quitted the work-table opposite to which he was seated in a lounging-chair, (with his legs crossed like those of an



unpropitious divinity, and his hands in his pockets!) and quietly drawing aside the window-curtains, looked out into the park.

As she anticipated, a beautiful moonlight shed its pallid lustre on the scene.

“What a lovely night!” said she. “In such weather, the ride to Edenbourne is nothing. John will be back immediately.”

“I should hope so. He has been gone nearly an hour. The bay mare ought to take him there and back in three quarters. I have known the castle servants sent backwards and forwards to Edenbourne twenty times a day!”

“A *day*—but surely not at *night*?”—

“At night, when required. What are servants and horses good for, but to serve their master’s convenience?—*I* have not been used to study the convenience of my servants before my own!”

“*Do* come and admire the lovely effect of the moon upon the flower garden!” pleaded Evelyn, looking pointedly forth from the window, rather than be forced to notice his unkind allusion to her often-chided solicitude for the

comfort of old Susan. "The flowers look so beautiful in its subdued light!"

Still brooding over the loss of his key, Philip neither stirred nor spoke! But Evelyn was rash enough to provoke him into a rejoinder, by a further ebullition of enthusiasm.

"In moonlight," said she, raising her mild gray eyes to a sky equally unclouded, "there is something so soft,—so soothing!"—

"Soothing, perhaps, but certainly not *soft*!" retorted her husband.—"Never was epithet more misapplied. Moonlight is *hard*,—all its effects are hard."—

"'How soft the moonbeam sleeps on yonder bank!'" quoted Evelyn, in self defence.

"You may cite ten thousand parallel passages of poetry, without disproving my assertion," cried Philip. "To lie, is the poet's privilege. But all who have eyes in their heads, or judgment to control the use of them, will admit that *sunshine* is soft,—or rather a softening medium,—susceptible of a thousand prismatic gradations and transparent shadows,—a thousand wavering outlines and uncertain

images. Whereas the rays of moonshine are direct and steady,—devoid of colour,—reduced to simple white and black,—creating distinct and profound shadows,—the unbroken outlines of which are hard as iron !”

“ I believe you are right,” said Evelyn, *really* convinced; or if not, prepared to give up her opinion, on his showing. “ But hark ! here comes your messenger; and, thank goodness, bringing the key,”

Philip concluded the “ thank goodness” to be ironical. In *his* mouth, it would have been so. He made no further comment, however, being occupied in hastily unlocking the bag, tearing open the papers, and addressing himself to the perusal of those details of the “ march of civilization and melioration of mankind” of which he had spoken so plausibly; in the shape of the account of a fête he had previously seen announced as about to be given at Grandison House, to introduce into the world of fashion the most peerless of brides and bridegrooms, Sir Hugh and Lady Anastasia de Bayhurst !

To this, Mrs. Hardyng’s letter of the pre-

ceding day had made no allusion. Emma was now sufficiently versed in the family history of her sister-in-law, to be certain that mere mention of the name of De Bayhurst would give pain; and though Philip knew no more than that the present baronet had joined with the last in opposition to his brother's marriage, and neglect of his widow, even *he* carefully avoided all allusion to Lady Anastasia or her husband. She had consequently the satisfaction of spelling over, unquestioned and unmolested, the account of that princely entertainment; comprising the noblest society in the land, collected under a roof well worthy to do it honour.

Lady Grandison's long series of hospitable efforts had not been thrown away. Every person of note in the metropolis seemed to have crowded around her, to shed lustre upon the public presentation of her daughter.

"Emma, too!" mused Philip, on observing the Honourable Mrs. Hardyng specified among the beauties of the night. "After all Bob used to say of Lady Grandison, he is somewhat prompt in inaugurating his wife into the set!

But, as a man of the world, he is right. If such scruples were once to be consulted, *where* would they carry us ?"—

And with half a sigh, he reflected that, but for his adoption of a country life in deference to Evelyn's morbid love of retirement, and deplorable want of connexion, *his* wife might have figured, as well as Hardyng's, in that brilliant assemblage; and, between her own beauty and the Askham diamonds, have eclipsed the rival brides.

Far other pretensions, however, engrossed the heart of that one of them, who had a lawful claim upon his interest. It would have been difficult to point out a happier creature than his sister. She might have been mistaken for Collins's

Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue ;  
and even had she been less prepared for happiness by the impulses of her own buoyant, honest nature, she must have been cheered by the joy of which she found herself the origin. Never were people so in love, as the Hardynges with the wife of their son !

Robert was an only child; and, for years past, the sole anxiety of his idolizing mother had arisen from the likelihood that, in the worldly set in which he lived, he might become the prey of some artful girl intent on an establishment; or worse still, renounce all taste for matrimony, dazzled by the sunny smiles of some more attractive Countess of Grandison. And that he should be actually married—unexceptionably—to a wife deserving of him—a wife who married him for love—was almost too great a stroke of fortune! She could never sufficiently mark her gratitude to his dear Emma, for having condescended to preside over the most perfect of villas, with one of the most delightful companions in the world. Such a sacrifice could not be too highly rewarded!

Emma, however, was wise enough to estimate her position at its true value. *She* knew on which side lay the obligation; and every day that tended to develop the worthiness of the Hardyng family, the pleasantness of their society, and the easy habits of their house, rendered her more conscious how dreary the existence of her own more exalted tribe!

Of men and things, and even of books, which are the portraits of both, impossible to be more *borné* than her knowledge; and her new family took the sincerest pleasure in extending her experience, wherever it could be amusing or profitable.

Released from the cares of office, and of a cheerful, affectionate, child-like disposition, Lord Hardyng was never so happy as when he could persuade his pretty daughter-in-law to drive with her husband to town; and while Bob was engaged at his office, accompany *him* in a walk to visit those public monuments and institutions, of which she knew as much as if reared at Nootka Sound!

To a man familiar only with the human mind entrammelled by golden or brazen fetters, or simple hempen cordage, to commune open-hearted with this frank and intelligent but ill-taught girl, was like turning up a furrow of virgin soil, in all its richness of fecundity. Emma's ideas were so original, her perceptions so clear, on every subject proposed she thought and felt so justly, that it was a triumph to

afford her novel themes for thought and feeling. Nor did those pleasant and profitable saunterings with her father-in-law, by which he playfully pretended to render her husband jealous of his superior favour, disqualify her for shining in gayer circles. Lady Hardyng's maternal vanity was often gratified by hearing cited as the beauty of a ball-room, the daughter-in-law who was the comfort of her fireside.

“Surely dear Emma cannot have led a *very* pleasant life at home?” said she, one day, to Lord Hardyng. “She is so grateful for every trifling kindness we show her!”—

But the happiest moments enjoyed by the delighted mother-in-law were as a visitor at Eske Hill. While the two husbands proceeded together to town, (where parliament was now on the eve of re-assembling, and the whole political world in commotion,) she loved to remain with Emma;—to gossip over their work,—or sit reading under a fine old cedar tree, the noble branches of which swept the lawn.

One day, while seated thus, discoursing of nature and the picturesque, (*à propos* to the



memorable Cuyp which had so strangely proved the origin of their present happiness,) Lady Hardyng in enumerating among the elements of rural landscape unsightly on canvas, though beautiful to the eye, the hop-gardens of England and vineyards of France, betrayed her national partialities by according the preference to the former.

“I suppose it is owing to my Kentish origin,” said she, “that I consider a hop-garden one of the prettiest objects in the world.”

“I have heard that opinion maintained by my sister-in-law,” said Emma, “and from the same motive. And, by the way, dear Lady Hardyng, since you are so well acquainted with the De Bayhursts, surely Evelyn herself must be a little known to you?”—

“I never saw Mrs. Askham,” replied her mother-in-law, with sudden gravity. “When I married and quitted the neighbourhood, she was still a child.”

“But you must have heard of her in the family?”

“ From *them* not even her name.—It was a prohibited subject at Bayhurst.”—

“ And was poor Edward Saville so *very* charming a person ?”—

“ Most charming !”—was Lady Hardyng’s laconic answer, evidently not caring to enter into the question.

“ Then surely you must have been surprised when you heard of her marriage with my brother ?” persisted Mrs. Hardyng, who did not, or would not, discover her reluctance.

“ I was truly glad to learn that an amiable young woman had been so fortunate. She was one of those whom one might almost fancy to have been born under the frown of Destiny, like some victim of pagan times ; and I rejoice to find her settled in peace and happiness at last.”

“ Yes, she is very happy,—long may her happiness continue !”—said Emma, sighing, as if she thought it less certain than she could wish. “ But I cannot help sometimes wondering whence arose the strange antipathy of the

Saville family towards one so young,—so inoffensive,—so pleasing !”—

The prudent mother-in-law hesitated. “Why should we talk about it, now that she is one of your family?” said she. “I should feel it an act of treachery towards her, to apprise you of circumstances you do not seem to know, and which it *might* be painful to her that you should learn.”

Emma’s curiosity was now strongly excited. “I beg and beseech of you, dearest Lady Hardynges,” cried she, “do not tantalize me by these mysterious allusions.”

“Without begging or beseeching, *your* requests, my dear child, must ever suffice,” replied her companion. “But take the word of an old woman who has lived through treble your years, Emma, that knowledge concerning those we love of which they desire us to remain ignorant, is always a troublesome possession.”

“I am answered !” replied Mrs. Hardynges. “If you wish me not to inquire further, I am content.”

“Nay, as far as concerns *me*, my dear child, I have not the slightest desire for secrecy,” replied Lady Hardyng. “I was thinking only of your sister-in-law!—However, lest you should form unwarrantable surmises, better, perhaps, (since we *have* broached the subject,) that I should be more explicit.”

Emma resumed the seat from which she had started up, and, bringing it nearer to Lady Hardyng, under the “cedarn cover,” so deliciously impervious to the summer sunshine, prepared herself to listen.

“I have often told you, dear Emma, that my father inherited the advowson of a family living on the confines of Kent, of which my brother is now the incumbent,” said her mother-in-law. “The village of Holmehurst is situated three miles from the seat of the Savilles. But at the distance of two, stands Holmehurst Grange, a curious old place, belonging to Mrs. Askham’s father, Colonel Monson, the impoverished representative of one of our oldest Kentish families. When I first remember him, he was a widower; and small as was

his household, (consisting only of the labourers necessary for the cultivation of about twenty acres of land, and two domestic scrubs, the slaves of a housekeeper who had lived with him since the death of his wife, on the plea of having charge of his infant girl,) his hereditary income would not have sufficed to support it, but for a trifling pension accorded for extraordinary services in the Mysore.

“ But however impoverished, the ancient consequence of a family which has bequeathed to the old church at Holmehurst brass monuments of the fourteenth century, and alabaster ones of the days of the Stuarts, would have commanded the utmost respect of the neighbourhood, had it not been for Colonel Monson’s odious temper, and objectionable habits of life. Between the smart of old wounds, and the still more bitter pang of seeing the fine domain of Holmehurst attached to the hereditary estate of the Savilles, (between whose family and his own had festered an ill-will for centuries,) the old soldier had become almost a misanthrope.

“ The plea was a good one for excluding his wealthier neighbours from his denuded house ; which, dilapidated and miserable as it was, commanded a degree of interest often refused to palaces of modern invention.

“ Holmehurst, my dear Emma, always gave me the idea of the moated grange of Shakspeare’s Mariana ; except that the western front was sheltered by a screen of ancient chesnuts and sycamores, such as I doubt whether Austria ever furnished. The structure being of stone-coped flint, like the ancient churches of Sussex, no wonder it had bid defiance to the encroachments of time, and to everything else, indeed, except the ivy creeping over its surface.

“ Even the ivy, however, did not seem at ease there, as one sees it, wreathing and disporting in luxuriant growth around some noble tower. It crept meagrely and charily over the smooth surface of the flints, as if aware of being on inhospitable premises, and at any moment liable to be warned off.”

“ I see the old Grange ! ”—cried Emma, whose eyes were fixed with intense interest on the ex-

pressive face of her mother-in-law.—“ I know the dwarfed and meagre ivy you describe !”—

“ Another motive, besides the churlishness of Colonel Monson, kept the better class of neighbours away from Holmehurst,” resumed Lady Hardyng. “ The housekeeper was supposed to be both above and beneath her station ; nay, some servant of the house, discarded at the moment of Evelyn’s birth, had circulated rumours in the village that the death of her young mother was caused by a discovery of an undue intimacy between her husband and Mrs. Carter.

“ The scandal might be groundless, like most scandals reported by discarded servants ; but on the strength of the prejudice it created, the housekeeper tried to impress on her master that it was his duty to marry her ; and the resistance suggested by his hereditary pride to the importunities of the coarse overbearing woman, produced perpetual strife. Their quarrels transpired. Everybody knew that the infirm man was incessantly menaced by his domestic tyrant, and, if the testimony of ser-

vants could be believed, occasionally beaten; and deeply was the commiseration of the neighbourhood excited in favour of the lovely little girl, who was growing up in that dim old Grange, like the better genius of the place.

“ Strangers, as they rode by, used to see the child, scarcely clothed by the scanty frocks she had outgrown, and far more richly covered by the long tresses of auburn hair overhanging her shoulders.”

“ Like Selina’s now !”—interrupted Emma.

“ Selina’s? Ah! *that* was the name of poor Mrs. Monson !”—cried Lady Hardyng. “ They used to see her,” said she, resuming her narrative, “ stationed in the old porch, like the figure of a youthful saint within its niche, watching for hours the withered blooms fluttering down from the lime-trees,—without instruction,—without companions,—without comfort of any kind; and many a good mother felt grieved at heart that a little creature so promising, should be so grievously neglected.

“ But the colonel was busy fighting his battles with Mrs. Carter; or lost in cheerless



contemplation of a MS. map appended to the mildewed wall of his sunless chamber, which exhibited the boundary line of the estates of Bayhurst and Holmehurst, as they subsisted in Elizabeth's time; since which, two thousand acres had been transferred from the latter to the former, so as to necessitate the creation of the Hall, one of the finest of the fine seats erected by Inigo Jones.

“ It was a satisfaction, in short, to everybody when one day Mrs. Carter, having carried off Evelyn and returned without her, the child was understood to have been placed at school;—probably an inferior one, suitable with the notions of the housekeeper and fortune of her master;—but anything was preferable to that ill regulated and dismantled home.

“ Better for poor Evelyn had she never returned!—The homely establishment at Tonbridge, in which she was educated, was safer for her than Holmehurst! For as she grew up, beautiful beyond belief, and gentle and timid as you say she still remains, she had the

ill-fortune to attract the admiration of Sir Herbert Saville's eldest son."

"*Second* son, you mean,"—said Emma, gently correcting her. "She was eventually married, you know, to Edward Saville."

Lady Hardyngre replied by tapping her on the cheek, with a smile of superior information.

"She had the misfortune, I say, to attract the attention of Sir Herbert Saville's *eldest* son; who, as a boy, had occasionally stopped his pony to stare at the pretty child nutting on the confines of his father's coppices. And when, at a later period, he discovered that the lovely girl, into which the pretty child had expanded, was in the habit of escaping from her dreary home, and spending the day with her book and work in a favourite nook of her father's property, called Holmehurst Hanger, young Saville, then idling away his college vacation at Bayhurst, soon became of Evelyn's opinion that it was the most attractive spot on the estate.

"I must describe it to you, Emma, for in my girlhood it was my favourite haunt. I used

to go there on spring mornings with my brother, to gather the bee-orchises, which, wherever their fantastic blossoms abound, impart a character of mysticism to the place.—Imagine a lofty grove of chesnuts, cathedral-like in their groined arching, planted in some former century to surround a fine rock-spring, the fountain-head of a neighbouring stream. So thoroughly does their massive growth now conceal it from view, that only when the sun is vertical do its beams attain a spacious tank, cut in the solid rock around the spring, with a single subterranean issue for its waters; and as since the return of the colonel from his campaigns not a gun had been discharged on his grounds, all the song-birds of the neighbourhood seemed to have taken refuge in the Hanger. It was there one heard the first nightingale of the year,—the first cuckoo,—the last robin.—*There* climbed the squirrel unmolested,—there shone the glowworm in the moss!—

“Throughout the neighbourhood, the Holmehurst tank went by the name of the Fairies’

Bath. But my father, an antiquarian of some research, declared it to be a *Piscina*, created by the Franciscan friars who formerly possessed a priory at Holmehurst, to secure fish for their fast days. No matter its origin!—The waters were not the less glassy, nor the bright-barred perch that darted through them, less pleasant to look on.—

“ At one angle, indeed, where the green turf clothing the alluvial soil upon the margin had by degrees crumbled into the tank, forming a deposit which Colonel Monson’s over-tasked people were at no pains to remove, there sprang up a tuft of reeds and water-flowers, that seemed to flourish with especial triumph, as if proud of having conquered a place in their native element; over which, in the month of May, hovered those bright varieties of ephemera, which delight in water-flowers and reeds.—Imagine it, at such a moment, with the noble chestnut trees throwing up their pale cones of blossoms overhead!—No wonder they called it the Fairies’ Bath.—It was really a place of enchantment!”

“ You must take me to see Holmehurst Hanger, when we are able to accept Mrs. Scotney’s hospitable invitation,” said Emma. “ I long to be acquainted with every spot you loved and frequented in your youth.”

A smile of pleasure brightened the face of Lady Hardyng, as she resumed her narrative.

“ Since you enter so fully into my picture, dearest child,” said she, “ you will have no difficulty in fancying how much the shy recluse of the Grange was annoyed, on finding herself beset by Hugh Saville, in a haunt, which, though situated only a quarter of a mile from her father’s roof, was solitary as the desert. For the first few times, she bore his intrusions in silence; hoping by her coldness to render each the last. Still, he persevered. (You have seen Sir Hugh, dear Emma, and can judge from his countenance the dogged obstinacy of his nature!) He persevered, I say; and was finally guilty of insults so atrocious, that, to avoid him, she became a close prisoner in the house so distasteful to her. When they *did* chance to meet, the young lady of the ruined Grange

was seen to pass without notice the heir of Bayhurst Hall.”

“ A romance,—positively a romance !” cried Emma: who, even if not warmly interested in the heroine, would have been captivated by Lady Hardyng’s low-voiced, but impressive manner of narration.

“ The surly young man, however, had no leisure to brood over his grievances. He was sent upon his travels. War rendered the North of Europe inaccessible. But his father despatched him to the Mediterranean; where he had a brother high in naval command, with whom young Saville sailed for Sicily, then the head-quarters of the exiled Neapolitan court.

“ Neither time nor travel, however, effected the smallest change in his attachment. When he returned, the following summer, his first inquiry was for Evelyn.—Alas ! another of the family had found his way to the Fairies’ Bath !—Edward, a gay soldier of the Guards, handsome as his brother, and possessing the charm of graciousness in which the elder is so deficient, had arrived at Bayhurst, surrounded by all the

*prestige* of his heroism of Valenciennes; and towards *him*, poor Evelyn did not evince the repugnance inspired by his rival. Probably because he had approached her as a being so fair and gentle deserved to be approached.

“ Not to weary you with the details of a love story, Sir Herbert was soon maliciously apprized by his elder son of the danger incurred by the younger; and being at issue with the unfortunate man whose property had passed into his possession, (concerning certain title-deeds, by virtue of which Mrs. Carter was instigating the Colonel to attempt the recovery of a portion of his estates,) he lost not a moment in interdicting all further communication between the young people.”

“ In spite of which, of course, they met again; and were again denounced by that hateful elder brother?”

“ Precisely!—The story was related to me by my sister-in-law, on the spot that originated the mischief. Seated one summer’s day upon the short green turf beside the Fairies’ Bath, she told me how Colonel Monson, frantic on

learning the offence offered to his daughter, had despatched an insulting letter to Sir Herbert, for which, satisfaction could not be exacted from the infirm old man. In short, after they had all abused each other disgracefully, in a correspondence instigated by the malice of the vindictive Hugh, coercive measures were adopted towards the young people, such as are pretty sure to end in an elopement."

"Poor girl,—poor Evelyn!"—

"*Poor* indeed,—with such a substitute for the authority of a mother, as that infamous Mrs. Carter. The woman not only favoured her escape, but soon afterwards accomplished her own object, by inducing the outraged father to make her his wife. Colonel Monson did not long survive an act of which he was ashamed; though the widow artfully protested that it was his daughter's misconduct which hurried him to the grave.

"Fortunately for poor Evelyn, a sum of five thousand pounds had been secured her by her mother's settlement. For the Colonel bequeathed everything in his power to his widow;



and Edward Saville survived his ill-omened marriage little more than a year."

"But is it possible that no one could be found to intercede with Sir Herbert for his widow and orphans?"

"*Who* was to counteract the influence of the son that never left his side?—Broken in health and heart, no one approached the old man but Hugh;—no letter reached his hands but through those of his son. Even if Edward addressed his father in his last moments, (as most people surmise to have been the case,) the application was doubtless intercepted."

"That horrible Sir Hugh!"—

"So convinced was my brother of the fact, that, as pastor of Holmehurst, he did his utmost to procure an interview with the old man. But his son was not the person to be counteracted by a country parson; and had an unanswerable pretext for preventing the interview, in the assurance given by his father's physicians that emotion of any kind must be fatal.—As if any emotion could be more painful than the conviction of Edward's ingratitude!—Edward, his

dear promising Edward,—the pride of his soul, —who had lived to disobey him, and died without a token of repentance?”

“ Sir Herbert expired then, in his turn, a victim to the malice of his son ! From the moment I saw that man, I disliked him ; how little supposing I should ever acquire reasonable grounds for the prejudice ! Surely his conduct must have rendered him unpopular in his neighbourhood?”

“ As unpopular as is compatible with a fortune of twenty thousand a-year, which he receives without reckoning, and spends with equal liberality. Aware of being no favourite, he gives no hold to his enemies. Had people the means of raising a cry against him, they would seize it readily. I sometimes fancy that his change of name originated in a desire to get rid of the painful associations connected with that of Saville !”

“ I wonder,” cried Mrs. Hardyng, revolving in her mind this complication of interests,— “ whether he has of late held any communication with Evelyn, or ever experienced an in-

terest in the orphans of his brother?—How I should like him to see Selina!”—

“My son, who, by the wish of his uncle, has been kept ignorant of these details, and knows only that Ned Saville made a love match in opposition to his father’s authority,—told me, a few years ago, that he was certain Sir Hugh cherished an unhappy passion,—he knew not for whom.”—

“Strange that my husband should not have guessed the truth!”

“Robert never liked him well enough to guess about him; and at that time, was unacquainted with your sister-in-law. To you, however, darling Emma, I may venture to confide one other secret connected with the case. Though the acquaintance of my family with the Savilles originated in my father’s residence at Holmehurst, the intimacy between Sir Hugh and Lord Hardyng was produced by his application for my husband’s professional opinion respecting the ‘legality of a marriage with a brother’s widow,—issue of the first marriage surviving.’”

“ You conclude then that the monster had courage to propose a second time to Evelyn?”

“ I am persuaded he had courage to *meditate* it. But as he sought the opinion only a month or two before the death of Lord Askham, Mrs. Saville was probably already engaged to your brother.”

“ What would I not give to know the truth!— Refuse him she *must*!—But, do you suppose,” cried Emma, interrupting herself, “ that Lady Grandison is aware of these particulars?”

“ If she were, they would have created no obstacle to the marriage of her daughter,” replied Lady Hardyng. “ But not another word, dear Emma! I hear the grating of wheels under the portico; and here come your husband and mine, before whom I do not wish to renew the subject.”

She forgot how many pleasanter topics of discussion were likely to present themselves between Robert and his wife!—She forgot the eagerness with which Emma was in the habit of addressing herself to her oracle, for news from abroad, or court, or city! Like the Siennese peasant

whose son was, in her lifetime, elevated to the papal chair, and whose mind became bewildered on finding herself mother to one entitled to remit sins and confer canonization, the infatuated young wife was convinced that the hand in which her own was pressed so fondly, possessed the power of grasping a wreath of laurels wherever it listed, and obscuring the fame of the greatest heroes

where'er they shone or shine,  
Or on the Rubicon or on the Rhine.

King George might select Mr. Perceval to keep *his* seals, but in Emma's opinion, the safety of the country was mainly invested in the zeal and intelligence of the Honourable Robert Scotney Hardyng, member for Edenbourne.

## CHAPTER IV.

Difficili bile tumet jecur.

HORACE.

He rag'd and kept as fierce a coil, as  
 Hercules for the loss of Hylas ;  
 Forcing the valleys to repeat  
 The echoes of his wild regret.

HUDIBRAS,

THE public mind was just then agitated by one of those periodical spring-tides, which it is customary to call a crisis ; i. e. the flux and reflux of the political ocean, accelerated by official attraction.

In the present instance, the commotion of the waves had long been rising. The war declared against France in 1793, by the short-sighted policy of the Tories, had forced the French nation to concentrate itself into a mili-

tary republic; instead of remaining a commonwealth weakened by factions, and sure to be crushed by the Briarean arms of civil war.

Yet for the sake of England, better far had the French been left to prey upon each other, like the Kilkenny cats, even to utter extermination. For the termination of their commingled elements of mud and gore had, alas! engendered an Alexander, who had already crossed the Granicus; and Great Britain, in whose blunders and obstinacy originated the creation, ran no small chance of falling a victim, like Pygmalion, to the re-action of the work of her hands. The spirit of Talleyrand and strength of the new Emperor, united, were putting the British lion sorely on his mettle.

Conscious, however, of standing in a position that admitted of no mediary measures, and that it must fight—*like* a lion,—or skulk dishonoured from the field, it put a good face upon the matter,—flourished its mane and tail,—and roared with such prodigious energy, that, (to borrow the words of Bottom,) “it did any man’s heart good to hear him;” the ground-

lings exclaiming in ecstasy,—“ Let him roar again,—let him roar again !”

But our bravado arose neither from the consciousness of strength, nor, from what is next in power, the consciousness of weakness. Had England found courage to recognise the greatness of her foe, she would have condensed her forces to oppose a noble front to his menaces, instead of scattering her shot, in attacks upon the four quarters of the globe,—Alexandria,—Constantinople—Copenhagen—Buenos Ayres; under sanction of which dispersion of national strength, the giant assumed his seven-leagued boots, and pursued his victorious march across the Vistula, not deigning to turn round and renew his defiance to the *nation boutiquière*, whose sensibility he declared to be invested in her counters, till he took his victorious stand upon the Treaty of Tilsit.

*There* perched the triumphant eagle, flapping its wings! A fraternization between the new Emperor of an old kingdom, and the feeble autocrat of a mighty empire, for the avowed purpose of dismembering Europe, and creating



kings to govern it, as coolly as if manufacturing Guelphic knights, or pricking for sheriffs, was a feature in universal history which, however it might be pooh-pooed by the country gentlemen and the Morning Post, was somewhat startling to the Council of Ten of that Venice viewed through a magnifying glass, the capital of the House of Hanover: accustomed to inflate itself like the ambitious frog among the sedges of the Thames, into the proportions of a bison, and fancy its croak Olympian thunder.

Whigs and Tories had been successively called upon to put a shoulder to the wheel of the state waggon, sticking in the mud amid the pelting of the pitiless storm. But the efforts of the former were neutralized by the disfavour of royalty. Like the Marquis of Adorno, who, when called upon as governor of Elvas, to declare whether the French army, about to traverse his province of Tras los Montes, would be received as friends or foes, replied "We are unable to resist you as foes, or entertain you as friends. I have the honour to be your most obedient humble servant,"—George III. seemed

to consider himself almost more severely visited in the ministry of Fox, than in the death of Pitt!

Already, therefore, by the will of Providence and his majesty, the country was restored to the jurisdiction of the war-makers. War was, in fact, becoming its normal condition; and, little to the credit of its patriotism, parliament was far too bewildered by party-strife, to contemplate with becoming gravity those fatal combinations, which led to continental blockade, all but fatal to British industry, and the more than Runic sacrifice of millions of human lives.

