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WENDERHOLME

W E N D E R H O L M E

A STORY OF
LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE

BY
PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON
AUTHOR OF 'A PAINTER'S CAMP,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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CHAPTER I.

OUR Jacob, or big Jacob, or Jacob at Milend, as he now began to be called in the Ogden family, to distinguish him from his nephew and homonym, had arrived at that point in the career of every successful cotton-spinner when a feeling of great embarrassment arises as to the comparative wisdom of purchasing an estate or "laying down a new mill." When his brother Isaac retired from the concern with ten thousand pounds, Jacob had not precisely cheated him, perhaps, but he had made a bargain which, considered prospectively, was highly favourable to his own interest; and since he had been alone, the profits from the mill had been so considerable that his savings had

rapidly accumulated, and he was now troubled with a very heavy balance at his bankers, and in various investments, which, to a man accustomed to receive the large interest of successful cotton-spinning, seemed little better than letting money lie idle. Mrs Ogden had three hundred a-year from five or six very small farms of her own, which she had inherited from her mother, and this amply sufficed for the entire expenses of the little household at Milend. Jacob spent about a hundred and fifty pounds a-year on himself personally, of which two-thirds were absorbed in shooting,—the only amusement he cared about. His tailor's bill was incredibly small, for he had the excuse, when in Shayton, of being constantly about the mill, and it was natural that he should wear old fustian and corduroy there; and as for his journeys to Manchester, it was his custom on these occasions to wear the suit which had been the Sunday suit of the preceding year. His mother knitted all his stockings for him, and made his shirts, these being her usual occupations in an evening. His travelling expenses were confined to the weekly journeys to Manchester, and as these were always on business, they were charged to the concern. If Jacob Ogden had not been fond of shooting, his personal expenses, be-

yond food and lodging (which were provided for him by his mother), would not have exceeded fifty pounds a-year; and it is a proof of the great firmness of his character in money matters that, although by nature passionately fond of sport, he resolutely kept the cost of it within the hundred. His annual outlay upon literature was within twenty shillings; not that it is to be supposed that he spent so large a sum as one pound sterling in a regular manner upon books, but he had been tempted by a second-hand copy of Baines's 'History of Lancashire,' which, being much the worse for wear, had been marked by the bookseller at five pounds, and Jacob Ogden, by hard bargaining, had got it for four pounds nine shillings and ninepence. After this extravagance he resolved to spend no more "foolish money," as he called it, and for several years made no addition to his library, except a book on dog-breeding, and a small treatise on the preservation of game, which he rightly entered amongst his expenses as a sportsman. We are far from desiring to imply that Jacob Ogden is in this respect to be considered a representative example of the present generation of cotton-manufacturers, many of whom are highly-educated men, but he may be fairly taken as a specimen of that generation

which founded the colossal fortunes that excite the wonder, and sometimes, perhaps, awaken the envy, of the learned. When nature produces a creature for some especial purpose, she does not burden it with wants and desires that would scatter its force and impair its efficiency. The industrial epoch had to be inaugurated, the manufacturing districts had to be created—and to do this a body of men were needed who should be fresh springs of pure energy, and reservoirs of all but illimitable capital; men who should act with the certainty and steadiness of natural instincts which have never been impaired by the hesitations of culture and philosophy—men who were less nearly related to university professors than to the ant, and the beaver, and the bee. And if any cultivated and intellectual reader, in the thoughtful retirement of his library, feels himself superior to Jacob Ogden, the illiterate cotton-spinner, he may be reminded that he is not on all points Ogden's superior. We are all but tools in the hands of God; and as in the mind of a writer great delicacy and flexibility are necessary qualities for the work he is appointed to do, so in the mind of a great captain of industry the most valuable qualities may be the very opposite of these. Have we the energy, the directness, the singleness of pur-

pose, the unflinching steadiness in the dullest possible labour, that mark the typical industrial chief? We know that we have not; we know that these qualities are not compatible with the tranquillity of the studious temperament and the meditative life. And if the Ogdens cannot be men of letters, neither can the men of letters be Ogdens.

It is admitted, then, that Jacob Ogden was utterly and irreclaimably illiterate. He really never read a book in his life, except, perhaps, that book on dog-breaking. Whenever he tried to read, it was a task and a labour to him; and as literature is not of the least use in the cotton trade, the energy of his indomitable will had never been brought to bear upon the mastery of a book. And yet you could not meet him without feeling that he was very intelligent—that he possessed a kind of intelligence cultivated by the closest observation of the men and things within the narrow circle of his life. Has it never occurred to the reader how wonderfully the most illiterate people often impress us with a sense of their intelligence—how men and women who never learned the alphabet have its light on their countenance and in their eyes? In Ogden's face there were clear signs of that, and of other quali-

ties also. And there was a keenness in the glance quite different from the penetration of the thinker or the artist—a keenness which always comes from excessively close and minute attention to money matters, and from the passionate love of money, and which no other passion or occupation ever produces.