While humbly kissing hands for the restoration of its salaries, the new ministry renewed the old pledge for "the extermination of France!" But they promised it as the alchemist promises the philosopher's stone to some half-ruined neophyte; by exacting the cession of his last doit for the accomplishment of the great work. Like Palissy, the inventor of enamelling, who, after exhausting his money and fuel, thrust his household goods into the furnace, rather than that the fire should be extinguished which was

to consummate his invention, the Tories entertained little scruple about the means to be employed in satisfying the frightful appetite of the bloodhound they cherished as a pet.

Nor were the Whigs less grasping in their ambition of power. A hurried banquet on the sweets of office, had not satiated their hunger ; and of more than five hundred members present at the opening of the new parliament, more than half were actuated by motives which dispose a party to contemplate the state of the country through the wrong end of the telescope ; and substitute that petty policy which is the surest cement of an administration, for the broad principles of statesmanship which are as applicable to the minister as the mightier details of government, —as the trunk of the elephant is organised to uproot a forest-tree, or pick up a pin. As well, however, attempt to construct a hovel out of the gigantic masses of Stonchenge, as expect permanency or coherence, in a cabinet formed of elements so intractable.

With the country, meanwhile, both parties were equally unpopular. Facts spoke for them-

selves more eloquently than the oratory of Lord Howick or the plausibility of Spencer Perceval. "*L'universale non s'inganna!*" and the eyes of the people, though easily dazzled by a halo of triumph, see pretty clearly on a cloudy day. There was little in the state of the empire to reconcile it to the exorbitancy of its taxes, or depression of its commerce. The hero-market was looking down. Sir Arthur Wellesley was occupied in bringing in bills for the suppression of insurrections in Ireland, instead of laying suckers for a grove of laurels, more sacred than those of Blarney, or Dodona; and how was John Bull to foresee in him the redeemer of our national fame,—destined to acquire a palace and princely revenue, in reward for restoring the Bourbons to a throne, from which Marlborough had acquired a palace and a princely revenue, for endeavouring to pull them down?—

Among those who contemplated the affairs of the nation with the hopeful eye of his own sanguine nature, was the new member for Edenbourne. Though his heart bled from every

wound of his country, his spirit, like that of a staunch boarhound, was roused into greater fierceness by the smart; nor could the practised experience of his father induce him to believe that the vessel of the state had more to fear from sunken rocks, than from those ostensible reefs against which he had armed his courage.

The pacific little borough of the Askhams would have shaken in its shoes, had it surmised how valiantly its new champion was prepared to do battle against those who, having "cried havoc and let slip the dogs of war," experienced some difficulty in harking them back to kennel.

Lady Grandison, on the other hand, released from the cares of chaperonship, and finding her house and time hang heavy on her hands during the honeymoon of her daughter, had seized upon the interregnum to attempt the creation of one of those political circles, by which, in Paris, she had seen women of a certain age endow themselves with attractions exceeding those of youth and beauty.

It is true that, to accomplish the presidency

of such a senate, the Aspasia should have a Pericles at her feet, or the Mrs. Masham a canopy of court favour over her head; whereas, neither Mr. Perceval nor Queen Charlotte was likely to amplify the consequence of Grandison House, either by protection or anathema.

But the Countess was one of those persevering masterly spirits, which contrive to make bricks without straw; and by her reckless combination of opposite influences, through personal friendship with the Prince and Lord Grandison's turf connexion with the Duke of York, she created a neutral territory, where the Whigs, sorely in want of a rallying point, were content *en attendant mieux* to assemble their forces. As the chief business of the French Exchange is carried on at Tortoni's, the *frondeurs* transacted theirs under cover of the ices and *sorbets* of Grandison House.

Who now so happy as the restless Countess! Like a sea-bird luxuriating in the coming storm, she was ever on the wing, conveying wars and rumours of wars, between Carlton House and Camelford. No treasury messenger ever worked

half so hard, or was ever more ignorant of the intelligence assigned to his hand. As she assumed, however, all the ludicrous consequence of La Fontaine's "*âne qui porte les reliques*," the foolish women of her caste, who saw her perpetually whispering in the ears of bigwigs, and heard her emit mysterious nothings worthy of a king's speech, entertained little doubt that, if the woolsack became obnoxious to Lady Grandison, the woolsack was in danger!

Was it likely that, with such projects in her head, and such thunderbolts in her hand, she should have much interest to spare for the new *ménage* of the De Bayhursts?—No!—She had done her duty by her daughter in matching her with twenty thousand a year; and it was time she should do her duty by herself and the country.

It is true that scarcely a day passed without her bursting like a whirlwind into their house, to create dismay by the torrent of news she rattled forth, without choice or discretion, like coals shot into a cellar. But she was beginning to be a little out of conceit with her son-in-law.

Not because dear Stasy's cheeks were grown so pale and thin; for the change was lost upon her. But because, having undergone a relapse of the party fever by which she was attacked during the ascendancy of Bob Hardyng, she had no patience with a man of De Bayhurst's fortune, who, after wasting £30,000 in an unsuccessful contest for his county, was pitiful enough to abjure parliament for the remainder of his days, as a luxury beyond his means.

No hope of persuading him to think otherwise! A man who could stand out against the ties of nature and his own conscience, was not likely to succumb to the influence of a mother-in-law. Still less to *tomber en quenouille*, and be governed by a wife whose education had been limited to netting purses and trilling canzonets, and by whom the business of life was understood as comprised in matching a ribbon to her complexion, and adjusting a trimming to a gown. Anastasia knew nothing in this world, except how to look pretty, which no one understood better; and if she were now learning, in addition, how to feel miserable, it was unsuspected



by the fluttering mother, who, seeing her installed in so fine a house with such splendid family diamonds, had a right to suppose that she had not a wish unaccomplished.

“Is *that* your beautiful Lady Anastasia?” was Emma Hardynges involuntary exclamation to her husband, on meeting her, for the first time, at the fête at Grandison House, which so excited the envy of Philip. “Why I could cite twenty women in London who are ten times as pretty!”

But before they met again, at a fête at Carlton House, given soon after the meeting of the new parliament, the interest of Mrs. Hardynges had been so excited in the interim by the startling narrative of her mother-in-law, towards everything connected with Bayhurst, that the paleness and reserve of Lady Anastasia, which she had before thought vapid and tame, now struck her as the result of depression. In spite of her fine diamonds and point lace, Emma suspected her to be a miserable creature.

The intimacy between their husbands rendered an introduction inevitable. But in pre-

sending his wife to the sister of Philip Askham, De Bayhurst fixed his eyes upon her face, as though to search her feelings to the heart's core; and instead of leaving them altogether, as Hardyng had already done, to improve their acquaintance by a little womanly chit-chat, he stationed himself sternly at their side, as stiff and out of place as the man in armour at a civic show. Emma saw in a moment, that, by the sullen baronet's order in council, Eske Hill was in a state of blockade.

They met frequently,—almost nightly; their families being comprised within the same political *cordon sanitaire*: and the more studied the coldness of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, the more was she inclined to improve her acquaintance with his wife. Was it pity,—was it terror,—was it the species of magnetic emotion we experience in presence of the perpetrator of some great crime, or the victim of some terrible torment?—Impossible to say!—Emma herself could not account for it. But after prolonged contemplation of the fine features of Sir Hugh, and trying to trace in them a likeness to her

little step-nephew, she could never refrain from addressing a few gracious words to his wife, as if in atonement for the evil feelings rankling in her mind towards the brother-in-law of Evelyn.

The topic she selected was naturally suggested by her brother's former intimacy at Grandison House. Unapprised by her husband of the attachment he had so incautiously revealed to its object, *she* entertained no suspicion that Philip was more interesting in the eyes of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst's bride than the Duke of Norcliffe,—Lord Robert de Lacy,—or any other of her former admirers; and seldom addressed her in her husband's presence without some allusion to the domestic happiness of Eden Castle!

No wonder, therefore, that she had occasion to tax Lady Anastasia's cheek with paleness!—No wonder she found cause to confide to Lady Hardyng, that the beautiful young wife of Sir Hugh actually trembled in his presence!—

One night, however, towards the close of the season, as they were standing together in the crush-room at the opera, waiting for the car-

riage till they had exhausted all other topics of conversation, Emma having expressed her regret that "Philip was prevented joining them in an expedition to the Highlands by the approaching confinement of Mrs. Askham, an event which at present absorbed all his thoughts," the emotion of Lady Anastasia became so evident, that Mrs. Hardyngé determined never again to recur to Eden Castle.

"She is so attached to that horrid husband of hers," said Emma, when recounting the scene to her mother-in-law,—“that she can bear no allusion to a person so obnoxious to him, as the widow of his unfortunate brother.”

She was even rash enough to advert to the subject to Philip,—to whom her husband had charged her to write again, on the subject of her Highland expedition.

"I tried to extract a civil message for you, last night, from your friend Lady Anastasia," said she; "but I obtained nothing but blushes; and the times being past when these could mean anything on *her* part, or be acceptable on *yours*, they would be scarcely worth transmitting, had

I metal more attractive to append to Robert's message."

Alas! the idea of being deeply regretted, or even kindly remembered by his London friends, was, on the contrary, only *too* acceptable! Little did Helen Middlemore, who had calculated so closely the comparative advantages of a match with her cousin Philip, De Bayhurst, and Lord Hardyng's son, surmise, as she sat permanently benched beside her peevish chaperon, that the man last upon her list, as enjoying a paltry allowance and *roturier* distinctions, was the only one of the three who had afforded no reason to his wife to repent her choice, or suppose his own repented!

Evelyn had already ceased to deceive herself. Before the end of the summer, the unruliness of her boy had brought down such constant punishment, such perpetual murmurs, that, rendered peculiarly susceptible by her situation, all she could do was to retreat from the frowns of Philip into her own chamber, and comfort herself by solitary tears.

To borrow the forcible eloquence of Souves-

tre, she perceived that her husband “*ne cherchait plus la vie du même côté, et avait adopté de nouveaux dieux ; et elle se débattait contre cette désolante vérité. Semblable aux mères qui réchauffent les cadavres de leurs fils à force de baisers, elle pressait pour ainsi dire dans ses bras cette affection morte, et prenait pour des preuves de vie, les battemens de son propre cœur. Car l'apparence n'avait pu changer aussi rapidement que les sentimens ! La voix de son mari gardait un peu de l'accent d'autrefois,—le geste quelque chose de la caresse. Les tendres habitudes étoient demeurées dans le langage, sinon dans le cœur ; tristes reflets d'une lumière évanouie, mais qui empêchaient de croire à la nuit !*”

Desirous to find some pretext for the moroseness of Philip, she excused his pre-occupation of mind, by the anxious responsibilities of a landed proprietor in times so untoward. His position in the county was very different from that maintained by his father. The independent farmers of the neighbourhood rejected him as living on sufferance at Eden Castle ; a superior kind of agent, provided with

inadequate means for keeping up the place. From *him* the poor expected no oxen roasted whole, no overflow of old October.—Of the present Lord Askham's proceedings, enough had transpired at Edenbourne to satisfy them that the respectability of the family was no longer immaculate;—a perception that transpires at every pore in the deportment of the little towards the great. Hats were no longer lifted to Philip in the market-place with the same deference as of old; a mortifying change which he blindly attributed to his marriage with one whom they had seen poor and unconsidered, — the tenant at will of a wretched tax-gatherer's cottage!

The idea was wormwood to his pride; and more than once, while riding home from Edenbourne through the part of the park where Elshie was ranging, after perusing in the London papers some brilliant account of Bob Hardyng's speeches in parliament, or the fêtes of Grandison House, he could not forbear exclaiming that he had sacrificed his prospects in life; —that he was too young to be encumbered with

the family of another man;—that the little Savilles and their mother would have been happier and better off at Edenbourne Lodge, than misplaced as they were at Eden Castle. He had trifled with his own happiness. He had missed his vocation in withholding his hand from Lady Anastasia Grandison!

Among the mistakes of his honey-moon, in forcing the children out of their place,—which renders *all* children disagreeable,—was that of insisting that they should breakfast with him and their mother, because such had been their custom at Eastfield, (which *they* were beginning to call “*dear* Eastfield,”—an epithet highly offensive to Philip;) and the consequence was, that the meal seldom passed without some interruption to conversation on the part of the impetuous little Edward, certain to produce a sullen silence on the part of his stepfather.

One morning, however, when the careless boy had been guilty of one of those table negligences so offensive to persons of nice habits, unaccustomed to children,—such as overturning the cream-jug on the tablecloth, or streaking it



with a trail of honey,—Philip Askham burst suddenly into such an explosion of rebuke, that even the spirited boy looked frightened.—Pale as death, Evelyn secretly resolved that they should never breakfast with her again.

Vexed with himself, and embarrassed by their awe-struck looks, Philip abruptly announced his intention of riding after breakfast to a cricket-match, to be held that day in the park of one of their more distant neighbours, Mr. Lechmere of Carlton; and the young offender, who had been long promised that he should see this match, was about to put in his claim, when Selina, after watching in anxious silence the quivering lip of her mother and lowering brow of “papa,” contrived to divert his attention and lead him gently away.

“Do not ask!” whispered she, when they were out of hearing. “You have displeased him. You will displease him again; and when angry, he will perhaps be cross with mamma.”

“Cross with mamma?—Cross with my own darling mamma? I should like to see him!”

cried the little hero of seven years old, with his face in a glow.—“I will go back and tell him how changed he is, and how much I hate him!”—

“Hush, hush!” cried his sister, throwing her arms around his neck, and stopping his mouth with kisses;—“for *my* sake, —for mamma’s, do not be naughty!”

And while still engaged in pacifying her brother, Mr. Askham luckily mounted his horse and rode off to the cricket-match.

It was a burning day in July,—the very weather to ripen corn and discords. The deer were clustered panting round the trees, as Philip progressed through the park; and on approaching Elshie’s favourite pasture, the pony cantered saucily towards him, tossing its mane and tail, as with an air of defiance.

Even after he had reached the Chase, whose beautiful expanse of verdure might have been expected to refresh his heated frame, the sight of some magnificent oaks marked with a white cross for the autumnal axe, brought so pain-

fully to his mind the tenor of a letter he had received from Verdun the preceding day, as only to increase his exacerbation.

Percy's letters, indeed, were now seldom of a pleasant nature. Always new difficulties to be relieved,—always fresh complaints of his “confounded luck!”—As if “luck” ought to have attained any ascendancy over the destinies of the owner of Eden Castle!

His last epistle, however, afforded wholly new grounds of annoyance.

“The people here,” wrote Lord Askham, “are the most cursed screws on earth! The cormorants remind me of the vultures gathered together over the carcase in Scripture: and bound as I am to the stake, no means of evading their beaks and claws!

“I often wonder, my dear Phil, how I was ever so confounded an ass as to decline my father's offers! For though, with *my* views, I could not have represented his borough, what more easy than to get into parliament, on my own account; and by working hard for the Whigs, obtain for the family, when they were in office, an English

peerage?—For, at present, what *are* we in the country? Nothing!—and nothing shall we always remain, now that *I* am a slave to Boney, and *you* to the caudle-cup!

“ You ought to be in the House. You ought to be representing Edenbourne, and doing your part towards the consolidation of our family interests. It makes me sick when your letters potter over the beauties of Eden Castle, as Simprens or old Hacket used to do when they dined with my father! We do not come into the world, *fratello mio*, to babble of green fields. Who is to provide for the children I bespoke of you, or for the young ones I left in the school-room, who will soon want a helping hand to eke out their scanty fortunes?—Master Henry, the pride of Torydom, is safe, I presume, under Uppingham’s protection. But Claude, Richard, and Edmund, naturally look to *us*; and I feel the care of their advancement to be a portion of my inheritance. Dick, my mother writes me word, must needs be a soldier. Edmund, I should be glad to hear of in the diplomatic career which you disdained. Who knows, but

he might prove the mouse to nibble a hole in the net which holds in captivity that majestic lion, his elder brother!"

Now Philip had hitherto accustomed himself to fancy that, his younger brothers and sisters being under the guardianship of his mother, with whom he held such frigid communication, he was exonerated from all interference with their destinies beyond the payment of their fortunes. He had not duly contemplated the duties devolving upon him as, virtually, the head of the family; and on perceiving how much Lord Askham expected of him, in return for the noble provision he enjoyed, his selfishness recoiled from the cares thus accumulated on his head. *Two* families to be provided for by his exertions, without adverting to the one in prospect!

Still lost in the brown study produced by these unsatisfactory considerations, he found his horse standing against a gate, forming the limit of the Chase in the direction of Carlton, one of the least frequented routes in the neighbourhood;—to which was appended a lodge whose services were so seldom in request, that the care

of it was confided to a deaf old woman and infirm old man,—decayed labourers of the estate.

The moment old Nelly Knowles discovered, by the use of Philip's pass-key, that one of the Eden Castle family was on the road, she hobbled out, mumbling and curtseying: and on recognizing "young Master Askham," her delight exceeded all bounds. Concluding that she had some petition to make, or complaint to prefer against the forester or keepers, for curtailing her faggots or invading her little garden with their ferrets, Philip stopped his horse to listen to her grumblings.

But to his surprise, all was grace and benediction!—She only wanted him to "thank my lady for the money and clothes."—

Nothing doubting that Evelyn's benevolence had been exercised towards the aged couple, Philip was passing on, when a parting admonition from old Nelly to "be sure and tell Miss Susan, when he wrote, that her old man was purely, and had quite got rid of his rheumatiz," induced him to make further inquiries.

It was by Mansfield Street, after all, that the succours had been supplied! Nelly, it appeared, was a protégé of his sisters; and the good-natured girls, whose hearts yearned, even in London, after their old home, had addressed themselves to Mrs. Hacket to convey their contributions to the lodge.

A scarlet spot appeared upon either cheek of Philip as these facts became developed. He was extremely displeased. The act of charity of his sisters was at once an interference with his rights of benevolence, and an attestation of the estrangement which had established itself between them and his wife. Though she had been "noticed" at the castle, as Mrs. Saville, as "Mrs. Askham" she had clearly become non-existent. To execute a commission at Edenbourne, Lady Askham and her daughters were forced to have recourse to the vicarage!

As he pondered on all this, the road appeared too hot to hold him. It was a thrilling day; one of those days of golden sunshine which the second childhood of Turner delights to carica-

ture ; when floods of light come pouring down upon the earth, till a fiery cataclysm seems to inundate the face of nature, and the song of the grasshopper sounds like a cry of torment. Not more radiant the memorable Cuyp in Mansfield Street, than the landscape around him ! But there was no standing against a glow that seemed to extort a scorched smell from the herbage. The eyes of Philip were dazzled. His heart was ill at ease—

—————Ardentis ab ore

Scintillæ absistunt : oculis micat acribus ignis !

Before he had progressed four miles towards Carlton, which lay at double the distance, so fevered was he by the heat of the day and the chafing of his own temper, that he found himself in no mood for the cricket-match. He was thoroughly out of sorts.

Easy however to return,—return at a foot's pace through the plantations. He had informed Evelyn, at parting, that he should partake of the early cricketing dinner of the Lechmeres,



and return in the cool of the evening. But with his wife and home, who is not entitled to be capricious?—

No woman in the world but has experienced the relief of having occasionally a day to herself, for the discharge of some feminine duty, or the enjoyment of some feminine pleasure, without hindrance or molestation. Especially such as have cross husbands! Evelyn, who was now approaching an event which forcibly recalled the dreary moment of her Edward's birth, when, though little more than a girl, she was already a widow, clinging to life only for the sake of that Selina, who was the crowning pledge of her wedded love,—*poor* Evelyn felt that the moment of her husband's absence at Carlton would be favourable for the discharge of several minor duties, which had of late hung heavy on her mind.

Previous to her marriage with Philip Askham, she had destroyed a variety of objects long cherished as bringing personally before her the image of her lost husband. Still, a certain

number had been reserved and set apart to become hereafter the property of his children. The first letters she received from him when a girl at Holmehurst, and, above all, those denouncing the nefarious conduct of his brother, were still in her possession.

In the event of her accouchement proving fatal, these ought not to fall into the hands of Philip or the children ; for she already foresaw that this brother,—this uncle,—this fearful Sir Hugh de Bayhurst, was likely to be the only protector remaining to the orphans in case of her decease.—There was Sir Erasmus indeed.—But Sir Erasmus was old: and had perhaps already repented his generous offer. At all events, it would be safer to cancel the evidence of what De Bayhurst had been, in the utter uncertainty of what he might be required to be.

She had accordingly brought from its obscure nook, and placed upon the table in her dressing-room, a curious old Flemish desk, full of traps and contrivances—her mother's of old ; which had accompanied her from Holmehurst, and con-

tained, besides the letters in question, the few trinkets she had laid aside as belonging to Selina.

At any moment, it would have been a trying duty to examine those papers. But now, connecting the task with the injury she had done to her children, and her sad presentiments concerning the occasion for their arrangement, she was completely overpowered. As she threw herself into a chair, staggered by the host of agonizing images they conjured up, tears burst in torrents from her eyes.

The table was strewn with letters. Beside them was an open medallion, containing a miniature of her dark-eyed Edward in his regimentals,—once dearly, *dearly* treasured,—which now appeared to fix reproachful glances upon her face.

*There* lay his pocket-book,—the pocket-book in which, during his last illness, he had jotted down a few of those striking thoughts, whose radiance so often transpierces the fissures of decaying nature.

*There* lay the lock of raven hair she had

shred from his brow ere it was shrouded for the grave. She had brought forth all,—*all* her hidden treasures,—or rather the treasures hidden for her children; with the intention of sealing them in a packet, addressed to Selina, to be preserved for her till she was of riper age.

Contrasting the manly face before her, which in life had never met her eye—even in poverty and pain,—unbrightened by smiles of affection,—with the one she had that morning beheld, distorted by passion, uttering imprecations against her careless boy, it was impossible to repress the tears consecrated to the memory of the dead.

A low knock came at the door. It could not be the children; for she had despatched them to the garden to play, with injunctions not to disturb her. It must be Susan,—old Susan;—who had now often to consult her about the nursery preparations in progress. Hastily drying her eyes, therefore, she rose to unbolt the door. The good woman would not dream of

approaching the table where her mistress was employed; but after obtaining an answer to her questions, would leave her to the completion of her task.

But the door being thrown open, it was Philip himself who made his appearance;—Philip, returned, hot, cross, and weary, from his ride; who, without noticing anything unusual in her manner and appearance, proceeded straight to the table, and threw himself into the chair she had quitted!

He started!—All was seen at a glance.—All was felt at a blow!—The inflamed eyes of Evelyn,—the ghastly paleness which now overspread her face,—the picture,—the hair,—the letters,—the relics over which she had shut herself up to weep unmolested:—ay! weep with the child of another man struggling into life beside her heart!—All, all were before him!

The feelings which had been festering in his bosom, came forth at a gush. The sentiments which, faintly suspected, had occasioned her such bitter pain, were poured with the harshest

vituperation into her ears. She had guessed rightly.—He did, indeed, bitterly repent his marriage!

“He saw that he had always been an object of repugnance to her. She had overcome her loathing, only to provide a home at his expense for the children of the man she still adored!”

And having uttered these cruel words, he seized the medallion from the table, and crushed it ferociously under his feet;—then, flinging himself anew into the chair, covered his convulsed features with his hands, and burst into an agony of tears!

That night, the life of Evelyn was despaired of. The following day, an untimely confinement placed another life in danger as well as her own. The infant whose birth had been at one moment so fondly looked forward to by Philip Askham,—the sturdy boy bespoken by his brother to become the heir of their ancient line,—was a wretched, puny creature, thrust into this breathing world before its time, and inducing every member of the family to pray for its release.

It was only little Selina, who, stealing unobserved into the nursery, bestowed on the brow of the unwelcome babe a kiss of sisterly affection!—

## CHAPTER V.

C'est au nom de leur sexe, déshérité de tout droit d'examen et de contrôle, que j'appelle à toutes les mères de porter les ciseaux de la réforme dans cette éducation de broderies et de colifichets, de babil et de petites bonnes grâces, frivole et par conséquent funeste, qui énerve l'âme, qui détrempe tout ressort, et qui voue à l'infériorité.

RAYMOND.

*Τυγακὶ κόσμῳ ὁ τρόκω κ'ὄν χρυσία.*

ONE evening, a few days before the close of the session, which the tardy assembling of parliament rendered unusually late, Bob Hardyng, finding there was no question of interest before the House, determined to dine at Brookes's instead of Bellamy's;—and was crossing Saint James's Park, at the leisurely pace befitting a sultry day in August, when, lounging



on a bench in the Mall, he caught a glimpse of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst.

Yet surely he was mistaken?—What should the Baronet do there, at a moment when the fashionable world was in the Ring, and the domestic world, at dinner?—

It *was*, however, the envied husband of Lady Anastasia; who, on descrying him, turned his back, as if for concealment; on second thoughts, rose and advanced to accost him; and finally, on learning that he was bound for Saint James's Street, fastened upon his arm to bear him company.

Thus closely brought in contact, Hardyng had an opportunity of noting the ravages which the cares of a married man had already wrought in the countenance of his companion; till he ceased to wonder at his choosing a quiet half hour to refresh himself in the pure air of the Park. The cadaverous hue of De Bayhurst served to verify his suspicions that to be son-in-law to the fussy, worldly Lady Grandison, might be no improvement to a man's temper.

Of his own movements, meanwhile, he saw fit to give an explanation.

“ I am going to dine at my club,” said he, “ as becomes a disconsolate widower,—for I am alone in town. Emma is gone down to Eden Castle. Her brother, as you may have heard, has been very near losing his wife.”

“ I understood she was out of danger ?”—replied Sir Hugh, in a hoarse voice. “ Mrs. Hardyng, I conclude, will shortly return to town ?”

“ No,—I join her next week at Edenbourne. She has had a trying time of it.—They have saved, thank God, both mother and child. But it was a near thing !—Philip would never have got over it had the event been fatal.”

Sir Hugh remained silent; *so* silent, that his constrained manner recalled to the incautious Hardyng what he had totally forgotten,—his family connexion with Evelyn :—his *family* connexion alone, however ;—for, as Lady Hardyng had intimated to her daughter-in-law, he was ignorant that any other had ever existed between them.

A little indignant to find him thus callous to the danger of his brother's amiable widow, Hardyng chose to push the subject home.

“And, by the way, if she had died, poor soul,” said he, “*you*, also, my dear Sir Hugh, would have been a sufferer.”

“It is many years since I saw Mrs. Askham,” replied the baronet, in a husky voice.

“Yes,—I am aware that you hold no communication with her. But that fine boy of hers, your nephew,—(at present, I conclude, heir presumptive to your title and estate?)—you would scarcely have left *him* in the hands of my brother-in-law?”—

“Has Mrs. Askham a son?” demanded Sir Hugh, with pretended ignorance, and quivering lips.

“One of the finest little fellows I ever beheld!—His mother adores him!”

The saturnine Baronet seemed to shrink under every fresh blow inflicted by his remorseless assailant.

“Very much attached to him, is she?”—said he, in a tremulous voice.

“Ay, more a great deal than would please *me*, were I her husband,—seeing that his name is Edward, and that he is said to be the image of your brother!—However, the birth of Philip’s boy will give a new direction to her feelings.”

De Bayhurst evidently did not choose to hear, for his next observation regarded the prorogation of parliament.

“Young Askham has made a very brilliant *début* in the House, has he not?”—said he, sagaciously foreseeing that the surest way to divert the attention of Hardyng, was by piquing his vanity as a public man.

“Why yes; I believe his party are proud of it!” said he; “for Lord Uppingham goes about crowing like chanticleer when he picked up a jewel instead of a barleycorn.—A barleycorn, however, would have been a deuced deal more to the purpose!—

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo, dare lucem  
Cogitat, ut speciosa, dehinc miracula promat.”

“Flash or no flash, I suspect that Henry Askham’s success will end in more than smoke,”

replied De Bayhurst. "His speech on the abolition question made a great sensation with the public."

"With the public, perhaps. But do you suppose it influenced the division?—What *I* call a powerful speech is one that converts a minority into a majority!"—

"I doubt whether a speech of Chatham's ever did *that!*"—observed De Bayhurst.

"I am certain it will never be effected by one of Henry Askham's,—or even of his patron's, Lord Uppingham!—By the way, have you seen Deighton's caricature of them, as Launce and his dog? Henry, led in a string, and turning round to wag his tail at his patron, is really delicious!"—

"They are not at the trouble of getting up political caricatures against so young a member, unless a great deal is expected of him," said De Bayhurst, drily.

"Perhaps not! But you must have seen his speeches, as I, God wot, have had the good fortune to *hear* them: and I only ask you, in common candour, whether you ever read any-

thing more tame, more spiritless, more common-place!—Nothing original, in principle, or theory, or style, or delivery!—The copy of a copy!—The paraphrase of a translation!—The dilution of what was weak before!—Lord Uppingham's small beer made a little flatter by being broached in the Lower House!"

"I have a shrewd guess," observed De Bayhurst, "that, in times to come, small beer will have the best of it! We have drunk out our champagne; and, even had we not, into what a state of things has its effervescence betrayed us! Trust me, the country prefers even the smallest beer to a beverage whose sparkling conveys no nutriment, and leaves only the heartburn!"

"But do you mean to tell me," cried Bob, with growing earnestness, "that the sententious plausibility of a Henry Askham,—the priggish, owlsh gravity with which he utters his effete truisms,—will ever rivet the attention of an enlightened House of Commons?"

"Certainly! if your enlightened House of Commons perceives that it has weight with the

country. I, you know, am a country gentleman," continued he, with a grim smile; "and you may, therefore, try the question upon me, as Molière did his wit upon his housekeeper. I promise you that plain truth, clothed in plain language, brings conviction to *my* mind, far before the finest oration, studded with classical quotation, and coloured with historical allusions. I, and still more the farmers my tenants, do not want to hear what was done by the Stuarts or Tudors,—the Greeks and Romans. We want to learn what the Guelphs will do for us, and whether their ministers will let them."

"Yet surely historical precedent——"

"Historical precedent and classic philosophy should form the *basis* of a man's political studies; but he has no more business to intrude them on the House, than the elements of syntax, which are no less essential to his oratory."

But Hardyngé shrugged his shoulders with an air of compassion, as if he had never felt certain till then that the country was in danger.

“ It requires time for a young member to acquire the confidence of the House, unless, like Pitt and Fox, hereditarily established,” persisted Sir Hugh, as they reached the bottom of St. James’s Street. “ But, though little in the habit of prophesying, I venture to predict that, at no great distance of time, Henry Askham will stand in the foremost rank of his party.”

Bob Hardyngre replied by a bitter laugh.

“ Is such,” said he, “ the decree of Grandison House ?”—

“ I see you have become less assiduous in your visits there, since your marriage,” retorted Sir Hugh, “ or you would be aware that, so far from yoking myself to its opinions, I seldom set foot within its gates.”

“ We were married in one and the same hour and church,” observed Bob Hardyngre, more in his natural tone, “ and seem to have adopted one and the same policy towards our mothers-in-law ! I confess, however, that one of my reasons for eschewing Mansfield Street is a thorough dislike to the company of that



political automaton wound up by Lord Uppingham, who, you tell me, is to become the future lawgiver of Europe. And now, good-bye, for I conclude you are bound for Grosvenor Square?"

"I need not hurry myself," replied De Bayhurst, slightly shaking hands with him at parting. "After Lady Grandison's example, Lady Anastasia's carriage is usually among the last in the Ring. We dine at the hour my father used to sup."

Little did Hardyng surmise, as he proceeded up St. James's Street, cursing in his heart the stolidity of country-gentleman-kind,—how deeply the seed he had accidentally let fall, while alluding to Evelyn and her children, was fated to take root in the mind of his companion.

Sir Hugh de Bayhurst was a man of peculiar temperament,—so peculiar among his class and countrymen, that people were apt to retrace it to the Spanish blood of an ancestress who had married into the family at the time a Prince of Spain espoused that English Queen

whose religious persecutions are said to have raised the price of faggots. For, like British wine, the jealousy and vindictiveness of native growth are of a mawkish quality, compared with those of Spanish importation ;—and there was something of the genuine Borachio flavour in the hatred of Sir Hugh.

The predominant passion of his life,—his love for Evelyn Monson,—had been embittered into a feeling compared with which all human interests and sentiments appeared cold and colourless. Reared in a family almost as systematic as that of Eden Castle, and tormented by jealousy of his younger brother, as Philip of his elder, and in a degree consonant with the intenser nature of his passions, like Philip he had taken refuge from the dreariness of home in the illusions of a devoted attachment.

But the affection nurtured in such an atmosphere as the family of either, could not be of gracious growth. We remarked long ago that the Cupid of Philip Askham was born a cripple ; yea, so halting in its nature, that no sooner was he satisfied of possessing the whole

heart of Evelyn, than he ceased to value the treasure intrusted to his care.

The passion of De Bayhurst on the other hand, savage as his own nature, had been stimulated by disappointment almost to frenzy. The days are luckily past for poison and the poniard. Our civilized century is too much in awe of the quarter sessions, for battery or assault. But malignity is not the less malicious for the cooling of its venom; and the brother-in-law of poor Evelyn awaited in patient bitterness the ripening of his revenge!

He had traced every step of her blameless life. He had hoped that the poverty which made her wretched, would make her criminal, and that its crushing results would place her wholly in his power. But when he found the young widow, unpampered by early prosperity, accommodate herself without a struggle to the narrow sphere of Eastfield, and fulfil with pious care the line of duties which her sense of equity had judiciously traced out,—like Satan at the gates of Paradise, he almost despaired!

The assiduities of Philip Askham revived his

anticipations of mischief. That so stiff-necked a family as the Askhams would consent to the union of their son with a poor and encumbered widow, was most improbable; and he had little doubt that Evelyn, compromised by so dangerous an intimacy, would be left to shame and remorse.

When Philip, on his first arrival in London, assumed the dare-devil attitude of a man of pleasure, De Bayhurst could scarcely contain his delight at the notion of the grief his departure from Eden Castle must have inflicted, and the still deeper anguish likely to result from his infidelity.

No pursuit, no occupation, interfered with his gloomy contemplations. The momentary excitement consequent on the levy of his yeomanry corps during the invasion panic, soon subsided; and cruel reminiscences of other days were perpetually brought before him by those walls which had witnessed the last moments of his father embittered by Edward's desertion, and the distant woods of Holmehurst which had witnessed his own rejection.

The neighbourhood was hateful to him. Having persuaded Colonel Monson's widow to dispose of the Grange, only that he might avenge himself on the pride of the Monsons by cutting down the ancient grove of trees, annexing the denuded land to one of his farms, and letting the old mansion to tenants of the lowest grade, the quaint façade and twisted chimneys thus laid open to notice, served only to attract greater attention, and to vex his eyes and grieve his heart every time he repaired to the parish church.

For to complete his exasperation, came the irritating reflexion that, at his death, the child of Evelyn must resume possession of the old place! Bayhurst was entailed on him.—The title also must be Edward's.—It was fated that Banquo's issue should succeed him on his throne!—

This was not to be borne!—He must marry; he must become a father; heirs of his own must interpose betwixt him and his enemy; or all he had suffered and projected would have been projected and suffered in vain.

Such were the views which induced him to

seek an introduction to Grandison House ; and there, the very first object that met his eye was Philip Askham,—the man so dear to Evelyn,—the man by whom Evelyn was beloved ; and but for whom, he might perhaps have eventually obtained a place in her regard ! When he reflected on the triumphant hours enjoyed by that man at Eastfield,—on the injury he had inflicted on Evelyn's reputation and his own hopes—his hatred and disgust were beyond control !

It was the very moment when Lady Grandison, deceived by Lord Middlemore's hoaxing as to the prospects of his cousin, had marked down Philip Askham as a good match for Lady Anastasia ; and what the world calls a desperate flirtation was going on between them. Even after Hardyngé had usurped his place in the favour of the Countess, Philip remained attached to the side of her daughter. The triflers of the set, who had never heard of Eastfield and Mrs. Saville, decided him to be passionately in love ; and appearances certainly justified the presumption.

In a moment, it suggested itself to De Bayhurst that he might retaliate upon him by whom

he had been a second time supplanted, the cruel disappointment of his hopes ; for, rich in all that could recommend him to Lady Grandison as a son-in-law, he had only to address himself to *her*, to secure protection to *his* suit.

And so it proved.—The Countess was at his feet, the moment he spoke of placing himself at those of Anastasia.

In the prosecution of his courtship, however, Sir Hugh de Bayhurst experienced a feeling for which he was wholly unprepared. The youth, the beauty, the ingenuousness of Lady Anastasia Grandison disarmed his malice and gave a new colour to his thoughts. He discovered that the world might have something pleasanter in store for him, than revenge upon Evelyn Monson. Better dismiss her from his memory ; and commence with this younger, fairer, and kinder Eve, a new paradise on earth !

For Lady Anastasia received him graciously, —more than graciously. Her manners, tinged by the coquetries of her mother's Parisian levity, encouraged the advances of every stranger ; —and in the present instance, the pretendant to

her smiles, who boasted so many recommendations of person, rank, and fortune, and who might consequently pique the wavering Philip into a proposal, was intitled to every distinction she could bestow.

Mistaking her April smiles for summer sunshine, De Bayhurst—prepared to warm in its genial atmosphere his long-chilled heart and soul,—resigned himself once more to the cheering delusions of hope ! On one occasion, indeed, a suspicion glanced momentarily into his mind that he had mistaken his object,—that the attachment he had imputed to Philip, was on the side of Anastasia.

But an appeal on the subject to Lady Grandison procured him one of those plausible explanations in which her diplomatic duplicity excelled. He was given vaguely to understand that Mr. Askham having been refused by her daughter, the coolness between them was produced by resentment on the part of Philip, and prudence on that of dear Stasy ; while as to Hardyng, *his* intimacy in the family had arisen from his Pyladeship with Philip Askham, while the lat-



ter was vainly trying to make himself acceptable at Grandison House.

Sir Hugh de Bayhurst accordingly gave himself up to his new prospects, with the happy confidence of a child. On his guard against the mistrustfulness of his own nature, he closed his eyes wilfully against conviction. It was essential to his happiness to believe in the sincerity of affection of one who had pledged herself to become his wife !

On the eve of the accomplishment of his happiness, her paleness, her tears, her all but despair, were speciously attributed by her mother to the pang of quitting a house where she was adored ; and the man, so long a prey to self-deception, was again deceived. Nor was it till on the very steps of the altar, when, as he stood awaiting his bride with his eyes fixed upon her face, he distinctly saw her start of recognition on beholding Philip Askham, — her sudden faintness, — her total change of deportment, — that his mind became fully enlightened.

Till that moment, Anastasia had commanded her feelings ; — till that moment, the unhappy

girl had been sustained by the strong spirit of resentment produced by having been trifled with and forsaken for another;—or perhaps by the hope of securing a kind protector,—a quiet home. But on beholding Philip Askham before her, come doubtless to triumph over her misery, her very soul shrunk within her; and lo! the searching eye of her bridegroom detected its despair!—

Too late for redress!—The prince stood there with his gracious smile,—the bishop with his open book,—the parents, who had been like *him* deceived,—the crowd, with their avidity for a catastrophe. If he recoiled now, he should become the butt of the newspapers—the jest of the town.—And so, the fatal “I WILL” was tremulously pronounced,—and another couple made miserable for life!—

It was not, however, till they reached Bayhurst, which of late he had permitted himself to repeople with such happy hopes and illusions, that the sense of wretchedness thoroughly unmanned him. Too long accustomed to give way to his feelings to control them in deference to

her by whom he had been deceived,—too long the arbitrary lord of that princely place to suffer even a painful position to obtain the mastery,—he did not hesitate to tax Lady Anastasia with her treachery, and upbraid her with the heartless perjury of her marriage vow!—

Paralyzed by hearing for the first time in her silken life the accents of unkindness, the poor girl had not self-possession to manifest the truth; that, having done her utmost to overcome a preference called into existence by the unprincipled trifling of its object, she had nerved her courage to embrace new duties, in hopes of giving a new impulsion to her feelings; and that she was solely and religiously intent on becoming the best and most dutiful of wives.

All this was within her; for nature had gifted her with generous instincts and sufficient powers of mind. But dear Stasy had not been trained to examine her heart, or give utterance to its suggestions. All she could do was to weep and tremble; and thus confirm the worst suspicions of her husband; who, having rushed from her presence in the blind excitement of passion, be-

took himself to Holmehurst Hanger, the birth-place of his evil passions,—and involved in a common curse and vow of vengeance, Evelyn, Philip Askham, and his unhappy wife!—

Never was honeymoon so sad as hers!—Her youthful spirit was withered on the threshold of life. Hitherto, Anastasia had seen of the world only its pastimes, heard only its flatteries, imbibed only its incense. And now, she stood for ever in presence of an enemy!—That stately house, so often pointed out by her mother to her bridal ambition, appeared a huge and menacing prison. The personal beauty of her husband, proverbial at Grandison House, now assumed the terrible expression of an avenger. His face had become awful in her eyes as the painful compositions of Spagnoletto and Zurbaran, gracing his picture gallery!—

The frivolous nature of her education rendered her, in short, a ready victim to the grasp of the ruthless man to whose jurisdiction the concatenation of errors, which we call evil fortune, had submitted her destinies. Awed by his frown, she felt fifty times more guilty

than in fact;—for the boundaries of right and wrong were not distinctly engraven on her mind.—

To open her heart to her mother for the disclosure of her sorrows, was expressly forbidden her. Nay, in so heinous a light had her disingenuousness been placed before her by De Bayhurst, that she regarded it as beyond the reach of even maternal forgiveness. “She had deceived her parents,—she had deceived every body,—she had broken the bonds uniting her with kith and kin. All that remained for her was to discharge the remaining duties of life in silent repentance.”

On arriving in town, however, secretly resolved to throw herself on Lady Grandison’s protection, to interpose between her and her offended husband, she found herself already superseded in her mother’s heart. The Countess was in no mood to listen to her tribulations. The rabid contagion of party spirit was frothing from her lips. Whenever dear Stasy addressed her in a minor key, she was bidden to rejoice and be merry, for that it was impossible the ministry could stand. When tears stood

in her eyes, she was congratulated on the numeric strength of the Whigs. Lady Grandison could talk only of the grand gathering at Willis's,—the meeting at Brookes's; and, after her first visit to Grandison House, Lady Anastasia returned broken-hearted to her gorgeous home,—as a bird might feel which, having taken flight from the maternal wing, sought in vain for warmth and refuge in the forsaken nest. In gaining that cruel husband, she had lost her parents.

And to what could she turn for comfort?—On what had she to fall back?—The poor child possessed little religion—less philosophy.—Beyond the formal observances of the Protestant faith, no sense of piety had been impressed upon her mind. She was terrified at the idea of a jealous God, as at the face of her angry husband.—Heaven was too far off for the apprehension of a daughter of Grandison House!

Reading had always been treated as a task; and for her former occupations of embroidering muslin, netting purses, and practising Italian ariettes, her mind was no longer sufficiently at

ease. The only alternative that presented itself was reckless diversion. Her husband opposed no obstacle; for he was glad to get her out of his sight. "Providence bestowed a great gift upon us," says Voltaire, "when it made us frivolous; for we lose, in fluttering, the consciousness of pain." And in frivolity, (bereft, like Voltaire, of higher consolations,) she had squandered away her happiness. Piqued by the loss of a single ill-played game into staking her whole existence on the ensuing chance, she had lost, and become a bankrupt for life!

But if happiness were gone, pleasure remained. If her home were joyless, there was the opera, the ball-room, the park; Vanity with her looking-glass, Pride with her peacock's train! Of her bridal lot, the sparkling jewels, the rich lace, the garlands of flowers, at least remained. If her heart was void, her *trousseau* still occupied the polished wardrobes of her fine new house; and devoting herself to the rival attractions of diamonds or sapphires,—white satin or blue,—chip hats or silk,—she tried to create an interest in life by striving to eclipse the young Duchess

of Norcliffe,—out-dressing the pretty actress Lady de Lacy,—or throwing into the shade the unpretending Marchioness of Uppingham, or her *piquante* sister, Mrs. Hardyng.

Such were the triumphs which had been expressly pointed out to her by Lady Grandison, as the reward awaiting her accomplishment of a good match!—

It was not, however, the intention of Sir Hugh that the delinquent should thus readily escape him. Retributive justice demanded that she should suffer, in expiation of the wound she had inflicted on his already bleeding heart. For of all the afflictions with which Providence could have visited him, that of finding his wedded wife attached to another, and that other the man who was possessed of the affections of Evelyn,—demanded far other atonement than the altered looks and nervous tremors of his bride.

She had made him wretched. She had made him ridiculous. For the incident at their wedding, which had so startled *him*, was doubtless the fable of the clubs; and it was too much



that she should derive sufficient consolation from the lustre of her diamond necklace or the number of her satin gowns.

Since he could not revenge himself by seeking a quarrel with the object of her secret passion,—(Philip being safe in domestic seclusion at Eden Castle,)—it was on *her* his vengeance must fall; and though brutal violence may be a sin against the conventions of society, the daggers that are spoken and not used,—the moral poison, distilled drop by drop in a chalice of tears,—are within reach of every well-conditioned husband and wife!

The power of embittering her life and Evelyn's by the adoption of his little nephew, accidentally suggested by Hardyng, was as the discovery of a hidden treasure! It would be a stroke of twofold retribution. The wife who had deceived him, the woman who had scorned, should be involved in a common punishment. And the world would be on his side. The assertion of a right of guardianship over the orphans of his brother, would pass for an act of virtue.

Meanwhile, unsuspecting of the affliction preparing for her, the sufferer at Eden Castle was progressing slowly towards recovery. From the moment of Mrs. Hardyng's arrival, a sensible improvement had taken place; and, after four days spent in hourly expectation of Evelyn's dissolution, her horror-struck and haggard husband was apprized that the fever was subsiding; and that he was reprieved from a life of remorse, as the murderer of the gentlest of wives

Nothing had transpired of the origin of Mrs. Askham's attack. All seemed to have occurred in the ordinary course of things, and was attributed to the heat of the weather and the delicacy of an enfeebled constitution; nor was the nature of Philip sufficiently expansive to induce him to entrust, even to Emma, the secret of his inexcusable barbarity. To *her*, perhaps, least of all; for of her clear-sighted sense of justice, he stood somewhat in awe.

So sudden, indeed, had been the seizure of Evelyn, and so rapid the progress of her danger, that that fatal cause of all,—those letters and

tokens of love so long secretly and sacredly treasured,—remained exposed on her dressing-room table, throughout her time of peril. Any one in the castle might have perused them, had any one at that moment entertained an interest apart from the existence of the woman so universally beloved.

But when her safety and that of his child was announced to him, one of the first impulses of Philip, while retracing the progress of what had occurred, was to collect the letters,—the hair,—the wedding-ring,—seal them together in a packet,—restore them to the old desk,—and leave them, thus deposited, till Evelyn's perfect convalescence.

And what would he not have given for the power of replacing among them, in its original condition,—the miniature,—the shattered fragments of which afforded such cruel proof of the violence of his jealous madness!—All he could do was to collect and secure them apart; hoping that the still partially-preserved ivory might suffice to enable some artist of skill to produce a nice likeness.—Instead of still desiring the

obliteration of all trace of Edward Saville from the face of the earth, he was fully conscious of the crime he had committed in seeking to disinherit those poor children of the little that remained to them of their father.

Admitted, at first, only for a few moments at a time to the presence of the exhausted Evelyn, and aware of the danger of renewing her emotions by reverting to the past, as a matter of conscience, he sealed his lips. However eager to throw himself on his knees by the bed-side and implore her pardon, he contented himself with fervently kissing her hand; and by the time she was able to converse with him, it was plain that her resolution was taken,—that from *her* would proceed no allusion to all that had occurred. She had already afforded to Emma an explanation calculated to divert suspicion. It would be cruel to defeat the precautions thus kindly devised.

With consideration equally delicate, he strove to demonstrate his repentance without express allusion to the past, by gifts to the children,—by bringing them in his arms to her bed-side,—

by the restoration of all their former enjoyments. The first day her condition was such as to justify his leaving her, Edward, mounted on Elshie, was the companion of his ride.

Do what he would, however, he could not bring himself to experience a fatherly interest in the puny little creature prematurely forced into the world by his intemperance; over whom old Susan lifted up her eyes compassionately to heaven, while comparing it with Master Edward, "the beautifullest baby that eyes were ever set on;" and Dr. Boswell's announcement of the improbability of its eventual survival was heard without an expression of regret.

But no sooner was Evelyn sufficiently herself to think and act, than even Philip was forced to desire the reversal of the decree. In the heart of a mother, there is always hope;—for the eye of a mother, there is always beauty. Mrs. Askham looked confidently forward. The child would improve—it would become dear to others as it was already to herself.—No one could have the cruelty to wish the little creature released, when they saw how fervently the mother who

had suffered so much for its sake, prayed for the preservation of its days.

By the time Hardyng was enabled, by the prorogation of parliament, to rejoin his wife, all had resumed at Eden Castle the customary routine, and there was no drawback on the cheerfulness of his welcome. But on finding Emma's services no longer needful, he began to renew his projects for their Highland tour.

“You are now able to discharge your nurse, my dear Philip,” said he, as they sat together over their wine on the evening of his arrival;—“and I consequently claim my wife.—We are expected in half a hundred hospitable mansions; and my father will be affronted if we disappoint the friends to whom he has written to announce us.”

Philip, in the interest of Evelyn, pleaded for another week.

“Another week, in the grouse season, counts for a month!” cried Hardyng. “I can't afford it, out of my small income of twelve in the year. But if you want to see more of us, why not let us come back to you in October, and help you

shoot your pheasants?—Horace Trevor and Walter Lesly told me they were coming to join you in October.”

Philip, who saw in this free and easy proposal only the desire to escape the dulness of Eden Castle when unenlivened with company, could not but acquiesce. But he determined that Hardyng should never again have occasion, in *his* house, to complain of a tête-à-tête.

To his voluble companion, however, the stiffness of his assent was imperceptible. Bob was full of the happiness of rejoining his charming wife,—full of the conflicting interests of the recent session,—full of the vicissitudes of the Austrian campaign,—full of the stirring interests of life. *He* was not so self-absorbed as to have susceptibility to waste on idle punctilio.

“ We have done all that time would allow,” said he, (in reply to the charge in which Philip’s ill-humour took refuge, that “ the new parliament seemed likely to achieve as little as its predecessor.”) “ We have shown the Tories that Shylock is whetting his knife, against another session. To have made a precipitate

incision, and bled the victim to death without obtaining our pound of flesh, would have exposed us to condemnation. It is only heaven-born ministers who are privileged to violate all law and abjure all pledges, without forfeiting their respectability."

"Still," argued Philip, "I suspect that many of our liberal members will feel somewhat shamefaced on confronting their constituency."

"*You are my constituency!*" cried Bob, laughing, "and I promise you I look you in the face as unabashed, as though you were your grandsire cut in alabaster!" Admit, my dear Philip, that the country gentleman is a most unreasonable beast!—The country gentleman expects countries to be conquered for him, without powder or shot, and cities to be reduced, without pickaxe or scaling-ladder. The country gentleman is convinced, like a child, that the vehicle he travels in is standing still, and that the hedges are moving. The country gentleman would make every step in public life a stride; but when things are jerked out of their places by the movement, complains



of the breakage. The country gentleman would fortify the state with his own turnips, and then wonder at being eaten out by the sheep. The eye of the country gentleman being organized, like that of the bull, to magnify proximate objects, he fancies himself able to overbellow an army t'other side the channel; but succumbs to the *taureador* who, having acquired colossal proportions by approaching him, flings a mantle over his head. The country gentleman—”

“Quarter, quarter!” cried Philip, good-humouredly filling his glass;—“and allow me to propose, in my turn, the health of the young member. The young member is one who, like the great pyramid, covers a whole province by the magnitude of his shadow. The young member is a sophist so enamoured of the subtleties of abstract politics, that he will leave an insurrection unquelled, or the budget unopened, while he is carping at a definition or rounding a period, or selecting examples among the Lacedemonians. The young member parries the tangibilities of a treasury return by quotations from Dante; supports a local militia bill

by invoking patriotism as the pulsation of a nation's heart; and when cheered by the lovers of claptrap, fancies he has emitted an argument. Bewildered by the acclamations of his chairing, (a ceremony founded on the *fêtes des foux*, which were imitated from the frenzy of the *Bacchanales*,) the young member fondly fancies himself a demi-god. Harpooning his whale in a vulnerable part by addressing himself to the prejudices of John Bull, rather than his understanding, the young member computes his consequence by that of the monster he has conquered;—forgetting that in public shows, the giant is ever led by a dwarf.”

“Hear, hear, hear, hear!”—interrupted Robert, with a hearty laugh. “A palpable hit,—a capital portrait!—Henry Askham to the life! Yet this vapouring young member Sir Hugh de Bayhurst ventures to point out as the leader of the new era!”

Philip was silenced. Not because Hardyng had so cleverly transferred to the shoulders of his brother the ridicule intended for his own; but because piqued by the allusion to De Bayhurst.

“By the way,” cried Bob, who, having accomplished his object, was content to change the subject.—“do you know that you are about to have a very pleasant new neighbour at Hexham?”

“Has one of those horrid girls, then, picked up a husband at Bath?”

“I know nothing about horrid girls! The lessee to whom I allude is a broth of a boy!”

“Hexham about to be *let*?”—cried Philip, in some surprise.

“Not *about* to be! The deed is done!—or rather, as the pragmatistical young member would say, ‘signed, sealed, and delivered!’ Sir Robert de Lacy told me, three weeks ago, that his brother had been looking at a place in your neighbourhood; and cross-questioned me about the sporting.”

“Of which you knew nothing.”

“And Emma, to whom I applied for information, still less! She has often told me, indeed, that the only good seat or shot in the family, is her sister Susan. However, I answered Robert de Lacy with the cool decision

characteristic of the ignoramus,—that the sporting near Edenbourne was execrable. Not because I thought the family too rollicking to be of much advantage to the morals of our little corner-cupboard of a borough; but because, assured, that a few hundred brace of partridges more or less, would make no difference in Lord Lynchmore's intentions. All he wants is a pretext for absenteeism. In spite of his reputation as a red-hot patriot, the great object of his life is to get away from the "fire-raising of Lynchmore Castle."

"I do not remember Lord Lynchmore. Is he a married man?"

"Very! At least his wife considers herself immeasurably his better half—and if not as good as two, she is as big. Their eldest boy is just gone to Eton,—another reason assigned by Sir Robert for their project of settling in England; though it is pretty plain that white boys rather than Eton boys are at the bottom of the move."

"And when do they arrive here?" inquired Philip.

"Immediately. People were sent down, a

fortnight since, to put the place into habitable repair."

"Impossible to be in better repair than Hexham!" cried Philip. "Mrs. Gwatkin is as rich as a Jew, and as neat as a quaker."

"Pho, pho! By habitable repair, *I* mean that they have provided themselves with chaise longues and lounging chairs,—reviews and pamphlets,—hock and champagne,—and all the other elements of comfortable life. When we visit you in October, my dear Philip, we will straightway to Hexham, and amuse ourselves famously at Lynchmore's expense!"

"I am not acquainted with Lord Lynchmore," said Philip, stiffly.

"Not know Lynchmore?—I thought everyone knew Lynchmore,—the best fellow in the world!—Hospitable as an Arab!—Perhaps one might call him cracked, had he not happened to be born in that part of his Majesty's dominions called Ireland. I once spent a glorious month with him at Lynchmore Castle, and my head ached for the six ensuing."

“ A pleasant prospect, truly, for his quiet country neighbours !”

“ He won't let you be quiet long !—You will find him a great acquisition in this dull neighbourhood !”—

It did not please Philip to hear the neighbourhood called dull by any one but himself. But though the quizzing of Bob Hárdyngé had often, both at Eton and Eske Hill, caused his “ fell of hair to bristle,” it was not in his own house he could pick a quarrel with his brother-in-law.

## CHAPTER VII.

It is only the intelligent who appreciate trifles;—the trivial exaggerate—the solemn underrate them. Dull must be the sight which fails to perceive great events and great actions, but it requires sagacity to detect the indications afforded by the bubbles on the stream.

## FOREIGN REVIEW.

The mellow autumn came, and with it came  
 The promised party to enjoy its sweets ;  
 The corn is cut,—the manor full of game,—  
 The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats  
 In russet jacket, lynx-like in his aim ;  
*Full* grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.

BYRON.

OCTOBER made its appearance in its customary suit of yellow leaves ; when Edenbourne, true to its vocation as an utterer of base platitudes,

was guilty of the observation annually repeated in county chronicles and parsonage-parlours, on occasion of the first frost of the year ;—“that the winter could not fail to be a severe one, for never were the hawthorns so charged with berries, or the flocks of starlings so numerous.”

And with the haws and the starlings, and sere and yellow leaves, came Sir Walter Lesly and Horace Trevor,—two popular men about town, who, having nothing else to bestow upon their friends, were very liberal with their company ; ranging the country throughout the autumn months, — seeking whose venison they might devour, and whose pheasants bring down.

Unable to stand the fire of their cross-questioning at White's concerning the merits of his preserves and of the neighbourhood at Eden Castle, without vouchsafing to two fellows with whom his friendship dated from Eton, something of a general invitation, they not only rendered it specific, but booked the engagement on the



spot ; and it was no small relief when the Hardynges, who had concerted to meet them soon afterwards, made their appearance refreshed and excited by their Highland tour.

The restored health of Mrs. Askham, luckily opposed no further obstacle to the gaieties of the visit ; and there was every prospect of an amusing little party. Edenbourne was in its best looks and temper ; for, according to the prediction of Bob Hardynges, the Lynchmores were already stamped current, as a prodigious acquisition to the neighbourhood.

A new family, arriving without antecedent obligations to shackle their choice of society, and irresponsible to the piepowder court of county jurisdiction, enjoys peculiar advantages ; people like the Lynchmores being able to break through, like cobwebs, a variety of restraints and prejudices, which to a family enrooted in the soil, like the Askhams, are infrangible as a chain cable. To them, it was useless for the

demure Vicarage to quote precedents, (act xxiii. of Gwatkin. IV.) The Countess of Lynchmore cared no more for what had been done by her predecessors at Hexham, than for what was doing in her servants' hall.

The skill of a fast-witted and many-handed London upholsterer having rapidly converted the roomy old house into a first-rate country residence, instead of squinting obliquely at Eden Castle, it was now fully entitled to look its aristocratic *vis-à-vis* boldly in the face—its own having in the mean time been made as white as Pierrot's. The change of complexion from white to red, said to have been effected in the mulberry by the blood of Pyramus, can scarcely indeed have been more striking, indeed, than the transformation of that of Hexham Hall from red brick into white stucco.

In place of the meagre, dronish establishment of former days, all was now spirit and activity. The stagnant water was suddenly

forced into a *jet d'eau*! The old head-keeper who, under petticoat government, had taken such care of the preserves, that the pheasants were dying of plethora and old age, and the hares had become too gouty to run, took to his bed on learning that the hunting-stables of the defunct Squire Gwatkin, mildewed by the desuetude of five-and-twenty years, would not half suffice the stud of the new lessee, and that brick and mortar were already in requisition.

Even the kitchen was nearly demolished, for the introduction of new stoves and ranges, too complicated to be inserted otherwise than the apple in the dumpling; and both the French cook and groom of the chambers gave it as their opinion, that the Hall, in its unregenerated state, must certainly have been inhabited by cannibals!

Edenbourne, on the other hand, upraised its eyes to heaven, on hearing a whisper that the income of Dr. Hacket would be improved, were

he to change places with either of the fastidious worthies in question ; and took the liberty of whispering in its turn an inquiry why prodigalities were to be adopted at Hexham Hall, such as would have been condemned as sinful under the ancient dynasty of Eden Castle?—It had *too* long rehearsed the creed inculcated by the Vicarage, to “honour the king and respect the Askhams,” to be tempted into immediate recantation.

But on discovering that, for every five pound note expended in the borough by its patron, five times five were tossed into its lap by the thriftless Irish Marquis, it owned itself open to conviction, (the only point on which it *was* open!)—and muttered something about “marching with the times.”

Dr. Boswell, the canny successor of Simprems, shrewdly suspecting that the French cook and French wines of the Lynchmores would insure a prodigious increase to the black

doses licensed to be drunk on their premises, went about as fast and far as his gig could carry him, circulating laudations of the new family: —“charming people, combining the graces of the new school with the virtues of the old.” And, as it was pretty plain that the outgoings of Eastfield, Edenbourne Lodge, and the house of Gwatkin united, had not equalled, in a month, a single week’s disbursements of the Chancellor of the new Hexham Exchequer, a vote of favour was passed *nem con.*

There was every probability that, by another season, the peal of bells heretofore dedicated to the exclusive honour of the Askhams, would be set ringing for the births, marriages, and comings of age, of the family of an Irish Marquis.

Philip Askham, though forced to join his voice to that of the multitude, would have been better pleased had the place remained empty.— Competition with the opulence of the Lynchmores demonstrated, for the first time, the in-

adequacy of the means supplied for the maintenance of the castle in its pristine dignity. His magnificent house seemed suddenly to have outgrown his establishment, like a schoolboy his clothes; and the bare wrists and naked ankles that *would* peep out, looked poverty-struck!—His favourite groom left him, to become a helper at Hexham; and the head-gardener hinted that, unless more assistance were afforded him, he should desert in his turn. Even the old pony chaise which Evelyn found so useful, was declared by Philip unfit to pass the precincts of the park, now that the well-appointed phaeton of Lady Lynchmore stirred up, every day, at Edenbourne, the dust and envy of the Market-place.

Had the good-humoured Lord Lynchmore surmised that anything in his possession gave pain or offence to living mortal, he would probably have found means to dispense with it. For his nature being melting as that of a Newington

peach, he could not bear the temper of even an enemy to be ruffled. His jovial countenance and hearty laugh might have driven a whole legion of blue devils out of the county; and so genuine was his good-will both to be amused and amusing, that his worst jokes enjoyed a success often withheld from the more pregnant wit of worse natured men.

The only person who did not enter readily into his humour, was the Countess. In the outset of their married life, when Lynchmore was a dapper little fellow, and she a graceful girl renowned for her slenderness of waist and delicacy of complexion, his pleasantries had been triumphant with *her*, as with his bottle companions. But they had laughed and grown fat together, till there was something in the figure of his lordship that sadly recalled to mind the figure of eight, while the rose now predominated over the lily in the full-blown features of his wife.

While smarting under her perception of the change, she had overheard, or fancied she overheard, Lady Grandison whisper to the young Duchess of Norcliffe, the word "*vulgar*," just as one of Lord Lynchmore's hearty laughs startled from its propriety the vestibule of Buckingham House! The mere suspicion of such an imputation kept her sleepless for a week.—But it opened her eyes to the critical nature of her position. She saw that, under their cruel redundancies of drollery, amplitude, and complexion, and her own deficiency of pedigree, it required all her efforts to maintain them in the odour of aristocratic sanctity.

But though the joviality of her lord, who enjoyed life like an Irish chairman, was a sore grievance, nature *would* sometimes have its way;—and his odd whims and pleasant fancies often betrayed her into her former approving mirth, as if no such word as vulgarity existed in the language.



Nothing, however, could be more edifying than her self-reproachful mode of drawing up into additional dignity, after such acts of weakness!—Like a sleepy person, who, finding himself nodding in company, throws off his doze by staring his friends out of countenance in proof that he is wide awake, Lady Lynchmore grew stiff as Queen Elizabeth, after her lapses into good humour.

To so fastidious a person, the placid gentleness of Mrs. Askham was highly acceptable; for it imposed restraint upon her lord. No attempting practical jokes with Evelyn,—no hazarding a double allowance of claret, when about to join her tea-table;—and Eden Castle was consequently courted as an invaluable resource. Lady Lynchmore, who had been in fear of finding the vulgarity of her Irish country neighbours emulated, in a district so rustic as that of Edenbourne, was thankful for her agreeable disappointment. For she was

haunted by the dread of vulgarity, as some people by that of infection. Conscious, perhaps, of a natural aptitude to imbibe the evil influence, she lived in a perpetual state of quarantine.

Having several tall raw-boned daughters growing up, like a herd of young camels, into what her father called "divilish fine women," her chief objection to Hexham had arisen from the difficulty of procuring a sufficient number of masters to pumice down the Ladies de Lacy into young ladies of fashion. But as in those days families in want of accomplishment-mongers had only to extend their hand and catch some needy foreigner who passed for an *emigré*, "a prince or count in his own country," (where, Providence it knows counts and princes were then little skilled for the diffusion of either useful or useless knowledge, with the exception of the be-Genlised Orleans family, the exception confirming the

rule!) and Lady Lynchmore had accordingly secured the services of a certain Monsieur and Madame la Jouvencière, who, in utter contempt of the English governess engaged to disbrogue her daughters, undertook to varnish with dancing and music, their geography and use of the globes.

Lord Lynchmore, who hated foreigners as much as it was in his philanthropic nature to hate anything that walked on two legs, would not hear of domesticating the La Jouvencières at the Hall; and right thankful was the Countess to Mrs. Hacket for pointing out the vacant tenement at Eastfield; which was instantly engaged for the dancing-master and the showy lady, who, though professing to be a French mistress and the nine Muses melted into one, was his lawful wife.

To the haughty nature of Philip, this desecration was insupportable. Fain would he have bought Eastfield, and razed the cottage to the

earth. But the tax-gatherer's grandson being unluckily a minor, the place could not be sold ; and ere a word transpired of Lady Lynchmore's intention, the La Jouvencières were installed !

A dancing-master and his wife !—What successors for Evelyn ;—and what must the sensitively refined Countess think of a Mrs. Askham, who had emerged from a tax-gatherer's cottage rented at eighteen pounds a year !

To Evelyn, little covetous of the approbation of strangers, her ladyship's opinion seemed of minor importance ; more especially from being just then happily reconciled to herself by a kind letter from Lady Uppingham ; who, in dutiful imitation of the custom of her parents whenever *their* brothers and sisters were blest with an increase of progeny, favoured Philip and his wife with a congratulatory epistle on the birth of their little boy. For that Edenbourne was represented by a Whig, did not exonerate the

amiable Margaret from her affection as a sister, or duty as an aunt.

Even Lady Askham, on learning that Mrs. Hardyng had been summoned to Eden Castle in consequence of the danger of her sister-in-law, relaxed so far from her harshness as to inquire after her progress, and the sex of her first grandchild; and little did the well-affectioned Evelyn suspect that, the brilliant marriage of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst having served to bring before the assizes of the great world the wealth and dignity of the Saville connection, the dowager was not sorry for a decent opportunity to elevate the temperature of the family atmosphere a trifle above freezing point.

By these tardy acts of grace, she was more gratified in fact than they deserved. Not from a mistaken estimate of their value; but hoping that they might assist to smooth down the ruffled plumes of her husband, and reconcile him

to the unattractive feebleness of his puny child.

Unluckily, the ruffled plumes were made only *too* smooth!—Partly from satisfaction at a renewal of the civilities of Uppingham Manor, partly from pique at the pomps and vanities of Hexham Hall, Philip was growing proud as a peacock; and Bob Hardyngé did not fail to discover and turn to account, the expansion of his gaudy plumage.

For the naturally high spirits of Bob were stimulated by the excitement of his Highland tour; and after the open-hearted and open-handed hospitalities of the North, he was not prepared to be frozen into formality by the hearthside of one of his nearest connections. With a ready confederate at hand in the merry Lord of Hexham Hall, he did not scruple to indulge his satirical propensities.

It was a period highly propitious to the irony of those who, like Hardyngé, entertained sovereign

contempt for the empty titularity so distinct from hereditary rank. Aristocratic honours derived from ancestors on whom they were conferred in the feudal ages, when such distinctions possessed substantive value,—or badges of the ancient orders created in that secondary stage of civilization, when man must be extrinsically distinguished from his fellow-man in recognition of superior merits,—commanded his respect like the secular oak in Eden Chase, whose venerable branches had startled the palfrey of his dear Emma.

But towards the newfangled knighthood of certain Bayards to whom a spur was an inscrutable implement, and a sword as hard to wield as a Djereed, he extended as little indulgence as towards spendthrift lords who blemish their escutcheon by contact with the usurers of St. Mary Axe, or dissolute Dukes, that select their Duchesses in the green-room.

The recent creations of Pitt, who, regard-

ing all social institutions as secondary to the purposes of politics, had not scrupled in the accomplishment of his parliamentary projects to be-coronetize the counter, and—

Take the pen from behind the ear  
Of him he chose to make a peer,—

had done much to refrigerate in England that aristocratic glow, which, in Germany and Spain, is kept constantly at boiling heat in the *marmite perpetuelle* of the Heraldic College,—the Noble Chapter,—or the enactments of the Golden Fleece.

By Hardyng, the ennoblement of his father was considered, like the grade of general or admiral, a mere appanage of professional office; nor had it diminished his contempt for that most puerile among the Lilliputianisms of modern life, the love of title; a weakness unknown to the ancient world, and most dissonantly characteristic



of the Christian era, whose spirit of humility, had the fault been pre-existent, ought to have extinguished it for ever!—

The batches of kings and princes daily sent forth from the imperial oven, and the creation of Mulatto dukes and frizzled royal highnesses by King Christophe of Hayti, afforded ready texts for the bantering of Bob. He delighted in distinguishing his Edenbourne constituents by similar honours; and never designated the market-place grocer otherwise than after the Haytian title of “Duc de la Marmelade,” while the dealer in spirituous liquors was “Duc de Dantzig,” the cheesemonger, “Prince de Neufchatel,” the linen-draper, “King of Holland,” and the crockery-woman, “Queen of Etruria.”

Vainly did Philip attempt to silence his *mauvaises plaisanteries* on the plea that they might transpire, and hurt the feelings of the borough and the interests of the Askhams.—It

was only too plain that his *real* ground of disapproval was the fear lest Hexham Hall should augur ill of the birth and breeding of a circle, addicted to such democratic impertinence.

Heaven bless him!—Lord Lynchmore was content to laugh with any body, at any thing, even had his own escutcheon been emblazoned on a corner ; while in the eyes of his lady, the Hardynges and Askhams enjoyed an exceptional privilege, by virtue of the *cachet* of belonging to the exclusive set at Grandison House.

For into that sanctuary, the *parvenue* Countess had never penetrated. During the favour of Sir Robert de Lacy, she was safe in the bogs ; and on her arrival in London, her eldest son being a school-boy and her husband's political influence zero, there was nothing to recommend her to the notice of so close a calculator as Lady Grandison.

Those whom that lady once ignored, were non-existent to *her* for the remainder of her days; and nothing could be more erroneous than the supposition of Lady Lynchmore that her own rotundity or the mellow laugh of her lord, had elicited the word *v—r* from lips so superfine. (The nervous whisper in which the Marchioness pronounced it can only be initially rendered!) She was, in truth, wholly unconscious of their existence.

A foe to affectation of all kinds, Hardyngge had no mercy on the folly of a woman, who fancied herself hunted through life by the obscurity of her own birth, like Actæon by his hounds; and in pursuance of a habit too prevalent at Eske Hill, of selecting a butt in every party for the amusement of the rest, he was often tempted to show up Lady Lynchmore's fashion-seeking absurdity, for the amusement of Sir Walter Lesly and Trevor: who agreed that, as regarded Grandison House,

the Countess became diminutive as the race which, of old, did battle against the cranes.

“Take my word for it,” said Bob Hardyng, when the ladies had left the room; “all Lady Lynchmore’s solicitude about her size and complexion, arises from the dread that, when forty, she shall be *too* fat and no longer fair enough to achieve the conquest of Carlton House.”

“Scan. mag!”—retorted Lesly. “When you know that she never beheld the Prince nearer than through an opera-glass!”

“The Persian who has never seen the sun nearer than the heavens, does not adore it the less!” retorted Hardyng. “But it is no case of scandal great or small. Lady Lynchmore’s idolatry arises simply from conviction that contact with the finest gentleman in Europe, would secure her against being v—r for the rest of her days; a mere affair of kissing the Pope’s toe, or a pilgrimage to Mecca!”

“ *C'est qu'elle voudra se dégrasser jusqu'à l'écorchure,*” said Horace Trevor, after a sip of claret.

“ And foreseeing this,” drawled Lesly, (an acolyte of the newly arisen sect of dandies,—the Young England of the epoch of fribbledom,) “ *you, Hardyng, who call yourself the friend of the fubsy little Marquis, have promised to introduce her to Lady Grandison, — high-priestess of the temple of Carlton!*” —

“ *Que voulez vous?*” retorted Bob, laughing.—“ One *must* sometimes lend a helping hand to one's neighbours!—As Madame du Deffand observes, “ *il n'y a pas du mal à faire, de temps en temps, un peu de bien. On ne sait pas à quoi ça peut servir.*” Who knows but when Lady Lynchmore is a great lady, she may get my son made a beef-eater!—I beg her ladyship's pardon for a term so v—r. I mean a yeoman of the guard.”

“ You should really be more cautious, Hardyng!” remonstrated Philip. “ It would be most unpleasant for me were these sarcasms to reach Hexham.”

“ Lesly—Trevor—make him name his hour and friend !” cried the incorrigible Bob.—“ He takes you for common spies and informers !”—

“ Did you never hear of such things transpiring through the gossip of servants ?” rejoined Philip.

“ As if our dear Countess would be guilty of the vulgarity of gossiping with servants.—Faugh !—*Les manants à la lanterne !*—She once spoke to her maid, but it was through an acoustic tube ; and her orders to the footman to put on coals, are transmitted, like those of the Abbé de l’Epee to his pupils, in dumb show !”

And, suiting the action to the word, Hardyng exhibited so admirable an imitation of the imperial dignity of Lady Lynchmore, that the

whole party, with the exception of Philip, were convulsed with laughter.

“Look at Askham!” cried Bob, provoked by the doggedness of his brother-in-law ;—

“Egregii mortalem altique silentii?”

He reminds me of Nero, who when his lyre was out of tune, used to cut people’s heads off!”

Then turning aside to Lesly and Trevor, he redoubled their merriment by a mimicry of Philip’s air of dignified ill humour.—“Truly said the ancient sage,” continued he, gravely, “that, to appreciate a creature’s powers, you must detach it from its species ; for eagles would be held as cheap as swallows, if they appeared in flights alone.—Since Philip has resided in the country, like a *grand seigneur* as he is, there is no getting a word or a rise out of him, as one used at Brookes’s. When Lady Lynchmore rules the court, the camp, the grove, she shall have him made comptroller of the household to

Gog and Magog, or originate an office for him, as *introduceur des géans*."

Again did Lesly and Trevor laugh heartily. They were accustomed to laugh on trust at Bob Hardyng's jokes, which, at Brookes's, passed current from the mint :—Dukes of Cornwall at their birth.

Next day, they were all to dine quietly at Hexham Hall; and so seriously did Hardyng assure them *en route* that the Countess had compelled her husband to abandon Lynchmore Castle, only because the family portraits of the De Lacys, with their bossy outlines and rubicund noses induced strangers to suppose that Punch was a poor relation of the family, obliged to find a livelihood in the streets because Lady Lynchmore had proscribed him as v—r, that they declared it would be impossible to look their jovial little host in the face. Their gravity was instantly restored, however, by the dignified welcome of his lady; who, *corsetée en fer*, looked imperative as Boadicea.



Lest the jocularity of her lord should exceed bounds polite, everything in the entertainment was as studiously and coldly correct as though presided over by an archbishop. But with the inborn bad taste which, in spite of Lady Lynchmore's efforts at fine-ladyism, *would* peep out, after coffee appeared the Irish brigade of the Ladies de Lacy, escorted by Monsieur and Madame la Jouvencière; the former, as fugleman, arrayed in canary-coloured shorts, pink silk stockings, and pumps that mechanically placed themselves in the third position; while the latter was attired in a soiled white tunic and green wreath, like a half-pay Muse strayed out of a German ode, or a minor theatre.

By the multitude of sonatas and overtures, duets and trios, scattered upon the piano, it was evident that a severe storm of music was impending;—a war of the elements of harmony, which spared neither age nor sex. But after listening to as much Steibelt and Clementi as

human nature could support, and wishing the La Jouvencières, by whom it was suggested, safely back in the country where they were a count and countess, Hardyngé ventured to propose to Lady Lynchmore, who was engaged with Askham at chess, that his wife should let them hear some charming Jacobitè songs, collected during her Highland expedition.

He almost repented his proposition, however, when he found Emma's performance, spirited and pleasing as it was, damned by the faint praise of the professionals; who remained close to the piano like base coin nailed to a counter, beating time as if for the practising of their pupils.

“*Bien, — mais très bien!*” said the seedy muse in the green calico laurels, at whom, during Mrs. Hardyngé's performance, Horace Trevor had been looking some of the unutterable things suggested by Lord Lynchmore's capital hock; while Monsieur la Jouvencière, inspired by na-

tive impudence and the patronage of a Countess, hazarded a *glissade* towards Evelyn, whom he regarded as a fellow-nobody because his predecessor at the tax-gatherer's cottage!

“*Madame devrait associer son talent à celui de Madame Adding!*” said he,—to mark his familiar acquaintance with her habits; “*Car je sais qu'autrefois, elles chantaient souvent ensemble.*”

“*Aujourd'hui, je ne chant plus,*” replied Mrs. Askham, more graciously than was his due;

*Suivant du rossignol l'usage et les leçons,  
L'abord de mes petits a fini mes chansons.*

“*Ah! que nous connaissons bien notre Racine!*” cried the dancing-master, with a nauseous smirk of approbation, (Maître Adam de Nevers being to *him* a carpenter unknown;) when Emma, who had overheard with delight both the quotation and rejoinder, gave the *démenti* to poor Evelyn, by proclaiming her a nightingale of all seasons.

“Come and obtain a song for us from Mrs. Askham, my dear Lynchmore,” cried Horace Trevor, desirous to rivet the attention of the party upon the music, that he might renew his conversation with the Eastfield muse, with whom, not knowing a word of French

He could talk, like an egotist, only with *eyes!*

And to the uproarious solicitations of the Earl, it was in vain that Evelyn pleaded in excuse the want of strength arising from her recent illness.

“Arh now!—*just* one little song couldn't possibly hurt a fly!” cried Lord Lynchmore; and when at length both the request and apology reached the ears of her husband, engaged at chess with Lady Lynchmore at the extremity of the room, he broke through the dignified silence of the game to call out so loudly and angrily to beg she would “comply without so much unnecessary fuss,” that Evelyn

mechanically rose from her seat, and placed herself at the instrument.

As if compassionating the compulsion under which she was acting, every one drew near to listen, predetermined to be pleased and to applaud. But such was the charm imparted to her voice, (a very sweet baritone of moderate compass,) by a certain tremulousness arising from agitation, that no one ventured to interrupt by tokens of approbation, the following quaint and simple ballad :

### BALLAD.

Spread thy light wings and flee,

Wild honey bee !—

The red red rose thy treacherous kiss hath rifled,—

With the pale lily's bell thy touch hath trifled,—

Where the sweet citron bloom its scent exhaleth,—

Where the sweet woodbine's breath the breeze regalcth,

Thy sport hath been, this livelong summer day.

Cold dews arise !—Away ;

Spread thy light wings and flee,

Wild honey bee!—

Spread thy light wings and flee

Poor honey bee!

Go, hive thy plunder'd sweets for winter's pleasure,—

Safe in thy waxen palace hoard thy treasure,—

For lo! while thus thy selfish feast providing,

The spoiler cometh, to thy refuge gliding,—

Thy dainty task achiev'd, prepare for death!—

Dense fumes suspend thy breath:—

'Tis past!—All's o'er with thee

Sweet honey bee!—

Scarcely had the plaintive symphony whose *bourdonnement* characteristically concluded the ballad, murmured to a close, when there was a universal cry for a repetition, supported, as before, by the word of command of Philip; and when, at the end of the second performance, Evelyn faint and breathless quitted the instrument, the Frenchman whispered with a sneer to Sir Walter Lesly (who drew back with much such an air of pity and disgust as if

he had accidentally walked upon a snail,) that  
“ *c’était vraiment d’une naïveté impayable !*”

Lord Lynchmore, meanwhile, swore loudly by everything it is decent to swear by in good society, that “barring the songs of Tom Moore, *that* was the prettiest tune he had ever heard in his life !”

“What is the name of it? Is the melody English, or French, or Italian, or Spanish?” inquired the Countess, coolly check-mating at the same moment her antagonist.

“Irish, I’ll take my oath!” cried Lord Lynchmore; “it is so mighty pretty.”

“I really do not know,—I never heard it before,” said Philip, in reply to the interrogatory looks addressed to him.

“A tolerable proof of the usefulness of exerting one’s talents for the amusement of one’s husband!” cried Emma. “My dear, dear Philip, you have heard it half a hundred times! I remember Evelyn singing that ballad

one night at Eden Castle two years ago,—without music; when she had been so long without a piano,—and was in the habit of making it a lullaby, to put the children to sleep.”—

Philip had heard enough. Though new to *him*, the song was doubtless one of Edward Saville's old favourites.

“ You *have* sung it to him often before, have you *not* ? ”—cried Bob Hardyng, eager to convict Philip of a blunder—

“ *Never !* ” replied Mrs. Askham, in a low voice, sweet as her singing, but still more tremulous.

“ And why not ?—for it is as pretty as it is original.—Is not my friend Phil worthy of music so choice ? ”—

And the confusion of manner which accompanied Mrs. Askham's evasive answer, confirmed the suspicion of Philip that a mystery of some kind or other was attached to the song.—He



tried to recall the words. Yes!—She had doubtless selected them as bearing allusion to her own miserable destiny.—*She* was the lost honey-bee,—*he*, the treacherous spoiler!—Impossible to look more like Reynolds's Ugolino than the unhappy husband, while pondering over the allegory into which he had distorted that simple verse.—He lost both his temper and his game of chess!—

Luckily, the La Jouvencières had tact enough to perceive how thoroughly they were out of place, unless when they could make their professional services available;—and after a little whispering between them and their pupils, a proposition was made to the Marchioness for a little dancing;—which, like a damaged squib, sparkled for a moment, sputtered, and fell to the ground. None of the gentlemen present cared to exhibit their unsophisticated capers in presence of a dancing-master.—

It was only Bob Hardyng, who, when Lord

Lynchmore, delighted at the idea of any thing merry, insisted that the girls should stand up for a reel, afforded himself the satisfaction of disconcerting all the *entrechats* and *jété battus* suggested by the master of the ceremonies to his pupils, by cutting into the figure with a genuine Highland fling, such as might have perilled the safety of any thing less solid than the oaken flooring of the old hall. Monsieur la Jouvencière seemed to consider the *naïveté* of this "*bourrée de montagnard*" quite as *impayable* as that of Mrs. Askham's romance.

The absurdity of the whole affair, however, served to break through the formality of the evening. Lady Lynchmore had been victorious; and with the exception of Philip's dolorous countenance, all was mirth and good humour.

To return home, the Eden Castle party had to divide into two carriages; and when they came to the door, a slight confusion arose in the hall from the disinclination of both Lesly and

Trevor to form the third with Philip and his wife.—Trevor wanted to set down the French heroine ;—both wanted to accompany the Hardynges.

“ Fair play is a jewel, my dear fellow !” cried Bob, opposing the entrance of Sir Walter Lesly into his chariot, as he attempted to spring in, after Emma. “ Were you to come with *us*, I would not answer for the consequences of a *tête à tête* between the happy couple yonder in the landau. What excuse would it afford for us to the coroner, that we could not suppose the Honourable Mr. Askham was about to strangle his Desdemona, merely because she had vexed him by her song of ‘ Willow, willow !’ ”

Had Philip overheard this indiscreet sally, he would probably have refrained from alluding, before Lesly, who was forced to be their companion, to any thing that had taken place. But they had scarcely passed the lodge gates of Hexham, before he alluded to the ballad.

Turning a deaf ear to Sir Walter's expressions of disgust at finding people intruded into society who were as much *déplacé* there as a page of Lindley Murray's grammar in a lady's album, he suddenly inquired of Evelyn in the low concentrated voice so much more terrible than loudness of anger, why Emma was more favoured than himself.

"How came you never to sing to *me*," said he, "a song with which she appears so familiar?"

The occurrence of the miniature inspired poor Evelyn with some suspicion of what might be passing in his mind. That frightful tone of voice was only too well remembered! That he should know the truth, was far better than the chance of renewing a scene so terrible.

"I fancied the song might be disagreeable to you," said she, "because I caught the melody, by ear from Moutiar, the Indian servant of Sir Erasmus l'Estrange, who, at Eastfield, used to

accompany Edward in his rides. I, myself, adapted to its curious rhythm those old-fashioned words."

"But was *that* a reason for denying me the pleasure of hearing them?"

"You seemed to have taken so great a dislike to Sir Erasmus," said she, trying in vain to appear composed, "that I scrupulously avoid all mention of his name."

"So, so!" mused Sir Walter, who was staring from the carriage-window at the frosty sky, (as if as much interested in counting the stars of Oriou's belt, as though they figured on the well-padded uniform of some new foreign ambassador,) "all, then, is not upon velvet between my friend Philip and his pretty wife!"—

And having extracted from the children, the preceding day, that their beautiful Shetland pony was the gift of "Sir Erasmus," and connecting the intelligence with Askham's present animosity, he decided, as became a satellite of

Carlton House, that the man thus generous and thus obnoxious, must be also young and handsome.—The proprietor of the harmonious servant was evidently a lucky dog!

“I never should have expected, however,” cogitated he, “that Philip Askham would turn out so confoundedly jealous!”

To divert the awkward silence into which the happy pair subsided when he ceased to examine the splendours of Orion, he began to laugh at the hospitable host who had been entertaining them. “His dinner was cold,—his champagne hot,—his liqueur *factice*.”

“What a relief it must be to poor Lynchmore,” added he, “that those handsome girls are growing up so miserably awkward! The dear Countess will have too much work on her hands in polishing them into decency, to leave leisure for taming down her husband.”

Philip could not have found an affirmative, at

that moment, had his companion asserted the circulation of the blood or the polarity of the needle!

“On the contrary, it is a pity but she *had* leisure!”—cried he. “When left to himself, Lynchmore is such an ass!—It sickens one to hear such pretensions to red-hot patriotism from an Irish absentee!”—

“Surely he does his best for his country!” replied Sir Walter, in the tone of Mrs. Candour. “Whenever a change of ministry takes place, Lynchmore wanders from club to club, wondering ‘what the devil they will do for Ireland?’—To-day, you heard him interrupt Lady Lynchmore’s rhapsodies about the prince with—‘Ay, ay!—a fine man of his inches. But what does he mean to do for Ireland?’”

“For my part, I hate all claptrap nationality!” cried Philip; “the mere brute instinct that gets drunk on St. Patrick’s Day, and breaks heads at Donnybrook fair! The only thing that

Lord Lynchmore *could* do for Ireland,—spend on the soil the noble income he extracts *from* it, —he leaves undone!”—

“*I live in Ireland! I would see her d—d first.*”

said Lesly, coolly parodying the popular hexameter of the Anti-Jacobin.

But this somewhat startling sally, produced neither applause nor rejoinder. Nothing was heard for some minutes but the grating of the carriage while laboriously ascending a hill.

“MEM. Never to be bodkin between a loving couple who have quarrelled!” was the secret soliloquy of the exceedingly bored dandy. “When a man who respects himself is jealous, he shoots or stabs his wife, or her lover, or himself; and there’s an end on’t! But he must have been very badly brought up to inflict upon his guests his fits of green and yellow! Unless my friend Philip decides on something desperate within the next four-and-twenty hours, by Jove, I will order post-horses, and be off!”



He had not so long to wait! Within the next four-and-twenty minutes, as he was lounging opposite his dressing-room fire at the castle, reading in the London papers which had arrived during their absence at Hexham, the account of a Newmarket prize-fight between Gully, the champion of England, and Gregson the pugilist, his blood was suddenly curdled by a piercing shriek, proceeding from Mrs. Askham's room, which, on the opposite side of the gallery, nearly faced his own.

Nothing doubting that one or other of his barbarous suggestions was already accomplished, he seized the poker to rush to the scene of action. When lo! just as he reached the corridor, the door of the opposite chamber was flung open by a frantic hand!—

“Who comes from the bridal chamber?”

as Southey would say.

“Is it Azrael the angel of death?”

No! only a bewildered lady's maid, rushing down stairs in pursuit of her master!

“Where is Mr. Askham, sir?”—cried she, addressing the astonished baronet. “Where,—*where* is Mr. Askham!—Oh! my *poor* mistress!”

## CHAPTER VI.

Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frightening me ;  
For I am sick and capable of fears ;  
Oppress'd with wrongs, and therefore full of fears ;  
A woman, naturally born to fears.  
What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head ?—  
Why dost thou look so sadly on my son ?—  
What means that hand upon that breast of thine ?—

SHAKSPEARE.

SIR Walter Lesly fulfilled his threats of ordering horses the succeeding day, and taking his departure from the castle ; but not because, as for a moment he had been attempted to apprehend, his jealous host had evinced tendencies to wificide. Horace Trevor, instructed by Hardyng, apprized him that “ the family had

received news of a distressing nature, which would render the presence of visitors a grievance." Like Macheath, "they must take the road!"

"Wretched sport and a worse *cuisine!*" was Lesly's succinct account of Eden Castle at Hurstwood, (the noble post-house of the Middlemore Arms happening to succeed the Askham Arms, in his itinerary of autumnal victimization.) The *ménage* seems thoroughly out of joint."

"Phil has scarcely run in double harness long enough, to be *quite* perfect in his paces!" replied Lord Middlemore. "But no matter for *that*. The happiest of men is a confounded bore to those who, being less happy, want to be more amused."

"From the first, his domestic felicity did not sit easy upon him," retorted the dandy. "He seemed to wear it, as the blacksmith does his Sunday clothes, only to make a show."

"But I don't understand, old fellow, how you

came to curtail your visit?" resumed Middlemore, to whom the cunning man of White's had been distilling his news, drop by drop, as people are forced to do in a country-house, lest the supply should not be equal to the demand. "Your story seems to have neither head nor tail!"—

"Story, God bless you, I have none to tell, sir!

They took care to keep me out of the secret. Besides, you treated me just now like your grey mare, and cut *short* my tale! I was going to explain that, having quitted Philip and his wife in the *beau milieu* of an amicable suit, which was beginning, like Hecate, to "look angrily," as I sat reading in my dressing-room, wondering whether they were kissing and making it up, or cutting each other's throats, I was panic-struck by a shriek, shrill as that of Sidons in the Gamester; and was about to rush to the spot in my dressing-gown and slippers, when I luckily recollected that, in the best re-

gulated families, it would be reckoned a higher crime to appear in a lady's presence *en dés-habille*, than allow her to be peaceably assassinated."

"So you sat still, and finished your newspaper?"

"No! I cut into the corridor,—where my pannel was smashed by a runaway lady's maid rushing down stairs in search of Askham, who was sulking in the library. Letters had arrived from town, which set the whole family into hysterics."

"Percy has been playing again, I suppose! That fellow will not be satisfied while there is a stick left on the estate! At Verdun, he is fleeced once a quarter, like a Biscayan sheep."

"No,—it was not a question of finance,—Mrs. Askham is half out of her mind, because the guardianship of her children has been claimed by the family of her first husband."

"What a deuced good riddance for Philip!"

“You would not have thought so, had you seen his face on the occasion. I have known fellows lose twenty thousand on the Derby, and not look half so crest-fallen !”

“Phil is a strange animal !” resumed Lord Middlemore. “He will neither follow the rein, nor take his own way. He never knows what he would be at ; and never forgives those who are at the trouble of informing him.”

And this stricture of the coaching cousin was on the present occasion peculiarly correct. Though conscious of being heartily tired of the children, no sooner did Evelyn communicate to him the letter from Sir Hugh de Bayhurst’s solicitors, which claimed, by virtue of a holograph will of Edward Saville contained in his last letter to his brother, the care of his orphans, than he resolved to resist the demand with all the means and appliances of the law.

“So long, madam, as you remained single,” wrote the man of business of Sir Hugh, “my

client was reluctant to interfere with your domestic arrangements.—But his brother's issue being now submitted to other governance, and since you have no longer a roof of your own, or even leisure to bestow upon them, it becomes his imperative duty to remove them to the charge of their nearest male relative. Your son, heir-presumptive to the noble property of Bayhurst, is of an age to demand a suitable education. I am, therefore, instructed to request you will hold the children in readiness to be surrendered, on the first of next month, to the custody of their legal guardian."

"A testamentary letter?—a holographic will?" cried Philip, after his first perusal of this epistle,—“the Court of Chancery will upset them in a moment!”

But on this point, the opinion of Lord Hardynge undeceived him.—The will, if admitted to probate, must be valid. So vast a pro-



perty, moreover, being entailed on little Edward Saville, the Lord Chancellor would, doubtless, favour the pretensions of his uncle to the guardianship.

“In your place, my dear Philip,” said Bob Hardyng, after obtaining this information,—“I would let matters take their course. De Bayhurst can provide splendidly for the children, for whom you can do nothing; and you will soon have a houseful of your own, to reconcile you to the loss.”

But against this line of argument, the warm-hearted Emma chose to be heard in reply,—“Have you no consideration for the poor mother’s feelings?” said she, after her brother had quitted the room. “Is Philip the *only* person to be considered?”

“If Mrs. Askham truly loves her children,” pleaded Hardyng, “she ought to be thankful for their change of prospects.”

“Thankful for *losing* them?—Monstrous!”

cried his wife. "Instead of indulging in these cold-blooded calculations, I trust, dearest, you will kindly prepare to act as intermediary between Evelyn and your friend Sir Hugh."

"I will prepare to obey any commands of hers or yours; but believe me she could not select a less efficient envoy,"—replied Hardyng. "On Philip's account, I should not *wish* to succeed; and on my own, should be horribly afraid of being knocked down by De Bayhurst for my officiousness, or halberded by his yeomanry."

"Do not treat it as a joke!" pleaded his wife, more earnestly. "To lose sight of those children, is to Evelyn a matter of life and death!"

"How absurd!—when she is sure of a succession to supply their place, as long as that of Banquo's spectral issue!"

"Consider the savage nature of the man to whom these poor little creatures are

about to be entrusted!" cried Emma, forgetting how little was known to her husband of the relations between Evelyn and De Bayhurst.

"I have no doubt his savage nature has become mild as the moonbeams, since his marriage!"—retorted Hardyng. "I anticipate wonders from the influence of Lady Anastasia! Remember the axiom of one of your favourite writers, that *une jolie femme habile se fait comme une atmosphère de bonheur, où les nerfs se détendent et les sentimens s'adoucissent.*"

"Why should you suppose matrimony to have so vast an influence over *his* character, when it has so little over your own?"—argued his wife, *almost* vexed. "Bob Hardyng of Eske Hill could never be induced to talk seriously of serious matters; and Bob Hardyng, the husband of Emma Askham, replies by a fool-born jest to a proposition in which her whole heart is concerned!"

“I am serious now, my dear little wife!” cried Hardyng, affectionately taking her hand. “*Voyons!*—What am I required to do?”

“Start by the mail for town; and from thence, to Bayhurst; where you must exercise your ingenuity and exert your eloquence, to dissuade Sir Hugh from persevering in his claim.”

“To Bayhurst?—I have never even been invited there since his marriage!”

“You go as an advocate,—not as a guest.”

“But advocates proceed on such occasions by letter; as you have seen in the present instance.”

“Not advocates who have a wife to content, as well as a client. Thank your stars that I do not propose to play Nerissa to your Portia,—and preach to this Sussex Shylock on the two-fold benefit of mercy;—instead of which, I shall stay quietly here, and comfort Evelyn till you come back!”

There was no help for it!—Sorely against his will, Bob Hardyng proceeded upon his expedition. He was too deeply indebted to the good offices of Philip, to decline the task the moment *he* expressed a wish for the interposition of his friend.

Not, however, that Hardyng intended to burst like a shell into the centre of the fireside circle at Bayhurst, according to Emma's suggestion. The rectory-house at Holmehurst was at his disposal; his uncle's family being just then at Sandwich, with Lord and Lady Hardyng, enjoying their professional holiday of a month at sea.

But though, on most occasions, tolerably self-assured, Hardyng felt a little nervous at the idea of his first interview with the De Bayhursts. For to *him*, they were "THE" De Bayhursts still. Married on the same day, how could he suppose them otherwise than "the happy couple?"—His parliamentary avo-

cations had secured him against noticing the coolness between them, or being enlightened by the gossip of society; and, nothing doubting that independence, wealth, and power, had converted Lady Grandison's daughter into a Lady Grandison a little less highly coloured, he expected to find her house the tumultuous resort of fashionable society, with Lady Anastasia presiding in the midst, like a miniature Semiramis on her throne.

Under such circumstances, seeing that she possessed the power of life and death over a person who was dear to him, he approached her with fear and trembling. For dear Stasy had wrongs to resent;—dear Stasy had injuries to avenge!—The interview could not but be disagreeable on both sides.

With anything but pleasant anticipations, therefore, did he approach Bayhurst. On entering the noble park—(the slopes and vistas of which, nature had so diversified, that

Repton and Capability Brown “toiled after her in vain,”) the majestic groves embedding the mansion and forming a rich contrast to the bold outline of the distant downs, seemed suddenly to expand for the disclosure of a Palladian structure, which, in any other land but England, (where country-gentlemen are princes,) might have passed for a palace. Bayhurst had indeed every pretension to the distinction :

*Si verbo audacia detur*

*Non metuam magni dixisse palatia cœli !*

“In such a home as this, dear Stasy cannot surely bear malice against me or Philip!”—cried he. “What a magnificent place ; and how different from our half an acre of lawn at Eske Hill !”

Though often seen before, it assumed a different aspect as the property of Lady Grandison’s daughter. Still stronger was his persuasion of her perfect happiness, when, on arriving under the stately portico, an alert and well-disciplined

establishment came forward to do the honours of the place.

“Sir Hugh was out shooting; her ladyship driving in the grounds. If Mr. Hardyng had no objection to wait, messengers could be despatched to both.”

So little objection had he, that he begged neither of them might be disturbed.

“He would wait their time, and amuse himself in the picture gallery till their return.”

“How right was dear Emma,” thought he, as he entered that finely-proportioned gallery, with its mirific oaken floor unsullied by footsteps, and its stagnant atmosphere chilled by the profusion of marble columns and entablatures, so wholly unsuitable to our climate,—“how right was she in maintaining that no man is justified in burying chef d’œuvres of the ancient masters, in his country-seat! What glorious pictures are here,—and how lost to the world! One travels to Florence and Dres-



den to see some that are little finer ! Were the works of art scattered in our provinces annually collected in a museum such as I saw in Paris, (a finer trophy for the memory of Napoleon, hereafter, than the battle of Austerlitz !) the world would admit that the shop-keeping nation has rifled to some purpose, the palaces of Venice and Rome !”

And with the epicureanism of a connoisseur, Hardyng began leisurely to feast his eyes ;—proceeding from Guido to Titian,—from Caravaggio to Salvator ;—entering into the subject and treatment of each picture with such enthusiastic fervour of imagination, that both the artist and the action seemed to live over again before his face. He forgot that he was at Bayhurst. The gods of Greece,—the heroes of Rome,—the saints of Palestine,—were around him. Raphael and Murillo, Vandyke, Rubens, and Titian, seemed to hold him by the hand ; till Sir Hugh and Lady Anastasia de

Bayhurst subsided into comparative insignificance!

How long his faculties had been thus enthralled by the contemplation of the great actions and great sufferings of antiquity, he knew not, when he was suddenly recalled from the thrilling details of one of Carlo Maratti's martyrdoms, by a footman of the house, spruce as a French marquis, and tiptoeish as a French comedian, who informed him that Lady Anastasia was returned, and awaiting his visit; and as Hardyng followed the bedizened dandy of the shoulder-knot through an imposing suite of rooms, he admitted that, were *he* proprietor of a family seat so noble, he should be apt to defy the remonstrances of his wife, in order to people it with creations exalted and exalting as those he had been contemplating, by way of antidote to the deteriorating influences of familiar life.

“It would require the countercharm of

twenty Vandykes," thought he, "to be waited upon by an army of powdered jackanapes, such as yonder parti-coloured puppet."

Startled from his philosophical reverie by the announcement of his name, he found that the door suddenly thrown open before him, was that of the morning-room; and that he was already in presence of Lady Anastasia.

But was it indeed Anastasia that rose from the sofa to receive him?—Was the pale, wasted, nervous being who seemed to be in awe of her visitor,—herself,—the whole world,—really the gay-hearted creature he had seen so blooming and so joyous, the preceding year?—So forcibly was he struck by the resemblance between her faded features and those of the chief figure in a Venetian picture he had just been studying, which represented the return of the shade of Eurydice from the Infernal Regions, that, for a moment, his eyes were riveted on the face of Anastasia, as they had been on the painting.

He held her death-cold hand within his own, unable to utter a syllable!

He was recalled to himself by her gracious,—her almost affectionate greeting.—Nothing of Lady Grandison in her manner,—nothing of resentment!—She was genuinely glad to see him again.

But even that gladness did not suffice to bring a tinge of colour to her cheek!—The ordeal of a long country tête-à-tête with the man who hated her, seemed to have congealed the blood within her veins. At Bayhurst, there was not even the factitious effervescence of vanity, to keep her spirits from sinking. The glistening of jewels and satins did not suffice, *there*, to dazzle her eyes. In spite of those gilded ceilings, those storied walls, those living landscapes smiling in the sunshine beyond,—the perpetual winter of her fate was ever before her!

So far from having any *hauteur* to appre-

hend from the lady of De Bayhurst, Hardyngce perceived at once that her depressed spirit required re-assurance at his hands. Her voice trembled as she addressed him,—though in answer to the commonest questions.

“ Her father and mother were quite well,” she said,—in reply to his inquiry ; “ Lord Grandison at Newmarket,—Lady Grandison at Brighton. She had not seen them since she quitted London in August.”

After De Bayhurst, he had not courage to ask.—That she was either very ill, or very unhappy, was painfully evident; and in either case, he could not but connect the evil with the temper of her dark-browed lord. In so new a *ménage*, enemies from without are seldom very potential.

But when Lady Anastasia proceeded to express a hope that he was about to spend some time at Holmehurst, and that Mrs. Hardyngce might be tempted to join him, he could no longer refrain from some allusion to the motive

of his visit. Prior to her husband's arrival, it might be as well to secure *her* interest, in support of his suit.

But what was his surprise on finding her wholly ignorant of De Bayhurst's application ! Though the daughter of Lady Grandison could scarcely fail to be an excellent actress, it was impossible but that her start,—her change of countenance,—her change of voice,—must be the result of unqualified amazement.

Such utter want of confidence between the newly-wedded pair was doubly astonishing to Hardyng; between whom and his darling Emma, all was open as daylight.

“ My ignorance seems to surprise you,” said she. “ But considering the estrangement that existed between Sir Hugh de Bayhurst and his brother, it is easy to conceive that all allusion to Captain Saville would be painful to his feelings.”

“ But you have surely been apprized that his widow is re-married to my brother-in-law ?”

“ By others,—by yourself, in the first instance;—never by *him!*” .

“ At least you are aware that Edward Saville left children ?”

“ Mrs. Hardyng once spoke to me of the family of her sister-in-law,” said Lady Anastasia, faintly ; her face becoming almost blue from the spasmodic contraction of her heart.

“ And since that time,” said he, “ another child has been born. You must have heard in town that my wife was sent for express to Eden Castle, in consequence of the danger of Mrs. Askham? We saved her, thank God, and saved the child,” added he, on receiving no reply, “ or Philip, I suspect, would have gone out of his mind!—But the birth of his son does not render him less unwilling that poor Evelyn should be deprived of her elder children !”

Had Robert Hardyng been professionally accustomed, like his father, to study the coun-

tenances of juries, he would have discerned in that of Lady Anastasia, that he had lost a point. The idea of Philip Askham as a devoted husband and happy father, instantly hardened her heart.

“If, as you assure me,” said she, “Sir Hugh de Bayhurst is bent on asserting his right of guardianship over his nephew and niece, it is out of my power to oppose it. In the most trivial instances, I never interfere with his affairs, and in one so peculiarly his own as this family question, should have neither pretext nor excuse.”

And by her mode of immediately leading the way to the dining-room, where a splendid luncheon was prepared and the servants in attendance, it was clearly her determination to avoid all further confidential conversation. Hardynge saw there was nothing to be hoped from the services of Lady Anastasia.

But it was no matter!—After the first half



hour of the private interview soon afterwards granted him by De Bayhurst himself, it became equally apparent that not all the advocacy of as many wives as Bluebeard's, or as many friends as Job's, would have shaken him from his purpose!—He had fortified himself in his wayward will by a thousand specious arguments.—“His duty to the dead,—his duty to the living,—the deathbed instructions of his father,—the interests of the future representative of his family,”—all were brought forward in battle array, to prove that it behoved him to be inflexible.

“Had not my brother's widow thought proper to marry again,” was the preface to all his asseverations that nothing should induce him to alter his plans.

Perseverance would have been waste of time. Having laid down his arms, Hardyng prepared to quit the field. But in the indiscretion of his candid nature, he first frankly admitted

that, in Philip's place, *he* should consider the loss of the children a relief, and that Philip himself would soon be of the same opinion.

“It is in behalf of the mother, I have been pleading,” said he; “for you will readily conceive that, with a child of his own already born, and the probability of a large family, my brother-in-law could very well spare the little Savilles.”

Like Protogenes, who, by flinging his sponge in despair at the canvas on which he had been vainly trying to pourtray the foam on the mouth of Bucephalus, produced by the accident the effect for which all his art was unavailing, this random taunt operated what his best eloquence had missed. Sir Hugh's exorbitant sense of duty towards his brother's orphans became suddenly modified, on learning that their departure would be no grievance to the man beloved by his wife; and Hardyng, perceiving and pursuing his advantage, with-

out pausing to examine the origin of the weapons suddenly placed in his hands, contrived, by dexterous management, to effect a compromise. Before the malice of the baronet had time to cool, it was arranged that, if the boy were immediately surrendered to his uncle's care, the girl might remain under the guardianship of her mother !

All Sir Hugh exacted, in return for the concession, was a formal and conjoint undertaking to that effect on the part of Evelyn and her husband, made through the hands of his man of business.

“ In the discharge of my legal trust,” said he, “ I must secure the means of proving hereafter that the request made to me by the mother, was sanctioned by the authority of her husband. This must be no matter of caprice. If Mr Askham undertake the charge of this child, it must be at once and for ever.”

Throughout the negotiation, so little were

the resolutions of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst influenced by personal courtesy towards Hardyng, that the invitation he now pressed upon him to stay dinner, was coldly declined. The visitor, who knew himself to be unwelcome as the brother-in-law of Evelyn, did not care to find himself patronized as the nephew of the parson of the parish; and when he took his precipitate departure, after a hasty farewell of his host, there was a sensation of mutual relief.

Far greater, however, was that of finding himself, at the close of his fatiguing expedition, folded, with warm acknowledgments, to the affectionate heart of his wife. Emma considered his embassy triumphant. Emma thought he had done wonders. Emma thought he had done *enough!*—It was only Philip who grumbled.—It was only Evelyn that wept.

Her boy,—her noble boy!—How was she to resign him!—Above all, how was she to resign him to *that man!*—What cruelty to take him

from her! — What cruelty to separate the children!

“Between ourselves, my dear Philip, I fancy *you* are at the bottom of De Bayhurst’s obduracy,” said Hardyng, when he found himself alone with his brother-in-law.

“You surely do not suppose me guilty of the meanness of trying to disencumber myself of the children?” cried Askham, firing up.

“Guilty only of *not* trying to disencumber yourself of the affections of Lady Anastasia! The beast is jealous of you!—I read it in his looks, every time I pronounced your name.—I heard it in the inflections of his voice every time he named you. I could have sworn to it, even had I known nothing of the antecedents! It affords him exquisite pleasure, to possess the means of giving you pain.”

“In that case, you were right to persevere in extricating poor little Selina from his hands,” said Philip, as if he had previously thought

the measure in some little need of apology. "But, for heaven's sake, not a word on this chapter before Evelyn!—She is already so wretched at the prospect of parting from the boy, that if she had reason to apprehend unkindness towards him from his uncle on any new provocation whatever, I would not answer for the result."

"She looks indeed most miserably!" said Hardyng, in a tone of heartfelt commiseration. "Poor soul!—poor Evelyn!—in so short a life, what severe trials her fragile nature has undergone!—Would that the approaching separation were over!—When the little fellow is no longer here to agonize her by the expressions of his grief, she will turn for comfort to the children yet remaining."

How was he to conjecture that a chief part of the sorrow rendering Evelyn's eyes so red and her voice so tremulous, arose from the scarcely concealable *delight* of her son, at quitting Eden Castle!—

“ I love my own darling mother,” said the young rebel, in answer to the affectionate expostulations of Selina,—“ but I cannot bear your dear Philip. He is no papa of mine,—and papa I will call him no longer. In his heart, he hates the sight of us. In his heart, he grudges us the bread we eat. Susan said as much, the other day, when he turned me out of the library for making a noise. My uncle, perhaps, will be more good-natured!—My uncle will give me a pony.—My uncle will look like that kind-faced picture of poor papa, which we were sometimes allowed to see, when we lived at Eastfield.—My uncle will not always be driving me out of his way.”

“ You will think differently of all this, dearest Edward, when you get to Bayhurst,” said Selina, with tears trembling in her eyes.

“ *Shall* I!—That’s all!—Susan says that Bayhurst is twice as pleasant a place as this,—and she was born, you know, within a stone’s

throw of the lodge. Bayhurst was a lord's seat in the time of William the Conqueror!—Bayhurst, she says, is like Solomon's temple!—And poor papa was born there too!—You don't know, Lina, how I long to see Bayhurst!”

And though the boy forbore to afflict his mother by similar avowals, it was only too apparent that her affliction found no echo in his heart.

“I should have been very, *very* sorry to leave dear Eastfield,” was his frank reply when imprudently taxed with want of tenderness,—“but I am not quite so fond of Eden Castle.”

Though cut to the soul by this indirect accusation, Evelyn was still more alarmed lest Philip should detect the ingratitude of the boy, and visit it upon herself, by refusing to make the formal application for the custody of Selina exacted by Sir Hugh. No sooner was Edward out of her sight, than she trembled



lest he should offend his step-father by some inadvertent betrayal of his feelings.

Nor was her dismay decreased by the inopportune arrival at Eden Castle of a guest both unexpected and uninvited, though well entitled to its hospitalities. Claude Askham, who, at ten years old, had insisted on entering the navy as parish boys insist on becoming chimney-sweepers, merely as the earliest mode of escape from the coercion of authority, had just landed at Plymouth, after a four years' cruise; transferred from ship to ship, and station to station;—till so home-sick from hardships by sea and land,—scanty fare and plenty of fighting,—that his first impulse on reaching his native shore was to obtain leave of absence for a visit to Eden Castle.

He was aware of his father's death and brother's marriage. But what then? *His* rights in that place could never be altered. To his sailor-hearted warmth of nature, the old house

was still home ; more home than ever, now that his attachments were strengthened by having dwelt among aliens.—“ *He* was not going to wait for invitations ! No need of an admiral’s signal before he dropped anchor in that well-known port !”—

“ How changed it all is, and *you* most of all !” said the audacious stripling into which the truant boy had shot up. “ To think, Philip, of finding you master here,—*you* whom my poor dear father used to bully so confoundedly !— I’ve often wondered since, you didn’t slip your cable and run for it. I’d rather be coxswain to a slaver, than worked as *you* were !”

It was in vain that Mrs. Hardyng, apprehensive lest her wild brother should conjure up a storm, attempted to moderate his reminiscences, and divert the play of his batteries towards herself.

“ *You* were boxed up with Miss Harrison in the school-room, fighting with the multiplica-

tion table, and saw nothing of what was going on below," retorted the reckless lad. "And who ever expected *then*, Emma, to see you grow up into such a handsome woman!—I wonder whether I shall find everything in Mansfield Street as changed as it is here!"

In pity to the embarrassment of his wife, Bob Hardyngé hastened to interrogate the young sailor concerning his traveller's wonders; the savage countries he had visited,—the coral reefs of Caribbean seas,—the fearful vegetation of Java,—walrus hunts in Behring's Straits,—or skirmishes with Port Praya dragoons.

And while Claude coolly recounted adventures supernatural as those of Gulliver or Odysseus, little Edward Saville sat open-mouthed to listen;—satisfied, not only that the midshipman was the greatest glory of the house of Askham, but the greatest hero

extant since the death of Nelson. “He would *insist* on being a sailor, the moment he arrived at Bayhurst Park !”

“I am almost in hopes of getting made, as soon as the *Ajax* is paid off ;” said Claude, when a figment more marvellous than all the rest had produced a dead silence in the little party ; “that is, with a little interest to push me. You, who are a parliament man,” continued he, addressing Hardyng, “must give me a helping hand at the Admiralty.”

Declining so hopeless a task as to make manifest to cockpit experience the state of parties in Great Britain, Bob cut the matter short by advising him to bespeak the aid of his brother.

“Henry is in Parliament as well as myself,” said he ; “and six times as grand a personage.”

“*Henry* in parliament ?—Henry, whom I used to dress up in my nightcap and pinafore, and

call Miss Henrietta Goodchild?—Henry, who had so little pluck that he would have run away from a water wagtail?”—

“To say nothing of Henry, then, Lord Uppingham has only to speak half a word, to get you made Admiral of the fleet!” added Bob, not a little amused at this brotherly supplement to the portrait of the young member. “The loaves and fishes abide with *that* branch of the family. *We* are only the scrubs,—as you will learn before you have hung up your hat in the hall in Mansfield Street.”

“Where, by Jove, I must be on Thursday!” added Claude. “For I’ve only a fortnight’s leave, and must manage to get a glimpse of them all; especially Susy, whom I so often got into disgrace with Goody Harrison, for helping me to throw old Triton over the bridge. I expected to have found them all here, at this time of the year!—My mother used always to spend her autumns in the country!”

To make it clear to midshipman capacity that there existed a state of things in which a mother no longer commands a home under the roof of her son, was about as hopeless as to make him comprehend that, while the Tories were in office, the honourable Whig member for Edenbourne could do nothing for him at the Admiralty.—Better let him risk his random shots!—Better let him occasionally graze the temper of his irascible brother; and thus divert his attention from the despair of poor Evelyn, which had well nigh exhausted his patience.

For terrible was now the struggle of her feelings! *She* knew that, in parting with her child to Bayhurst, she was parting with him for ever! They might talk of future visits,—of uncontrolled intercourse by letter. But the affections of the boy would become estranged from her.—She would never be again to him as she *had* been!—*he* never again to *her* as he

should never have ceased to be,—the first object upon earth,—because the last pledge of the attachment of the truest and most generous of men !

“ By all that’s good, Emma, we must get away from this place ; for I can bear the sight of that woman’s suffering face no longer ! ”—cried Bob Hardyng, straining his wife to his bosom, after escaping with her from the room where Evelyn had been seated for hours in blank despondency, scarcely knowing when she was addressed. “ I never saw such intensity of grief. What a countenance,—what a heart-breaking study !—The *mater dolorosa* of Carlo Dolce is cheerful by comparison. Kiss me, my little Emma ! If I thought your bright eyes would ever become swollen with weeping, and your merry face reduced to so careworn an expression as hers,—more especially on *my* account,—I vow to Heaven I would—but hush ! here comes Philip—

Who, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

I have promised to go with him and Claude, and look after the woodcocks."

"But why can't he look after them without you?" said Mrs. Hardyng, who was grievously out of spirits.

"Do not grudge me to him, my dear girl!" cried Bob,—throwing on his shooting jacket. "Next week we shall all be gone, and nothing remain to console him, but the wan face of his wife.—Poor soul,—poor Evelyn!

The spoiler cometh, to her refuge gliding,  
Dense sighs suspend her breath!  
'Tis past!—All's o'er with thee  
Sweet honey-bee!"—



## CHAPTER VII.

Grief fills the room up of my absent child ;  
 Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
 Remembers me of all his gracious parts.  
 Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form ;—  
 Have I not reason to be fond of grief !

SHAKSPEARE.

Exigite ut mores teneros seu pollice ducat,  
 Ut si quis cera vultum facit.

JUVENAL.

ALL thought it an act of charity to leave the Askhams to themselves, as the day of parting drew near. Sad misconception !—for any restraint upon the feelings at such a time, serves to convert grief into vexation,—of two miseries, the *least* !

The moment the tears of Evelyn were unrestrained by spectators, they burst forth with spasmodic violence; till Philip began to fear that her strength, severely tried by her recent confinement, would yield in the struggle. The recklessness of Edward served to increase her misery. The poor infant was too delicate to quit the nursery. Her only comfort was Selina.

On the eve of the day appointed for the man of business of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst to fetch him from Eden Castle, Philip went in search of the little girl, whom he found seated in the corridor near her mother's apartment, to be at hand if wanted, or out of the way, if importunate.

“Mamma is lying down,” said the child; “I am waiting lest she should awake and call for me.”

“You shall return to your post directly. But I have a word to say to you, Selina,” said

Philip,—having led her into the study.—  
“Your brother is going to leave us to-morrow ;—and I wish to impress upon your mind that *now* is the moment to evince your affection and gratitude towards mamma.”

As if the child were not already evincing it in every word, and thought, and look, and gesture !—

“Your mother has done a great deal for you, and made considerable sacrifices for your sake,”—resumed the step-father ; “and you must make it the business of your life, Selina, to reward her.”

The little girl blushed deeply ;—opening her eyes as if trying to find a hidden meaning for what, in its apparent sense, was so needless an injunction.

“You are not aware, I dare say,” added her dear Philip, “that Sir Hugh de Bayhurst was anxious to take *you* away from her, as well as Edward. Aware that you have nothing to

depend upon, and that mamma's time is very much taken up with her baby, he thought it likely she might be glad to have you happily settled. But she did not wish to part with you, Selina ; and at her desire, I have applied for the right of taking charge of you, and undertaken to afford you a home. I tell you all this, to show you how much it is incumbent on you to mark by your obedience your sense of all that has been done for you.—And now, my dear, go back to your post ; and remember that, if to-morrow, when she will require so much support, I see a *single* tear,—I shall think it a poor return for all our kindness.”

Though half of this unnatural address was incomprehensible to Selina, she understood enough to feel humiliated ; partly at the supposition of any possibility of want of attention on her part towards the dearest of mothers ; partly because it was the first time in her little life that

the sense of obligation had been imposed with leaden weight upon her heart.

The lesson, however, profited. Next day, though her usually blooming cheek was white as marble, and her usually expressive eyes fixed and dilated like those of a person recovering from a swoon, not a tear did she shed! No, not even when Edward scarcely found time to bestow upon her a parting kiss, so eager was he to jump into the chaise in which his trunks, teeming with her little presents, were already deposited;—not even when, after his departure, assisting old Susan to bathe the temples of her insensible mother.

It was at *her* suggestion the cradle of her infant brother was brought from the nursery and placed beside her mother's bed, that it might be the first object to fix her attention when restored to herself; and she had too much self-command to give way, even when she saw by the burst of passionate fondness

that followed the recognition, how dear a rival she possessed in her mother's heart.

It was not till, on repairing to her nursery at night, when she saw the empty bed,—the empty drawers which there was no longer a dear, wild, noisy brother to toss over and discompose,—that, having none but old Susan to reprehend the indulgence of her tears, she sobbed as if her little heart would break! For the loss of Edward was more to her than to her mother.—Her mother had other ties to comfort her:—Selina, nothing!

The companion of her infancy was gone,—gone cheerfully,—gone, seeming to care little for those he left behind.—Selina picked up an old glove, which the servants had neglected to clear away with the rest of “Master Saville's litter,”—(all that was left of him at Eden Castle,—) and placed it under her pillow to lay by among her treasures on the morrow:—something of *his*; something he had touched—her own dear graceless Edward!

Meanwhile that dear Edward was progressing towards Bayhurst in a state of the wildest excitement. It was the first time in his remembrance he had quitted the confines of Edenbourne, and all was novelty and delight. His companion was not backward in impressing upon his mind the consequence of his uncle and grandeur of his future residence; and the child, ignorant of pre-existent causes of alienation, comprehended Bayhurst only as his father's home, and Sir Hugh as his father's brother.

“*Now*, I am going to be happy with my *real* relations!” said he, as their entrance into Bayhurst Park suddenly recalled recollections of Mr. Askham's reproofs and interdictions, ever rankling in his bosom. “*Now* I shall live where I have a *right* to live!”

If, at the memorable turn of the road leading from Edenbourne, he had not burst into the Askhamic apostrophe of “*Adieu* thou dreary pile!” it was from no want of abhorrence

towards Eden Castle; and that mamma and Selina were still its inmates, alone qualified the proverbial ingratitude of childhood.

But while his young heart was thus agitated by anticipation, the emotions of the expectant uncle were scarcely less tumultuous. The child of Edward and Evelyn, about to become his inmate! The child of Sir Hubert's favoured son—of the Benjamin of the old man his father—about to assume his place in the family, as heir of Bayhurst;—the child of his early playmate,—of the brother he had injured,—the brother he hunted into the grave,—about to sit beside his hearthstone—fixing on him, perhaps, the large dark eyes of Edward, and addressing him in tones of endearment resembling those of his well-remembered voice. It would be enough to recall the shade of that injured brother to the haunts of his childhood,—gliding along those echoing galleries and stately chambers,—to greet the arrival of the boy it was never his living



fortune to fold to his bosom!—Like Goethe's Corinthian Bride, Edward might perhaps be tempted to burst his cerements, and welcome the new comer!

But to these fearful and depressing imaginings succeeded a sentiment more characteristic of the vindictive nature of Sir Hugh de Bayhurst.

What would be the mortification of Lady Anastasia on seeing him enfold in his arms this adopted heir,—this future representative,—destined to render secondary her position in the family! If a promising and handsome child, how bitter would be her jealousy of the indulgences he meant to accord him,—of the consequence with which he meant to invest him! While Evelyn Monson was doubtless weeping away her soul for the loss of the child his iron hand had wrested from her bosom, the other minion of Philip Askham,—the woman who had elected *him* to the miserable office of gilding a life which his happy rival had stripped of its illusions,—was about to see lavished on the son of

the stranger all the love, all the indulgence, all the luxury, never—NEVER—to be shared by a child of her own !

Evening was drawing nigh when Edward was ushered into his presence ; and Sir Hugh literally trembled to order lights in the library, lest the aspect of the child should disappoint him. But when they came, and he recognised at a glance one of the noblest little fellows in the world,—a boy scarcely eight with the spirit and proportions of ten,—he could not refrain from a warm embrace, as if to thank him for so fully accomplishing his projects.

So completely, indeed, did he accomplish them, that Lady Anastasia was lingering in tears in her own apartment, from reluctance to behold the child thus forced on her adoption. Not because she saw in him the heir of Bayhurst ; not because he was to form a perpetual reproach to her childless existence ;—but because fresh from a home where she believed the object of her first affections to be enjoying un-

qualified happiness with the *only* object of his own !

Some breath of its envied atmosphere might linger among the clustering curls of the beautiful child,—the child of the happy Evelyn. Some familiar expression of Philip's might startle her from his lips. It is not of her husband she is thinking. It is not Sir Hugh whom she accuses. “Non est conjuge quidquam quæstæ suo : quid enim nisi se quereretur amatam.”

But when, at length, she made her tardy appearance, with the inconsistency apt to arise from the struggle of feelings repented, she received little Edward almost *too* affectionately !—Tears mingled with the kisses she impressed upon his glowing cheek.

“ I *know* I shall be so happy here !” said the boy, when, after dinner, his uncle led him through that portion of the house in daily occupation, to the handsome apartments especially destined to his use. “ Do you know I

wanted to go to sea, only to get rid of Mr. Askham!—For how could I guess I had friends who would be so kind to me!—*This* is indeed a home!”

Next morning, his raptures were unbounded. The pony which was to replace Elshie, proved to be of a size that might have contented that stalwart hero of his emulation, Claude Askham; and on his admiring a handsome black greyhound which followed his uncle to the stables, it was made over to him at once. “Master Saville’s groom” was ordered to take Lufra under his charge, as well as Lapwing the pony, and hold himself, with both, at the command of his young master.

By the time Edward had accompanied Sir Hugh round the magnificent stables and well-arranged kennels, which a little world of well-drilled servants placed in somewhat different order from the ill-appointed establishment and half empty stalls and coachhouses of Eden

Castle, the boy had expanded into a sense of his own and his uncle's dignity, which might have served the heir-apparent of the realm.

The older servants of the house, in several instances descendants of ancient servitors, came eagerly forward to look upon the young stranger, with an air of deferential interest that did not escape the notice of his uncle. But though, for a moment, a jealous pang shot through his heart that it should be Evelyn's child to whom such marks of affection were conceded, his predominant feeling was joy in possessing so satisfactory a representative. The blood flowing in the veins of that princely boy was at least congenial with his own. But for *him*, all must have become the inheritance of the stranger!

“What fine pictures!” cried Edward, when conducted into the gallery. “I heard Mr. Hardynge say they were nearly the finest in England. But is there no likeness, among

them, of my papa?—Surely there must be *some* portrait of him at Bayhurst?”—

And when shown, in the private study of the late Sir Hubert, a beautiful sketch by Wheatley, representing a “Return from Shooting” that included portraits of the baronet and his sons, with their favourite dogs and horses, the child instantly selected his father from the group. The medallion which had been the object of such malicious vengeance to Philip Askham, rendered the features familiar.

“What a pleasant face!” cried the little fellow, with his eyes riveted on the open countenance of Edward Saville. “How well he looks on horseback! Old Susan always says papa was such a *gentleman*,—so much more of a gentleman than Mr. Askham.—Susan could never call *him* master!—I shall come every day, if you will let me, and look at this dear picture!”

“What puerile details are here!” exclaims

some sapient reader,—substantial enough to furnish materials for half a dozen county members. “Have you nothing better for our instruction or amusement, than the prattle of a child?”

As if such puerilities were not designed by Providence to conceal, like a graceful arabesque, the harsh outlines of human life!—As if the prattle of a child were not a gift of grace, like the flowers of the field, or the songbirds of the wood, vouchsafed us to convert our Arabia Petræa into Arabia Felix!

In a criticism upon the glorious essays of Montaigne, the learned Scaliger accuses the old Gascon of impertinence, for having informed the world that he liked white wine better than red.

“Who cares what wine he liked!” cries the indignant critic;—“and who is to endure such triviality and such egotism!” Vain word-catcher! It is because he *did* acquaint us with his preferences—the weaknesses of his powerful nature,—that he has become the fire-

side companion of succeeding centuries ! While the name of Scaliger *remains* a name, dry and mildewed as some old portrait in the Bodleian, Michel de Montaigne is a friend we would fain have drop in to dinner, to share the best bottle of hock in our cellar, or, better still, the best binn of feelings in our heart ;—and chiefly because his own was turned inside out for our delectation.

So much for puerilities ! But let those who to childish prattle prefer solemn prose, and the *pas grave* or Pavon of life to simple merris-dancing, leave the children to their play, and accompany us to the stately gates of Uppingham House, where the family were already settled for the winter ; the Marquis being compelled, like other official men, to shorten the shortest days of the year, by passing them in a metropolis whose inhabitants are defrauded of half their lawful daylight by the conspiracy of fog and smoke.

Content to exchange the noble freedom of



his baronial hall for slavery in Downing Street, for the satisfaction of adding a foreign *crachat* or two to his collection of ministerial insurance-plates, or perhaps of working out his passage to ducal strawberry leaves, the Mahomet of the Tories appreciated the full value of such a Seyd as Henry Askham, for the collection and diffusion of his doctrines.

Henry was now his right-hand man,—private secretary, preparatory to becoming *under*-secretary, when his beard and the Times would permit. In the estimation of Lord Uppingham, who held with Buffon that “*le génie c'est la patience*,” Henry was a man of genius. The experience of a long official life had taught him what marvels may be accomplished by the industry of the most insignificant insects,—the colossal structures of the white ants,—the circumvection of the lofty elm by the mite under its bark,—or the sub-aqueous undermining of the pipe-worm, which, by endangering the dykes of Holland, once brought the Seven Pro-

vinces to the brink of ruin. No one better understood than the noble P. C. the power of the Infinitely Little, when solidified by obstinacy, and actuated by unity of purpose.

Now Henry Askham was a man capable of burning the midnight oil for three hundred and sixty-five nights over the autopsy of a fly's leg; and of devoting the ensuing three hundred and sixty-five days to proving to the world that its organization was more complicated than the leg of an elephant. Henry Askham was a man into whose brain could be compressed reams'full of financial or statistical calculations; the figures of which, when duly emitted in the House, sufficed to bedunce the brains of five hundred wiser men;—like the Mongolfier balloons, which, after folding up to carry in the pocket, may be inflated to traverse the realms of space. He was, in short, as unexceptionable a secretary for Lord Uppingham as those great machinists, Vaucanson or Weeks, could have made to order.

His precocious gravity was really imposing ! Like Cromwell, he appeared to be seeking the Lord, even when looking for the corkscrew ; —and though the empty assumption which Balzac calls *la fatuité de la bêtise*, is scouted as folly so long as it arrays itself in a cap and bells, let it only assume the toga or the surplice, and the world will have to make way for its disciples !

Any one who, from a sufficient eminence, has the audacity to proclaim with sufficient perseverance his own merits, will in the end obtain belief. Such was the notion apologueized by the Roman artist in that charming fresco at Pompeii, which represents a parrot in a lofty car, driving a harnessed grasshopper,—supposed to convey a sarcasm against the wordy Seneca and his imperial pupil, from the pencil of some contemporary H. B.

But prating parrots in lofty cars are birds of every century and nation ; and feeble grasshoppers

lend themselves to their reins at Whitehall as well as on the Appian Way; and lo! Henry, the mouther of truisms,—Henry, who by public and laborious parturition of discoveries familiar to the other Solomon, contrived to make them pass for his own,—Henry was already hailed as a new lawgiver, found floating in infant strength among the bulrushes of the Thames. Deluded country gentlemen quoted the aphorisms of Sir William Temple, believing them to be those of Henry Askham.

While the eloquence of Hardyng, sparkling with wit, (like certain rivers glittering with mica, which their affluent impetuosity has brought down from a higher source,) was condemned as showy and superficial, the heavy, leaden-coloured flow of Henry Askham's navigable stream was more congenial with the nature of the sons of commerce. Cabinet ministers and privy councillors recognised him as "*du bois dont on fait des hommes d'état.*"

As, forc'd from windguns, lead itself can fly,  
 And pond'rous slugs cut swiftly through the sky ;  
 As clocks to weight their nimble motions owe,  
 The wheels above urged by the lead below,

the affairs of Lord Uppingham's department were seen to flourish admirably in the hands of his brother-in-law ; who stood exalted upon his lordship's shoulders, in public estimation. like King William's statue of *plomb doré* upon its shapely pedestal of granite.

For an official career, such owlshness as his was worth a million ! The public, which sees a Lord Chancellor in the woolsack and wig, disdains to be enlightened by the flambeau of truth, if adorned with a frippery *bobéche* of snipped paper :—nor would the greybeard-diction of Friar Lawrence be listened to, except from a Friar Lawrence wearing a grey beard.

When led by the nose, the public chooses that it shall be, like Satan, by the red-hot pincers of a saint ; or, if led by the ears,—a more

ordinary mode of official traction,—by a hand that lays itself as caressingly on its predominant features, as the hand of Titania on the Ass's head of the deluded Bottom !

Such was the origin of the growing fame of Henry Askham!—Sir Henry Bate Dudley, the be-cassocked Cicero of the Morning Post,

bragg'd of him

As of a virtuous and well governed youth ;

and though John Bull no longer recognised *any* living pilot as capable of weathering the storm, it was something to have secured a cabin-boy with courage to climb to the foretop, and

Like a sweet little cherub to sit up aloft,

And watch o'er the fate of poor Jack !

But, Heaven forgive us,—why waste time in detecting alloy in the metal, pre-ordained by Mint-currency to pass for gold ! To maintain

in our old age the hero-worship whose emanations go so far to gild the atmosphere of youth, we must accept things on their own showing.

For if the bliss of ignorance be questionable, no one will deny that the spirit of Analysis is the bitterest fruit that has been forced by culture out of the root of human intelligence. Since the age became over inquisitive, nature has been stripped of her beauty, and art of her grace;—the fragrance has been pillaged from the flower, and the brightness from the stars. By the iron wheels of its machinery, all that we venerated has been ground into dust, or in the crucible simmering over its furnace, fused into vapour.—Nothing is solid under its probe,—nothing elevated under its quadrant. It has taught us to

Peep and botanize upon our mother's grave ;

decomposed the sigh of love, to determine the weight of its gases ; applied its thermometer

to the glow of a patriot's heart ; and suspended its weather-glass amid the wavering prayers of an expiring saint.

The lambent diamond has become opaque carbon. The ashes of the dead are constantly torn up to prove that the hand which smoothed their dying pillow, poured poison into their cup. It has been shown us that the death-bed piety of Addison was mellowed by a dram ;—that Lucretia, the vainest rather than chastest of her sex, preferred the loss of honour to a stain upon her reputation ;

*Ne non procumbat honeste,  
Extrema hæc etiam cura cadentis erat.*

But what have we gained in exchange for our lost treasures ? What is there to reconcile us to

*L'adieu qu'en s'en allant chante l'illusion,—  
L'espoir éteint,—la barque attachée à la grève ?*

What apology can the microscopic-eyed monster which besets us, scalpel in hand, and



vitriolic tests in pouch, afford for having robbed the rainbow of its hue, and virtue of her halo?—

Alas! the first man who ate of the apple of knowledge, died of indigestion; and worse than death is the moral atheism which Analysis has engendered, and the materialism to which it would degrade us. Better mistake fifty such impostors as Henry Askham for true prophets, than that one angel should present himself at the door of our tent, and, through mistrust, be denied hospitality. Poor angel!—The scrutinizing spirit of the times we live in would doubtless present him with a mendicity ticket!

Whether or no the genius of Lord Uppingham's jackal rose to the high-water mark assigned it by his patron, he unquestionably possessed a dromedary power of patience. Throughout the ensuing tedious months, in which parliament was endeavouring to mak<sup>e</sup>

up its mind whether it had done right or wrong in sanctioning expeditions to the Baltic and Dardanelles,—stunning its own ears with old womanish objurgation, lest perchance it should overhear what all Europe was talking about,—those fatal views of Napoleon upon Spain, which eventually extracted from the British empire some of the best blood in its veins,—Henry Askham stood fast beside the ministerial benches, like a sentry on guard over the crown jewels.

While the Marquis defended himself in the Upper House with the weighty solidity of a man firm in the favour of his sovereign,—firm in the esteem of the nation,—and firmest of all in a social position enabling him to dispense with both,—Henry, like a blind devotee, adopted his tone and self-possession, without pausing to calculate their origin.

But though the young member resembled his

noble brother-in-law on the treasury bench, only as a flimsy engraving resembles some powerful picture, the busy public, which, too hurried in its judgment to be very discerning, purchases the flimsy engraving that reminds it, even remotely, of a favourite master, was content; as the populace, in the absence of Gessler, bowed the knee to his empty cap.

While Bob Hardyngé vainly attempted to rouse the dormant faculties of the House by startling exhortations, such as

*Soyez de votre temps,—écoutez ce qu'on dit !*

*Et tâchez d'être grand, car le peuple grandit !—*

or in a debate upon navy estimates, trifled with its time by allusions to the Argonauts, the Sea kings of Norway, or the Spanish Armada, the treasury hack won golden opinions by bringing forward, in reply, a specious array of figures that might have been the numeration table chopped in a chaff-mill for any information it conveyed to ex-official ears.

The House cheered it, however,—and the public heard and believed. It sounded so much like something that *ought* to be believed! The public observed that demonstration is demonstration,—that facts are facts,—and figures (those that are not tropes) unanswerable arguments.—Anything rather than admit that they were incomprehensible!

## CHAPTER VIII.

On a beaucoup écrit, et avec raison, contre les ingrats. Mais jusqu'ici, on a laissé les bienfaiteurs en repos ; et c'est un chapitre essentiel que manque à l'histoire des tyrans.

D'ALEMBERT.

WHILE the wordy war of parliament was waging in London, at Eden Castle all was silent as the grave. Not more dead the leafless woods and withered vegetation than the heart of Evelyn! Her efforts to appear cheerful under her misery served only to render it more apparent.

For it was not alone her moral nature that was suffering. Her strength, which had

scarcely rallied after the shock of her inauspicious confinement, sank under this second blow. No effort,—no self-government,—could disguise the illness preying upon her frame.

And to increase the mischief, Philip saw fit to take her indisposition as an affront! She was NOT *ill*,—only fretting,—fretting after her boy,—fretting after “little Saville;” and little Saville having been avowedly taken from her in consequence of her marriage, he had a right to consider every tear shed by his wife as a reproach to himself. Whenever unusual paleness overspread her cheek, he had scarcely patience to address her.

Even when Dr. Boswell, beginning to be alarmed, hinted that change of air might be beneficial, the recollection of Simprens’s interference in the case of Percy, hardened his heart. He felt convinced that Evelyn, desirous to escape from the reminiscences connected with the neighbourhood of Edenbourne,

had prescribed for herself through the medium of the obsequious doctor; whose advice that "he would on no account allow her to suspect the precariousness of her condition," passed for an extra dose of hypocrisy.

"As to removing from Eden Castle, Evelyn had chosen to decline the invitation of the Hardynges when there was every reason for accepting it; and he did not think it right to convert their house into a *maison de santé* as she seemed to desire, merely that she might be a couple of hundred miles nearer to her idolized son."

The Lynchmores had luckily taken their departure for town; for the impossibility under which Mrs. Askham found herself to accept their invitations, had already given offence. The Earl was a man more familiar than friendly; whose skin-deep good-nature, though ready to laugh with the merry, found little sympathy for the sorrowful. Having gone through life with-

out personal misfortunes, he looked upon grief as a thing that mutes are hired to deplore; and had no notion of having a lid of feathers introduced into the social circle.

“*Ill again!*” cried he to Philip, as they were riding home from hunting, on receiving a fifth consecutive excuse to a dinner invitation, on the plea of Mrs. Askham’s delicate health. “Then faith, my dear fellow, I can hardly wish you joy; for you seem to be in for it for the winter. ’Twas a mighty oversight on the part of the old gentleman not to have tempted Job with the trial of a sick wife!”—

The words “sick wife” grated on the ear of Philip, almost like an insult. Such was the plea of the labourers when they came begging to the housekeeper at the castle, for arrow-root and port-wine; or the pretext of a needy tenant to the steward, to obtain a remission of rent!—Nothing would be more provoking to him than to have it circulated through the county that



Mr. Askham of Eden Castle was very much to be pitied, "because he had a sick wife."

So little was he at the pains of concealing this from Evelyn, as to incite her into imprudent exertions that served to aggravate the evil. By stealth only could she indulge in the reveries in which she solaced herself by following step by step, and feeling by feeling, the progress of her boy;—arriving with him at Bayhurst, and retracing the haunts of her childhood. To Philip and Selina, after the departure of the chaise that conveyed him away, all was a blank in his destiny. But *she* could picture to herself every incident of his life. Above all, she could only too vividly foresee the sensations of his uncle on installing under his roof the child of the woman who had spurned him, and of the brother whom he had spurned.

With what anguish of spirit did she surmise the revengeful malignity about to embitter the existence of her devoted boy. For *her* gentle

nature was incapable of imagining the still more cruel vengeance devised by De Bayhurst, of withdrawing from her by excessive kindness the affections of her son,—teaching him to despise *her* and abhor the husband of her choice!

“There, where my childhood suffered,” mused she, as memory retraced the long forgotten scenes of Holmehurst Hanger and the old Grange with the woods of Bayhurst looming in the distance,—“there, where I used to languish for want of a mother’s kindness, my neglected boy will wander and weep!”

What tears streamed from her eyes as she dwelt on all he might endure! No wonder that Philip resented the despondency and loss of sleep and appetite, which proved how large a share of her affections was invested in another.

At length came the usual fiat of a frightened physician. “Mr. Askham must take further advice.” And Mr. Askham having occa-

sion just then to visit London, to transfer the money for a commission procured for his brother Richard through the Uppingham interest, and take leave of Claude, who, thanks to the same protection, was about to sail for the Baltic,—he insisted upon her leaving the children with Susan, and accompanying him to town. It would be easy, with Emma's connivance, to arrange without alarming her, a consultation with Dr. Baillie.

But alas! Eske Hill was no place for a "sick wife." Though Mrs. Hardyngé did her utmost to moderate the spirits of her husband to the serenity befitting the atmosphere of a nervous invalid, Bob was so happy to have them there,—so happy in his family,—so happy in himself,—that he was not to be tamed into quietude. The stirring, prosperous activity of the world he lived in, seemed to allow no leisure for people to fall sick, and die, and be buried. Time enough when they grew old and grey and use-

less. Like my uncle Toby in the case of the poor lieutenant, he *swore*, and loudly too, that Mrs. Askham should recover.

For the shattered nerves of Evelyn, these noisy demonstrations, and the fatigue of dress and conversation, proved too much. Nor were her feelings less tried by the motherly kindness with which she was welcomed by Lady Hardyng, than by the *un*-motherly civility of Lady Askham; who thought she did wonders by driving with her daughter to Eske Hill, to inquire after Philip's wife,—Philip's wife, who had so patiently soothed the declining days of her lord!—

But her worst trial of all was inflicted by the gentle egotism of Lady Uppingham; who, having insisted that the invalid should spend a day at Uppingham House, to effect a consultation with Baillie, could not forbear exhibiting to the doubly afflicted mother her own robust boy, now a noble fellow of four years old; enlarging with

unguarded selfishness on the pride taken by his father in the promise of his youthful heir.

“ She is so unreasonable !” cried Philip, on finding his wife some hours afterwards, overcome by an hysterical affection. “ You heard what Baillie said about the necessity of keeping herself quiet : that though there was no organic disease, cheerfulness and repose were indispensable. Yet you see how she agitates herself for nothing ! All this absurd emotion arises from having discovered through Hardyng, that the De Bayhursts spend the season in the country, when she hoped to find them settled in Grosvenor Square, and obtain a glimpse of that accursed boy !—This attack will prevent her leaving her room to-morrow, and Bob has a dinner party expressly to introduce her to my friends !—I do believe some women take pleasure in being sick, for the mere satisfaction of the annoyance they occasion !”

Yet his sister neither explained nor un-

derstood that the crisis was brought on by witnessing the passionate tenderness with which little Lord Roseneath had thrown his arms round her neck, on her return from her drive, showering the kisses of his rosy mouth on “his own dear darling mamma!”

The mood of Philip was in truth any thing but softened by his visit to London. Half an hour spent in the metropolis serves to convince even the vainest man of his insignificance; and in *his* case, it served also to convince an envious one of the superior distinctions of other men to whom he fancied himself superior. All his contemporaries,—many of his juniors,—were *something*. Both Hardyng and Henry were established among the celebrities of the day,—written in Italics,—recognized by the eye of the London public on the glasses of its galantie show. Their speeches were not only listened to in the House, but looked for in the papers. The bonmots of the one were repeated at Boodle’s,

—of the other, at Brookes's. Each was a great man in his circle.

Even Middlemore, if not *something*, was *somebody*. When his well-appointed equipage appeared in the park, the crowd proclaimed his name. His dashing recklessness was popular with the vulgar. When he entered the yard at Tattersall's, his coming produced a rise in the stock, as that of Rothschild on 'Change, in the stocks; and Lord Lynchmore's handsome boy, Lord Delvyn, and the other rising lads of the day, affected the "Middlemore crop" and "Middlemore snaffle."

The Duke of Norcliffe, on the other hand, was hailed by the newspapers as an enlightened patron of science, because (the crust in which he had been baked by Dr. Dactyl never having chipped off) he was in the habit of taking his daily doze in the chair of some scientific meeting. Sir Henry Lenitive was semi-canonized as a philanthropist, for his zeal in pre-

siding over the plates of the public dinners, given to eat up charitable institutions six days in the week, and holding the plate after the sermon given to preach them up, on the seventh. Sir Robert de Lacy was on the committee of one of the patent theatres, receiving thanks, and a piece of plate, for his suggestions of converting the noble tragedy of *Bonduca* into a ballet, and gilding the national pill of Shakspeare with gaudy processions and ovations to make his medicinale gums go down. Each of Philip's contemporaries had his appointed sphere. Each of them was doing something to make himself useful, or famous, or notorious. But what was *he*?—His history was a blank! He was not higher in the world by the altitude of a *chioppine*, than when he quitted Eton!—

Like most married men, who have missed their vocation, for want of sagacity to discover the exact moment and critical chance

That quite unmakes them, or that makes them quite,



he denounced his wife as the cause of his failure. But for *her*, he should have been in parliament. But for *her*, he too should be interrupting the business of the nation by allusions to the Sea Kings of Norway and the Spanish Armada. But for *her*, he should have requited the attachment of one who would have brought sunshine to his fireside, and basked with him in that of the world. But for *her*, Anastasia and himself, instead of being separately extinguished in rustic seclusion, would have become predominant influences in London life. "And what other," thought the apostate who had exchanged the Market Place of Edenbourne for glorious St. James's Street at the exact moment when the horses' heads of all England are turned towards the metropolis,—"*what* other is worth living for on earth!"—

Yet, instead of feeling gratified for the sacrifices he supposed himself to have made for her sake, Evelyn would not so much as assist in

qualifying the evils she had created, or renewing his interrupted social connexions, by exerting herself to make acquaintance with his friends, or accepting the attentions of her own! Lord and Lady Hardynge were more than kind in their invitations,—the Lynchmores had given several parties in her honour, and placed their opera box at her disposal;—the Uppinghams, overlooking all causes of offence, were desirous to show her every attention;—while the minor branches of the Askham family, followed, as the minor branches should, the inclination of the parent stem. Had she been a daughter of Grandison House, instead of the poor widow of Eastfield, they could not have been more attentive.

Philip did not perceive that their assiduities resembled those of a hive of bees, which are known to embalm with wax the body of the atropos moth that has crept into their hive to die, in order to diminish the ill-effects of a nuisance they are unable to eject. The pleasanter

their sojourn in town was made to the rustics, the less annoying was it to themselves.

Of the interested nature of their attentions, indeed, he had soon a striking illustration. A mysterious little note arrived from Lady Lynchmore, requesting a private audience, at her house in St. James's Square; and having been occasionally called into council by her ladyship, in the country, concerning parish premiums and district benevolence, Philip anticipated only a charitable mission to some *protégé* in the neighbourhood of Edenbourne.

Alas! Lady Lynchmore thought as little of Hexham Hall in London, as she thought of Lynchmore Castle at Hexham Hall. No Nelly Knowles had hereditary claims on *her* flannel and opodeldoc. For it is one of the minor curses of absenteeism that charities uprooted from their native soil, seldom take root in the land of the stranger. Like other exotics, they become dwarfed, and dwindle away for want of a congenial atmosphere.

Her ladyship's object, on the contrary, was exclusively of the Genus Londinensis. She wanted him to speak in her behalf to Lady Grandison! Bob Hardyng, with his usual recklessness, had laughed off his engagement to stand her friend; and she relied upon Philip, her country neighbour, who had eaten of her venison pasties and drunk of her claret cup, to officiate as mediator. Next year, her son, Lord Delvyn, would be entered at Oxford. Next year, her daughter, Lady Emilia de Lacy, would be presented. And it was essential to their prospects in life, to be passed as sufficiently fine into the fashionable world, through the sieve of Grandison House.

Philip was inexpressibly disconcerted. He was fully aware how much he should lose in the estimation of the lady of Hexham, by admitting how little he felt intitled to fulfil her desire; and scarcely less so, how much he should hazard with Lady Grandison by pretending to renew his acquaintance with her,

only to present an Irish peeress whom *she* had pronounced v——r!—To what extremities of indignation might not the already offended mother of Lady Anastasia proceed, on so heinous a provocation!—

Just, however, as he left Lynchmore's house, lost in wonder how he should extricate himself from the promise extorted from him,—walking with his eyes fixed upon the pavement as though he expected to find sermons in stones, and good in street crossings,—he was startled by a “Hillo! Phil, my boy!”—proceeding from a well-appointed phaeton driven within a *shave* of the kerb-stone by his coaching cousin;—probably on his way to Mansfield Street, where Susan was now as much the object of his daily worship, as Emma of old. For Lord Middlemore seemed to take his cousins in rotation, as if he could not allow himself to be lost to the family.

In order to get out of the crowd certain to gather round Middlemore's equipage wherever

it appeared, Philip consented to get *in* to the phaeton.

“You must come with me, Phil, to Grandison House!” cried the ‘peer of many capes,’—as soon as he had captured his prisoner. “The old lady laid violent hands upon me last night, at the opera, to call her chair; only for the opportunity of inveighing against your monstrous ingratitude in not coming near her. If you don’t want a spice of what they’re trying in Spain,—the *Guerra al cuchillo*,—I recommend you to hasten to her, with your lowest bow.”

Half afraid that he might be the dupe of some silly mystification on the part of one whose *un-gentle* dulness “ever loved a joke,”—and

Risu inepto res ineptior nulla est!—

it proved a considerable relief to Philip, when, on his arrival, Lady Grandison came forward to meet him, almost with open arms.

“I have not seen you these thousand years!”

cried she. "Why have you never called here since you came to town?"

The illness of his wife was for once acceptable to Philip, as affording an apology for his neglect.

But Lady Grandison stood in no need of excuses. She had no time to listen.—She wanted to be listened to.—She wanted to talk.—Talking was the great enjoyment of her life.—By her sparkling eyes and eager gestures,—the usual diagnostics of one of her spasms of loquacity,—Philip felt convinced that the De Bayhurst chapter was about to be unfolded in all its sections.

Not a page of it!—Lady Grandison troubled herself no further about dear Stasy, than the proprietor of a house that is over-insured, troubles himself about fire. Instead of resenting her son-in-law's determination to stay at his country-seat, she considered country-seats the best place for country gentlemen who have

neither spirit to push their way into parliament, nor popularity to be triumphantly borne into it on the shoulders of others. That the De Bayhursts were content to abide within their park-palings, proved that they were content with each other;—and as to dissatisfaction on little Saville's account, the child would afford a charming occupation for Lady Anastasia, till her attention should be occupied by offspring of her own.

Or perhaps, to come nearer the truth, she thought nothing at all about the matter!—She was wild about Spain.—Spain was just then her universe.—Dukes of Norcliffe and Sir Robert de Lacys were fairly obliterated from her memory by the “*Viva el Rey Fernando*” of the Spanish patriots.

Philip was indignant.—Rather would he have found himself required to appear at Lady Grandison's feet with rope round his neck, after the fashion of the citizens of Calais, than that the bright days of which he had thought the me-



mory substantial, should be so utterly forgotten. He was not prepared to be out of date. To *him*, that gay saloon, with its luxury of *bric à brac* and fragrant exotics, looked like a tomb;—nor could he disengage his eyes from a beautiful portrait by Lawrence, representing dear Stasy in the character of a Sylph,—“new-lighted on some heaven-kissing hill,”—which brought her girlish and aërial beauty only too vividly before him.

On emerging from his reverie, he found Lady Grandison still rattling on, at the pace and with the jingle of a hack postchaise, about the state of affairs in the Peninsula,—guerrillas, juntas, Palafox, Cevallos, Izquierdo, and the Prince of Peace; till any one might have supposed she had been spending her Easter holidays at Bayonne!

“And, by George, they say that, not satisfied with driving the Bourbons from Spain, Boney’s been having a rap at the Pope!” added Lord Middlemore,—who seemed to think that her

ladyship had been done Spanish brown. “The last ordinance of the French governor banished a whole lot of cardinals out of Rome.—Think of living to see the Old Hats jockeyed!—I shall never forget the row there was, when Percy and I bribed a staffiere of the Pope’s guard to get into Cardinal Doria Pamfili’s stables, during the carnival, and unshoe all his mules. I believe there was a conclave held about it. I’m not certain but we were excommunicated!”

“Were you not enchanted at those dear Arragonese firing up as they have done?”—resumed Lady Grandison,—addressing Philip as though his centaur kinsman were unworthy a rejoinder.—“Think of their sweeping the streets and buying up the apothecaries’ shops at Saragossa, to make illicit gunpowder,—like those wretched Irish people with their whisky. It is really *too* interesting!—To be sure, if anything *could* raise the spirit of the nation, it must have been to find the ancient throne of

Ferdinand and Isabella desecrated by the obscure younger son of a Corsican attorney!"

"Why, by George, I always fancied your ladyship a staunch advocate of Boney?"—cried the astonished Lord Middlemore.

"You have heard me do justice to his valour as a hero, and genius as a legislator.—But his having converted a distracted republic into a flourishing empire, does not entitle him to drive a legitimate sovereign from a legitimate throne, whose subjects are content with his sovereignty; in order, too, to make way for his thick-headed brother,—a man already known as the Bottle King, and married to a vulgar American!—Conceive a Miss Patterson reigning over the country of the Cid!"

"I always thought it was *Jerome* Bonaparte, not Joseph, who married the Yankee?"—said Lord Middleton, looking puzzled.

But Philip, whose attention had been recalled by the word "vulgar" to the object of his

visit to Grandison House, seized the opportunity of pleading the cause of Lady Lynchmore.

“Who and what is she?”—inquired her ladyship, after listening graciously to his request for permission to present to her acquaintance one of his country neighbours.

Philip endeavoured to place in their brightest light the aristocratic honours of the Lynchmores.

“Yes, yes—I know all THAT!” interrupted Lady Grandison; “Sir Robert de Lacy’s elder brother;—a decided case of bogtrotting;—people ennobled during the present reign,—no standing in the country,—no connexion!—But is she presentable?—Whose set has she lived in?—What is she like?”

“Very like a whale!—interrupted Lord Middlemore, with a hearty laugh; “good living having filled up the copious outline drawn by nature. To do her justice, however, Lady

Lynchmore laces herself into the stiffness of a log, rather than betray her natural dimensions. A very painstaking woman, I promise you!—a pretty face though—which I suppose is Philip's reason for applying for her passport into Grandison House."

"Oh, if it be an *affaire de cœur*," cried Lady Grandison, shrugging her shoulders, "*passé pour la belle comtesse!*—As *Henri Quatre* said of Gabrielle and Bellegarde, '*il faut que tout le monde vive!*'"

It was useless for Philip to remonstrate against such a preposterous inference.

"Bring her here when you will," resumed Lady Grandison, coolly. "To-night, if you like. I have as many people coming to me as yesterday's fête at Oatlands left alive. It was really *assommant!* Nothing better to amuse one than the sight of the Weybridge people admitted by hundreds into the park to feast upon tea and toast! A tenant's dinner is bad

enough. But ‘God save the King’ from a village band, in honour of a tea-party from the London suburbs, is somewhat meagre entertainment for a royal fête!”

Having purchased indulgence by rewarding with a hollow laugh the flippancy pretending to be wit, Philip ventured to request a formal invitation for Lord and Lady Lynchmore.

“There is an Earl, then, as well as a Countess?” said Lady Grandison, ringing for the groom of the chambers to supply a card of invitation and the visiting card that was to accompany it — “What is he?—Have I ever met him?”

“If you ever *did*,” again interrupted Lord Middlemore, “you no doubt mistook him for Punch, outgrown his show-box and retired as a family man into private life.”

“You must take care not to repeat that excellent jest, next season,” said Philip,—white

with anger;—"for his son Lord Delvyn, one of the most spirited young fellows of the day, will then be old enough to call you to account."

The veto Lady Grandison had been on the point of pronouncing against the Irish Peeress, was suspended by the announcement of her having a spirited son. Lord Delvyn obtained, like Louis XVII., "*grâce pour maman!*"—so strong being the force of habit, that, though dear Stasy was disposed of, her ladyship could not divest herself of her passion for elder sons.—She exacted, however, in presenting Philip with the cards, that he should himself undertake the introduction of the Lynchmores.—The state of Mrs. Askham could not be so critical as to prevent him from spending an hour that evening at Grandison House.

He desired nothing better. Having a pretext in his wife's illness for appearing there

alone, he was glad to forget his harassing discontents in a little excitement.

When, however, having obtained the ready acquiescence of Eske Hill in any project likely to appease the angry Lady Lynchmore, he made his appearance in St. James's Square, he found that voluminous lady thrown like a dead weight upon his hands. Lord Lynchmore would not hear of being accepted, on such terms, at Grandison House. — Grandison House had never done anything for Ireland; and there was consequently no reason why he should overlook the etiquette of being formally called upon by the Earl, previous to entering his doors. And having drawn himself up to his utmost stretch of magnanimity, and assumed his hereditary cap of maintenance, the little man looked so much the Earl of Lynchmore, that not an inch of Punch was perceptible!

Though Philip was greatly annoyed at hav-



ing to make his re-appearance at Grandison House with Lady Lynchmore on his arm, it was simply because restraint of any kind is an obstacle to the enjoyment of a pleasant evening.—An evil result awaited the association, however, for which he was unprepared.

In that circle, the face of Lady Lynchmore was as unknown as that of the veiled Isis at Corinth. The Union had recently propelled into the London world a portion of the provincial Irish nobility, theretofore content to enjoy their winter in Dublin, and summer in Connaught; and among the Castle belles, whose progress in fashionable society had been sorely impeded by want of family connexion, was the stately fair one who, with the port and diamonds of a queen, made her first appearance at Grandison House on the arm of Philip Askham!

As he had not been seen there since his marriage, certain venerable limpets, both fashionable and political, who in the interim had

adhered closely to their rock, took it for granted that the lady who accompanied him *must* be his wife; and Lord Middlemore having unluckily overheard such an assertion made by a true blue and buff old admiral, who pronounced the supposed Mrs. Askham to be “a monstrous fine woman,” (probably because she reminded him of the figure-head of a ship,) took especial delight in circulating the rumour through the room.

To the infinite disgust of Philip, therefore, scarcely one of the old friends who claimed his recollection by a bow, but also claimed the favour of a presentation to his wife!—The Duke and Duchess of Sandbeck, with the various branches of the illustrious house of Treby, —the Duke and Duchess of Norcliffe,—*e tutti quanti* of their set, brought successively on their shoulders not only an explanation of the mistake into which they had fallen, but an introduction to the Countess, whom that mistake argued indeed unknown!

Deeply would Lady Lynchmore have deplored such an exposure, in presence of her country neighbour, but that it secured her a bowing acquaintance with certain persons and personages, whose recognition was the grand ambition of her life. And after all, the mistake only proved her to be obscure;—a very minor disgrace to that of being accounted v——r!—

With the exception of this accomplishment of her purposes, she was sadly disappointed in Grandison House.—As she ventured to whisper to Philip (little surmising what was passing concerning her in his mind,) the suite of apartments at the Castle, was twice as fine;—and it needed no asseverations of hers to convince him that her drawing-rooms in St. James's Square were ten times as showy. For there was *nothing* gorgeous in the belongings of Lady Grandison.—All was subdued;—all in good taste;—all calculated for use and personal

enjoyment.—No need of glass shades, or Holland covers.—The furniture, somewhat worn, was somewhat behind the fashion.—The chandeliers were intended to contain lights; not to ornament the rooms.—The tarnished gilding of the picture-frames, though tending to enhance the merit of the paintings, afforded no embellishment to the walls.—The reception rooms, after the Parisian fashion, contained only chairs and sofas,—rigidly *en suite*.—No fancy lounging chairs,—no mismatched tables of knick-knackery,—nothing that recalled the curiosity shop, was to be seen.

Nor was the equally harmonious nature of that well-assorted circle more apparent to a woman, reared in ignoble bustle, and accustomed to the heterogeneous mobs of semi-fashionable life.—No high-bred instincts governed her discernment; and where these are wanting, it requires a long apprenticeship fully to understand what a clever French writer calls

“ *la science encyclopédique des riens,—la connaissance des manèges,—les grandes petites choses,—les musiques des voix et harmonies des couleurs,—les diableries angéliques et innocentes roueries,—le langage et le mutisme,—le sérieux et les railleries,—l’esprit et la bêtise,—la diplomatie et l’ignorance—qui constituent la femme comme il faut;*”—Lady Lynchmore’s total ignorance of which, and pretention to the reputation of understanding it, were what really rendered her vulgar!—An uneasy consciousness of plebeian extraction made her uncertain in her opinions, and capricious in her manners; and she was always entangling herself in her court-train, by her awkward endeavours to conceal the foot of clay!

Among those who had watched the entrée of Philip and his companion, was one accustomed to fix the cold scrutiny of his penetrating eye upon all new-comers into his set, and pronounce sentence upon them in epigrams, often concen-

trating the essence of a volume.—For he was one of those who had only to whisper to the reeds that such a one had the ears of an ass, to have the whisper become a popular rumour.

“ *Une parvenue, qui doit encore parvenir !*” said he, after examining her ladyship’s artificial deportment.—“ I am surprised Askham should have retired into the country.—Such a comedian as his wife requires width of stage.”

“ How clever,—how like him !” —cried Lady Grandison, when the *mot* was clumsily repeated to her by Lord Middlemore.

“ *Clever ?*” —repeated he,—perceiving only the *imbroglio* of persons, produced by his own hoaxing.—“ Why he took her for Philip’s wife.—It was only a *blunder* !” —

“ Not the least in the world, dear spiteful old creature !” —persisted Lady Grandison, apt, like all over-sagacious people, to see miles beyond the truth.—“ He took her for her sister-in-law, the actress, Lady de Lacy !—

And a woman of *her* size, certainly *does* require width of stage!"—

Fortunately for Philip, the Duchesses of Norcliffe and Sandbeck,

A pair of friends, though one was young,  
And t'other seventy-two,

were alike addicted to early hours; for the moment *they* departed, Lady Lynchmore took to flight, as hurriedly as Cinderella.—She could not better regulate *her* departure than by the dial of Duchesses!—

Having hastened to place her in the carriage, he was able to return to the party, and await in peace the coming of Bob Hardyng; who had promised, if the House were up in reasonable time, to rejoin him at Grandison House: and if not, to send his carriage, that Philip might meet him at the House of Commons.

“For now came in the sweet of the night” for Philip!—In that house, it was the custom when the great personages retired, for the

pleasant persons to remain awhile,—as the lively afterpiece follows the serious drama,—to chat, where they had talked before, and laugh where they had smiled.—Amid the general hilarity, accordingly, the old *habitué* prepared himself to enjoy, unobserved and unimpeded, the thrill of pleasure produced, after long estrangement, by the atmosphere of the gay world ;—an atmosphere of light, and warmth, and fragrance, where the rustling of every silken robe attests the presence of beauty, and the joyous modulation of every well-attuned voice, the golden influence of prosperity.

In such a scene, a thousand courteous words beset the ear,—a thousand graceful forms, the eye,—a thousand perfumes, emitted by precious flowers or the still more penetrating aroma created by the luxurious toilet of a well-dressed woman, the bewildered senses.—Snatches of amusing conversation brightened with bon-mots and news, (the gathering of the morning's



growth of the forcing-houses of the clubs,) tones of blandishment or gestures of conciliation such as it requires the schooling of years, and perhaps the hereditation of centuries, to modify into the tact that constitutes good breeding; these, and a thousand nameless and harmonious enhancements that pall upon the taste by force of habit, assume an inexpressible charm to one long submitted to the drawling, self-sufficing inanity of a neighbourhood like Edenbourne; where nothing is said that was not said, six weeks before, in London;—and nothing thought, but was thought sixty years ago, by our grandmothers!—

Philip Askham gave himself up to the luxury of that congenial atmosphere, till his contracted nerves relaxed, and his irritable nature was subdued. The good breeding of the spot begat a sort of dreamy beatitude.—*That* was his sphere!—Those artificial lights constituted his sunrise,—those perfumes *his* “breath of morn!”

There, on the very spot where he was lounging, had he often loitered for hours by the side of Lady Anastasia;—watching the expansion of her smiles, as we watch the unfolding of a flower, to catch the first emanation of its fragrance; or the quickened pulsation which, as her young heart beat with pleasure, caused the light curls to vibrate on her cheek, or the lighter tissue of her robe, to tremble.—How lovely she was in those days of *naïve* and unsuspecting girlhood!—The mysterious voice of nature was murmuring in her heart, as in some silvery sea-shell cast upon a tropic shore. How limpid all her looks and thoughts,—how sparkling her words and glances!—And, dearer than every other attraction,—how perceptibly had her accents ever softened, when addressed to his ungrateful self!

And this pearl of price,—this glowing gem,—this high-bred, gracious, lovely, loving creature, had he presumed to disdain; because ac-

cident had previously thrown him into a mail-coach with a faded widow and her family, on their way to struggle on a miserable pittance against the obscurity of a vulgar lot, too happy to warm their wretchedness under his mantle!— It must have been the contrariety of a perverse nature,—it must have been the mere desire of thwarting his father and mother, which had induced him to cling to such a choice!—

As the relapsed egotist fixed his eyes wistfully on Lawrence's portrait of his rejected love, the remembrance of Evelyn's woe-begone visage beset him, like a case of conscience, or a reminiscence from the tomb. In such a scene, how thoroughly was it out of place; whereas the beaming countenance and aërial form of Lady Anastasia, harmonized only too gracefully with every surrounding object.

From Afric or the Persian looms,  
The carpet's silken foliage sprung,  
And heaven, in its blue bounty, flung  
Those starry leaves, and azure blooms;

while *above* them, smiled a face bright as some Eastern houri, or the angel of a poet's dream.

“Hillo, Phil, my boy!—what the deuce have you done with your new wife?”—cried Lord Middlemore, throwing himself unceremoniously upon the ottoman on which his cousin was musing.—

“If you mean Lady Lynchmore,—she is gone home.”

“Gone home, *Judy*-ciously,—to her Punch, eh?—Poor soul,—I thought she'd never be able to stand it!”

“Stand *what*?—The annoyance of your stupid hoax?”

“No! the vexation of the Prince's whisking in and out, like a meteor! To see him address to every woman present, in succession, one of his little taking words,—the pearls and diamonds that drop from his lips, (the gift of course, like the girl's in the story-book, of a fairy god-mother,—for I never saw the shop where they

were bought,)—and then, just as he was approaching *her*, with the chance that one of those basilisk glances she has been aiming at him for this year past, might tempt him to seek an introduction,—for Lady Grandison to throw her casting net over his head, and carry him off *vi et armis* into the boudoir, to be bored into a state of stupor by her usual mish-mash of Godoy, Cevallos, Murat, and Izquierdo,—an olla podrida more Spanish than in Spain!”—

“The Prince came here only for a moment, on his way to Lady Perth’s.—It was natural he should bestow it on the lady of the house.”

“Natural perhaps,—but, by George, Lady Lynchmore’s face was a study for Hogarth!” cried Middlemore, rolling on the ottoman, convulsed with irrepressible mirth. “Except that of a poulterer’s boy who watched me this morning through Grange’s window, while I ate my ice,—his mouth watering as he stood grilling in the sun,—hang me if I ever saw such longing looks!”

“As during the Prince’s stay, Lady Lynchmore happened to be in the other room, on my arm, engaged in conversation with Horace Trevor——”

“To be sure!” interrupted Middlemore; “and as his Royal Highness nodded *en passant* to Trevor and yourself, did you see his dead point at the foot and *chaussure* of Mrs. Askham the second? By George, what an eye he has for a hoof,—and how he *does* hate a *parvenue*!—Do you remember what he said to Otto?”—

“Nothing so dangerous, my dear Middlemore, as a recanted antipathy!” observed Bob Hardyng, —who, having arrived from the House, and paid his compliments to Lady Grandison, had placed himself unobserved by their side. “Remember, too, that one of the greatest heroes of antiquity was smashed at last by a shellfish!—*I* bet on the lady!—Women who have an object to accomplish

wait so patiently ; *et tout vient à bout à qui sait attendre !*"

" In that case, who knows but *you* may fall in love with Lady Grandison, if you live long enough ;—or Phil here, with dear Stasy, whose picture he has been staring out of countenance for the last half hour !" cried Lord Middlemore, to whom the new-comer was an object of detestation.—

" Quite as likely as that the Prince would submit to be converted into a *savonnette à vilaine !*" retorted Hardyng.—" Petrel ! how are you ?—What ages since we met !" continued he, breaking off his conversation with the coaching lord, to lay hands on the necromancer by whose drop of aqua fortis the robes of estate of Lady Lynchmore had been so speedily worn into a hole, and who was gliding silently by them, like a shadow of the past.

" *Ages*, my dear sir ?—You must measure time like the six days of creation, by some

mightier luminary than the sun of our mother earth!" replied the poet of unalterable countenance. "There is a prodigious difference between *your* age and mine!"

"And what do you think of Marmion?" cried Hardyng, who was fresh from the first perusal of that stirring Romaunt.

"The death-rattle of an expiring literature!" responded the oracle.—"An armoury of tin foil.—Better the worst six lines of Pope, than six cantos of such jingle!"—

"I have heard people of the old school prefer the worst likeness by Reynolds, to yonder beautiful portrait," said Bob. "And after every new victory of Napoleon, Henry Askham never fails to crush him under Cyrus the Great. Natural enough, I am afraid! '*Naturaliter audita visis laudamus libentius; et præsentia invidia, præterita veneratione prosequimur; et his non obrui, illis instrui credi-*



*mus,*' says a wiser man, my dear Petrel, than all of us put together."

"For *my* part, I look on Marmion as the neigh of a new Pegasus!" interrupted Middlemore.—"By George! what a fight scene!—One hears the clash of swords, and sees the sparks fly!"

"God forbid that I should deny my obligation to *any* thing that makes the *sparks* fly!" rejoined Petrel, with his usual deliberate articulation, and sarcastic tone.

"But surely, Mr. Petrel, the poetry of Walter Scott may be regarded as the revival of romance?"—remonstrated Philip Askham, addressing the public executioner.

"Yes! a *revival*,—and old garments revived are seldom very lustrous," rejoined Petrel, who, on the way to his carriage, loved to make his passage strike terror, like the transit of the rattle-snake.

"At all events, thank God the success of

Marmion, tends to prove that the poetical spirit is not altogether extinct among us !” retorted Hardyng, —provoked by his impassibility.

“ No thanks, at least, my dear sir, to *you* Edinburgh Reviewers !” —rejoined the great imperturbable. “ You were the first to cast the Muse into the streets, like the Levite his concubine ; and, like *him*, affect indignation at finding her dead and dishonoured on your threshold !—Good night !”

“ Petrel is as good as a glass of absynth, to stimulate one’s digestion !” exclaimed Hardyng, drawing a deep breath after his departure. “ Anacreon lived to be eighty, and died by a grapestone.—Who bets that Petrel at a century old, is not choked by the hardness of one of his own epigrams ?—But blessed be the Muses, or Graces,

here comes wand’ring by,

A spirit like an angel,

to take the bitter taste out of one’s mouth !

It is like looking at a rose after a root of hel-lebore !”

“ A Parma violet rather than a rose,” said Philip, as the young and lovely Lady C — — r glided past. “ Nothing glaring or showy in such refined sweetness as *hers* !

Like summer twilights, still and sapphire skies,  
Beams the clear lustre of those cloudless eyes.”

“ And that soft smile of radiant Emily’s !” added Hardyng, provokingly,—amused by his brother-in-law’s unwonted enthusiasm. But

Such highflown verse suits not your grovelling pen, sir.  
Leave it to Petrel, or to William Spencer !”

“ I won’t swear to the *goodness* of his poetry, though by George, I can to its *truth* !” cried Middlemore. “ But I say, Phil, my boy !—how monstrous lucky that the most high-bred woman in England didn’t arrive before the bustling exit of your friend Lady Lynchmore ! She might have died of the concussion, as the beautiful humming birds fall dead

in a West Indian shooting party, from the mere report of the guns !”

“ Are you ready to be off, Phil ?” inquired Hardyng, eager to find his horses’ heads turned towards Eske Hill. “ The party is getting thin. We might almost address those who are left, like the Italian *padre* his congregation, as *Pochissimi Signori !*”

Starting up at the summons, Philip obeyed the call ;—right thankful that his brother-in-law was too much fatigued by his parliamentary *séance*, or too absorbed in returning to his happy home, to note the deep sigh with which he took his long last leave of Grandison House !

## CHAPTER X.

Muchos siglos de hermosura,  
En pocos asios de edad.

GONGORA.

She died, as fading roses die,  
Although the warm and healing air  
Comes breathing forth to wrap them round ;—  
She died,—and left me to despair !—  
I placed her gently in the lead,—  
I smoothed her hair as it should be ;—  
And breathed a promise to the dead,—  
A secret—twixt my soul and me !

BARRY CORNWALL.

THE desire of poor Evelyn to be with her children was becoming so painfully intense, that she at length obtained the support of the Hardynges to her petition to return home by

easy journeys, with her servants. Philip had business in town that must detain him at least a fortnight; and Emma was secretly of her sister-in-law's opinion, that a short separation might be beneficial to both.

It was not very difficult to obtain the assent of Philip, whose taste for the pleasures of the metropolis was now thoroughly revived; and when she was gone, or rather, when they had tidings of her safe arrival at Eden Castle, he surrendered himself without restraint to social enjoyment. Established in a London hotel, (for the better despatch of business!) and emancipated from the *surveillance* of the Hardynges, his days and nights flew by on noiseless wings; nor could Lesly, or Trevor, or any of his former associates, overlook the very different means of enjoyment he commanded as a country gentleman with five thousand a year, and as an official man with eight hundred.

By his wife, meanwhile, a painful task was accomplishing. Her condition was clearly before her;—nor did she shrink from the contemplation.—Her mother's early death, and her own delicate health, had prepared her to die early; and it was the consciousness of having to perform the most stringent duty of maternity,—the protection of fatherless children,—which, evoking supernatural energies of mind and body, had hitherto nerved her to support the struggle of life.

But *now* all was over!—Extenuated by a long course of suffering and persecution, the last blow struck at her heart was fatal. Like Cæsar, on recognizing the ungrateful dagger of Brutus, she covered her head with her mantle, and prepared to die in peace.

In *peace*?—no, *not* in peace!—There was much to render departure difficult!—Content to go,—there were those whom it was terrible to leave behind. That helpless infant—that

gentle, loving, promising Selina, whose lovely face was already grave with cares that should have been foreign to her young heart,—with *these*,—how hard to part!—How was she to leave them to the rough usage of a world, which to herself,—so wholly inoffensive,—had strewn the path of life with thorns!

Wise, from the schooling of much trouble, Evelyn had learned how much less positive than we suppose is the action of years on the human mind. She saw that the same providence which left the prosperous Lord Lynchmore a boy at fifty, had made (at scarcely ten) almost a woman of her ill-fated child. Having long marked with thankfulness the perfect discretion of her Selina,—her strong sense of duty,—her warm sense of affection,—she recognised in her one of those elect natures, whose impulses are from above.

As she gazed into those calm reflective eyes, so often fixed on her pale face till blinded by



tears, she tried to search into that little heart, to attain its rich treasury of good,—to fathom its powers of endurance, its depths of tenderness. *Not* from a mother's pride, which so often suggests similar investigations. It was necessary to ascertain the strength of the vessel in which her last earthly hopes were to be embarked!

But though, like the needle that conveys life and death to the mariner, trembling in her task, salvation was in the result! Her time was short. But she trusted it might suffice to perfect the strength of that young mind, and nerve the courage of the child for tasks so much beyond her age as were about to be assigned her.

It was a trying moment, however, to the mother; a trying moment—a terrible moment—when, one summer evening at dusk, the better to conceal her emotions, she called the little girl to her sofa-side, and, with careful prepara-

tion, tried to lead the way to the grievous announcement of her precarious state. As if *any* amount of preparation, *any* tenderness of speech, could overcome for Selina the shock of learning that her dearly-loved mother was on the verge of the grave;—that they were to part,—that she was to be left alone,—alone with that harsh stepfather!

“No! not alone, my child!” faltered the tender mother, wringing between her own the little hands that clung to her, and pressing to her heart the little sobbing face that hid itself in her bosom.

“Not alone, Selina! There is one over whose infancy you must watch, as tenderly as I watched over your own. There is one you must love for me,—one you must make, like yourself, all that a mother’s fondness could desire! Promise me this, my child! Promise me that, when I am gone, you will devote yourself to that hapless creature who will

so much need your care and affection ! Edward is gone,—Edward is safe. Prosperity is to be *his* portion, (God be with him, and grant that it may not harden his heart !) But this feeble, friendless little one, my Selina—”

“ I understand you, dearest mother,—I understand you !” cried the child, closing with fervent kisses the lips of the poor invalid, lest the effects of all this emotion should prove too much for her wasted frame. “ Do not say another word. It kills you to talk,—it kills you to shed these bitter tears,—dearest, dearest mother, I understand you.—He shall be mine,—my own dear child ! I will be to him what you have been to me;—as far as God will let me,—for it can only be *His* will that makes such mothers.—Do not be afraid.—Let that trouble be off your mind.—Only teach me,—only show me. I will spare no endeavours to be taught !”

She pleaded to unconscious ears. Overcome

by the effort of unburthening her mind, and the joy of being so instantly understood, her poor mother had fainted.

From that day, without a word of further explanation on either side, all was perfectly understood between the child-woman and the woman who was rapidly sinking into the feebleness of a child. Every morning, Selina accompanied Susan and her nursling to her mother's bed-side; listening to her instructions, and watching with eager eyes the progress of the feeble babe; and every afternoon, when the invalid was well enough to rise and be placed on her sofa, Selina brought her little chair close beside her mother's pillow, to listen to every word that fell from her lips when she was able to speak; or watch her eyes, whenever they gently unclosed, lest she should lose the smallest, slightest, faintest indication of the will of her who was soon to manifest her will no longer.

To children, the grave is usually too incom-

prehensible a mystery to be terrible. That those who are here to-day, disappear to-morrow, strikes them no more than any common departure on a journey. But Selina had been more painfully instructed. Selina, having seen tears shed for weeks and months and years, over the image of one who, because he was dead, returned no more,—understood the full force of the evil awaiting her.—The darling mother before her was going to Heaven ; while Earth,—the earth of the friendless,—was to be her bitter portion.

Was not this cruel consciousness sufficient to account for the premature intelligence that suddenly expanded in her mind, and imparted so supernatural an expression to her features? For had any stranger witnessed unseen those whispered colloquies between the mother and child,—the mother, with her finely-chiselled features pale as marble, save where through her wan temples the blue veins became daily

more perceptible,—the child, with her inspired face, grave and holy as a seraph's,—they would scarcely have believed them to be creatures of this world!

One evening—a glowing midsummer evening, when the whole face of nature was irradiated by the glory of the setting sun—Evelyn caused her sofa to be drawn closer to the open window, to enjoy the balminess of the atmosphere, and the fragrance of the flower-garden and new-mown lawn. It was just such weather as makes it hard to die, for those whose hearts are still susceptible of earthly hopes,—so bright is this lower world with the beauty of a happier sphere. And when the infant (now nearly a year old, so that, but for its constitutional feebleness, it was of an age to recognise those by whom it was habitually caressed,) was brought to receive her blessing for the night, so genial was the influence of that beaming sunshine, that, almost for the first time, it

smiled in her face, and extended its little arms towards her.—Then burst forth the agony of a mother's tears!—A new tie to life seemed developed in that simple token of love.

The gentle whispers and soothing caresses of Selina gradually restored her to her better self; inspiring mutual consolation,—mutual peace,—mutual hope of purer joys to come,—mutual reliance on the promise of a Word that endureth for ever and ever.—But no more of this! Tears such as were shed between them, endearments such as were exchanged, ought to be sacred from all human scrutiny—yea, sacred as the mysteries of the garden of Gethsemane, which were to afford an example of resignation to ages and nations to come!

All this time, poor Evelyn was replying to the letters of her selfish husband, which insisted strongly on the claims of his business in London, and slightly on his pleasures, by cheerful answers encouraging the prolongation

of his stay. Aware that remedies were unavailing in a state like hers, (for *she*, alas! had watched the gradual expiring of a frame shaken and exhausted as her own,) she declined the further attendance of Dr. Boswell;—so that as there was no one to betray to Philip the real state of her suffering, she assured him she was in no need of a physician.

She was only ill enough to die! Her weakness now increased so perceptibly, that the little girl, though careful to avoid alarming him whose absence was a relief to both, despatched a letter to her brother, in her own little round childish handwriting, (it was long since that poor mother had been able to continue her *ordinary* lessons!) entreating that Edward would obtain leave from his uncle to come and visit the dear mamma from whom he had been six months parted,—“she was so very *very* ill!” And soon, alas! came back an answer, far more expertly indited, but con-



veying a bitter disappointment to Selina ; who counted on having secured an unexpected moment of happiness for the invalid.

“ His uncle assured him that mamma could not possibly be *very* ill, since Mr. Askham was amusing himself at all the gay parties in town ; which being the case, he would much rather come to Eden Castle in the autumn ; because all summer they were to have cricket matches twice a week in the park at Bayhurst, established by his uncle’s kindness expressly for his amusement.”

On this grievous occasion, a first proof was afforded by Selina, that the lessons of her mother were not thrown away. Repressing the tears elicited by so terrible an evidence of the unaffectionate nature of her brother, she hastily destroyed the letter. She would not for worlds have had it fall into her mother’s hands. She could *now* perfectly appreciate the influence of such unkindness on a mother’s heart !

Many days afterwards, Selina was shocked to perceive a strange alteration in the countenance of the poor invalid on receiving her London letters. Though comparatively well and tranquil shortly before, when the baby, after wailing its usual fretful hour on its mother's bosom, had been removed to the nursery for the night,—her breath became suddenly oppressed after the arrival of the post.

Till eight o'clock, Selina was usually allowed to sit up in her mother's dressing-room, to participate in the news of "Papa." Not that his proceedings had now much interest for the child. But she retained a hope that, through *him*, tidings might reach them of her brother; on whose part, some after-remorse of feeling might perhaps prompt an application to his uncle for permission to visit Eden Castle.

Still, *still* disappointment! No news of Edward,—no letter from Bayhurst!—and Mrs.

Askham refolded her own with a trembling hand scarcely able to perform its office, without uttering even the usual announcement of—  
“Papa is well. Business detains him in town.—  
He will probably be home next week.”

Something wild and unusual in the expression of her eyes, however, induced Selina, instead of rising at that signal to retire according to her wont, to draw closer to her mother's sofa, and press to her lips the cold thin hand of the invalid. By degrees, as she held it between her own, she felt its pulses quicken, and its reviving warmth accelerate even to fever heat.—At length, in a broken, hollow voice, her mother, whose face was averted, incoherently addressed her.

“My child,” said she,—“my own dear child, —before you leave me to-night, I have a promise to exact of you.”

“Mother!”

“You must pledge me your word, darling

Selina, that, when I am gone, come what may,—unwelcome as you may find yourself in this house,—warmly as you may be invited to Bayhurst,—nothing shall induce you to desert your little brother!”

“Nothing, dear mother, nothing!” answered the child, as steadily as her little breaking heart would allow.

“My poor Percy will grow up weak, ill-favoured, peevish, perhaps deformed. No one will care for him,—not even his father!—Promise me, therefore, Selina, that—”

“My own dear mother,—have I not already promised?” faltered the little girl, imprinting a thousand fervent kisses on the hand she held.

“You have,—you have!—But at *your* age, the temptation of kind words,—of a brighter home”

“No,—no,—no!”—was all that poor Selina could utter in interruption.

“The pleasure, then, of being with Edward !”

And this time, the little girl answered not a word ; but had her mother beheld the emotions sparkling in her eye and quivering round her lips, on merely hearing the name of the ingrate, she would have perceived that such a condition was superfluous !

“I may rely then,” murmured the poor sufferer, “on your word before our Almighty judge, that Eden Castle shall remain your home, and Philip Askham your father ?”

Thus solemnly addressed, the little girl, suddenly dropping on her knees, placed gently on her head the trembling hand of the invalid.

“Bless me,” faltered she,—“bless me and *trust* me ! So long as I live, will I obey the bidding of my dear mother, as sacredly as the commandments of my God.”

Fervent were the words of benediction then breathed by Evelyn ; and fervent was the kiss

of love that sealed that sacred covenant;—a long long kiss, in which the soul of the dying woman seemed concentrated.—And then, she dismissed the child to bed.

“She wanted to be quiet,—she wanted to be alone.”

She wanted to be alone only that she might re-examine that cruel letter of Philip, which had stricken her death-blow.

“I cannot understand,” wrote her husband, “why you persist in treating me with such deliberate hypocrisy. You write me word you are better, and desire I will make no haste to return home, (as if you thought my business here a pretext, to be hurried or retarded as I please,) and then, amuse yourself by writing to your son the most deplorable accounts of your health.

“Last night, Lady Grandison was unable to repress her surprise at meeting me at the Duchess of Norcliffe’s, because, forsooth, a

letter from Lady Anastasia had given her to understand, *on your own showing*, that your state was precarious! This must have been done, on your part, solely to place my conduct in an odious light.—You doubtless wish people to suppose that *you* are dying at Eden Castle, while I am diverting myself in town!—All I could do in self-justification to the Grandisons, was to take your letter of yesterday from my pocket, and prove that the double-dealing was not on *my* side.

“In order, however, to frustrate all further attempts at deception, I have written by this post to Boswell, desiring him, if not for your satisfaction, for mine, to visit you; and favour me with a bulletin on the veracity of which I can depend. It is too unfair that I should be exposed to unjust reproaches, only that you may excite the commiseration of those people at Bayhurst!”

On the second perusal of this cruel letter, a

hectic spot burnt on the cheek of Mrs. Askham. But not a tear did she shed!—Her grievances against that man were now past weeping for.—She could only pray to God to forgive him.—She had already forgiven him herself!

When assisted to her pillow for the night, she was observed to experience so much pain from even that slight exertion, that her attendant was alarmed. Twice, on her way from the dressing-room to the adjoining chamber, she was obliged to pause for breath; and as soon as the young woman could leave her, she hastened to consult with Susan about the propriety of sending for Dr. Boswell.

“Time enough in the morning,” said Evelyn, faintly smiling, when they applied for her permission to despatch a servant to Edenbourne.—“Mr. Askham has written to desire he will call here to-morrow. All I want, is rest. It would disturb me were Dr. Boswell to come to-night.”



They contented themselves, therefore, with resolving that the attendant, who usually slept in the adjoining chamber, should keep watch during the night."

But a more vigilant eye watched over Evelyn, and a more merciful hand protected her! Before morning, she was at rest.—When, towards daybreak, the woman stole on tiptoe into the room, it struck her that the sleep of the sufferer, usually restless, was quieter than usual; and on drawing aside the curtain, she saw that the pillow was saturated with blood, and her mistress expiring!

Before the fleetest horse in the stable could bring the physician to her aid, all was over! But though Dr. Boswell was loud in his expressions of indignation at not having been sooner called in, he admitted the hemorrhage to be so extensive, that, even on the spot, his assistance must have been ineffectual.

On the discovery of her hopeless condition,

old Susan, perceiving from the expression of her loving eyes that, though speechless, her mistress was still sensible, hastened to bring the children to her bedside, for a last farewell. Reckless in her untaught distraction, of the effect a sight so fearful might produce on the young mind of Selina, she allowed her to witness the last yearning kiss imprinted by the dying mother on the forehead of her infant.—It left a crimson stain!—a stain which Selina, when the babe was placed in her arms by the nurse that she might support the head of her dying mistress, gently wiped away with a handkerchief which she placed in her little swelling bosom, to be preserved as a sacred token for ever and ever.

On beholding the eyes of their gentle mistress closed in death, the first idea of the horror-struck servants was to despatch an express for their master, as they had seen *him* do, the preceding year, for Mrs. Hardyng. But as the London post was to start in an hour, Dr.

Boswell decided that, since all was now unavailing, it would convey the grievous intelligence with sufficient speed.

The following morning, therefore, Mr. Askham was enjoying till a late hour the sleep usually allotted to those whom dissipation detains till day-break from their beds, with that fatal letter still lying unopened. Nothing in its outward appearance enjoined haste; and even when Philip rose and saw it on the dressing-table, where it had been laid by the servant, concluding it to be an answer from Boswell to his letter of the preceding day, he deliberately finished dressing, before he broke the seal. In the interim, he had received a letter from Evelyn, which set his mind at ease; and so intensely was he absorbed at that moment by reminiscences of a brilliant ball he had enjoyed at the Duchess of Norcliffe's, the preceding night, that he had not a second thought for Eden Castle.

Even after running his eye over the lines, their purport seemed at first to escape him. Yet the announcement was surely sufficiently explicit.

“Sir,

“It is my painful duty to inform you that Mrs. Askham departed this life at thirteen minutes past seven o'clock, this morning, from the rupture of one of the great vessels of the heart. Waiting your commands, I have the honour to be

“Your most obedient humble servant, .

“ARCH. BOSWELL.

“*Eden Castle, June 13th.*”

*Dead?*—Beyond all reach of aid or atonement?—Where,—where—was he to look for mercy or consolation!—

Overwhelmed as he was,—overwhelmed as *any* human being must have been by such a blow,—and though the speed of his journey

homewards was such as might have bewildered the mind of a man even less severely visited, so that on reaching the “dreary pile,” his deportment was scarcely that of a rational being,—Philip Askham retained sufficient use of his faculties to render the night of torture, spent upon his knees beside the bed where lay extended the cold remains of his wife, almost a sufficient expiation for his guilt.

It was with the fixed sweet smile of the enshrouded Evelyn before his eyes, that he perused the letter he found addressed to him in her desk; a solemn letter,—perhaps the more heart-rending for containing no appeal to his feelings or a single syllable of reproach.

As if she thought him inaccessible to any touch of human affection, she wrote to recall to his sense of honour his promise regarding the guardianship of Selina;—to recommend his sickly babe to his forbearance;—to entreat that Susan might be retained in charge of both the

children.—And then, she bade him a long farewell ; but not so tenderly as to imply that his conduct placed him in peculiar need of forgiveness.

But oh ! how he now implored it of her senseless form !—How he bowed down his head upon her marble feet !—How he called upon her to breathe again one blessed moment,—that she might witness his remorse,—that she might hear the avowal of his heartless egotism,—that she might accept his pledge to become more than a father to her children,—that she might murmur one word of pardon, ere she winged her flight to everlasting peace !—

When Selina was brought to him, (*brought* is the fitting word, for the little creature was unable to come into his presence,) he fell down before her, as though she were the living representative of the dead ; beseeching forgiveness of his ingratitude,—forgiveness for his accursed hardness of heart !—

Mr. Askham was informed that custom interdicted his appearance as chief mourner at his wife's funeral. At that moment, perhaps, he felt that he had had enough of custom!—At all events, he chose to go, as a public act of atonement; and that the afflicted child should accompany him, holding him by the hand.

He was assured that Selina was too young for such a scene. It needed only to point out the self-governed composure of her grief, to prove that age is not always to be measured by years.

“Let him have his way! Let the child behold her poor mother laid in the grave,” faltered Emma, who, with her husband, had hastened to the house of mourning. “The impression cannot be fatal; and if less than fatal, will be a lesson for life!”

On the appointed day, a great multitude surrounded the church at Edenbourne, to add their tears to those of the privileged mourners; and with difficulty did the sorrowing old rector

get through the funeral service. But the crowd consisted less of the retainers of Eden Castle than of the humble pensioners of Eastfield; for some of whom she had worked, with others prayed, when her humble fortune admitted no other assuagement of their miseries;—prayers and labours of more account to her *now*, than the alms-giving of her more ostentatious home.!

There was one individual present, however, whose coming was unnoted, and of whose anguish none took heed;—a spare old man, attired in the deepest mourning; who, in a remote corner of the church, concealed his face with his hands while the funeral rites were proceeding; and, when the train of mourners quitted the church, purchased leave of those in authority to descend into the family vault, and breathe his last farewell to the dead!

“Would to God that I had died for thee, Evelyn,” said he, as he knelt with clasped



hands beside her coffin ;—“ would, would to God that I had died for thee, or that thou couldst hear my solemn vow to be a protector to thy orphan child !”

But there was another, whose absence from the solemn ceremony was generally noticed. Notwithstanding the intelligence despatched by the Hardynges to Bayhurst Hall, no Edward made his appearance.

“ Master Saville ought to be *here*,— Master Saville ought to be *here* !” moaned the faithful old Susan, as she sat rocking in her arms the fretful infant, bewailing itself as if instinctively conscious of having lost its only friend.

To *her* it was no excuse that, by a disastrous coincidence, “ the dangerous illness of his uncle rendered it impossible for him at that moment to leave home.”

And thus, within a year of the removal of the fatal achievement from the castle gates, which afforded so sad an omen for Evelyn on

her marriage-day, it was replaced by a new ensign of mourning; again reminding the spectator that rich and poor must die, and that "In Heaven there is peace!"

But those most attached to the lost one gone before, studiously averted their eyes.—It was mockery to be reminded that "*In cælo quies,*" while such arduous and complicated duties remained for them to accomplish on earth!

END OF VOL. II.

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