In all that related to money Jacob Ogden acted with the pitiless regularity of the irresistible forces of nature. As the sea which feeds the fisherman will drown him without remorse—as the air which we all breathe will bury us under heaps of ruin—so this man, though his capital enabled a multitude to live, would take the bed from under a sick debtor, and, rather than lose an imperceptible atom of his fortune, inflict the utmost extremity of misery. Even Hanby, his attorney, who was by no means tender-hearted, had been staggered at times by his pitilessness, and had ventured upon a feeble remonstrance. On these occasions a shade of sternness was added to the keenness of Ogden's face, and he repeated a terrible maxim, which, with one or two others, guided his life: "If a man means to be rich, he must have no fine feelings;" and then he would add, "*I mean to be rich.*"

Perhaps he would have had fine feelings on

a Sunday, for on Sundays he was religious, and went to church, where he heard a good deal about being merciful and forgiving which on week-days he would have attributed to the influence of the sentiments which he despised. But Ogden was far too judicious an economist of human activities to be ignorant of the great art of self-adaptation to the duties and purposes of the hour; and as a prudent lawyer who has a taste for music will take care that it shall not interfere with his professional work, so Jacob Ogden, who really had rather a taste for religion, and liked to sit in church with gloved hands and a clean face, had no notion of allowing the beautiful sentiments which he heard there to paralyse his action on a week-day. Every Sunday he prayed repeatedly that God would forgive him his debts or trespasses as he forgave his debtors or those that trespassed against him; but that was no reason why he should not, from Monday morning to Saturday night inclusively, compel everybody to pay what he owed, and distress him for it if necessary. After all, he acted so simply and instinctively, that one can hardly blame him very severely. The truest definition of him would be, an incarnate natural force. The forces of wealth, which are as much natural forces as those of fire

and frost, had incarnated themselves in him. His sympathy with money was so complete, he had so entirely subjected his mind to it, so thoroughly made himself its pupil and its mouth-piece, that it is less accurate to say that he *had* money than that he *was* money. . Jacob Ogden was a certain sum of money whose unique idea was its own increase, and which acted in obedience to the laws of wealth as infallibly as a planet acts in obedience to the cosmic forces.

It is only natural that a man so endowed and so situated should grow rich. In all respects circumstances were favourable to him. . He had robust health and indefatigable energy. His position in a little place like Shayton, where habits of spending had not yet penetrated, was also greatly in his favour, because it sheltered him in undisturbed obscurity. No man who is born to wealth, and has lived from his infancy in the upper class, will confine his expenditure during the best years of manhood to the pittance which sufficed for Ogden. It was an advantage to him, also, that his mind should be empty, because he needed all the room in it for the endless details concerning his ~~property~~ property and his trade. No fact of this nature, however minute, escaped him. His knowledge of the present state of all

that belonged to him was so clear and accurate, and his foresight as to probable changes so sure, that he anticipated everything, and neutralised every cause of loss before it had time to develop itself.

That a man whose daily existence proved the fewness of his wants should have an eager desire for money, may appear one of the inconsistencies of human nature; but in the case of Jacob Ogden, and in thousands of cases similar to his, there is no real inconsistency. He did not desire money in order to live luxuriously; he desired it because the mere possession of it brought increased personal consideration, and gave him weight and importance in the little community he lived in. And when a man relies on wealth *alone* for his position—when he is, obviously, not a gentleman—he needs a great quantity of it. Another reason why Jacob Ogden never felt that he had enough was because the men with whom he habitually compared himself, and whom he wished to distance in the race, did not themselves remain stationary, but enriched themselves so fast that it needed all Jacob Ogden's genius for money-getting to keep up with them; for men of talent in every order compare themselves with their equals and rivals, and not with the herd of the

incapable. It was his custom to go to Manchester in the same railway carriage with four or five men of business, who talked of nothing but investments, and it would have made Jacob Ogden miserable not to be able to take a share in these conversations on terms of perfect equality.

“I’m sure,” thought Mrs Ogden, “that our Jacob’s got something on his mind. He sits and thinks a deal more than he used doin’. He’s ’appen* fallen in love, an’ doesn’t like to tell me about it, because it’s same as tellin’ me to leave Milend.”

Mrs Ogden was confirmed in her suspicions that very evening by the fact that “our Jacob” shut himself up in the little sitting-room with a builder. “If it’s to build himself a new ’ouse and leave me at Milend, I willn’t stop; and if it’s to build me a new ’ouse, I shall never live there. I shall go an’ live i’ th’ Creampot.”

The idea of Mrs Ogden living in a creampot may appear to some readers almost as mythical as the story of that other and much more famous old lady who lived in a shoe; but although a creampot would not be a bad place to live in if one were a mouse, and the rich fluid not dangerously deep, it is not to be supposed that Mrs Ogden enter-

* Perhaps.

tained such a project in an obvious and literal sense. Her intentions were rational, but they need a word of explanation. She possessed a small farm called the Creampot; and of all her small farms this was her best beloved. Therefore had she resolved, years and years before, that when Jacob married she would go to the Creampot, and dwell there for the days that might remain to her.

She waited till the builder had gone, and then went into the little room. Jacob was busy examining a plan. "I wish you wouldn't trouble yourself about that buildin', Jacob," said Mrs Ogden; "there needs no buildin', for as soon as ever you get wed I shall go to th' Creampot."

Her son looked up from his plan with an air of the utmost astonishment. Mrs Ogden continued,—

"I think you might have told me about it a little sooner. I don't even know her name, not positively, though I may guess it, perhaps. There's no doubt about one thing—you'll have time enough to repent in. As they make their bed, so they must lie."

"What the devil," said Jacob, thinking aloud and *very* loudly,—“what the devil is th'ould woman drivin' at?”

“Nay, if I’m to be sworn at, I’ve been too long i’ this ’ouse already.”

And Mrs Ogden, with that stately step which distinguished her, made slowly for the door.

In cases where the lady of a house acts in a manner which is altogether absurd, the male or males, whose comfort is in a great degree dependent upon her good temper, have a much better chance of restoring it than when she is but moderately unreasonable. They are put upon their guard ; they are quite safe from that most fatal of errors, an attempt to bring the lady round by those too direct arguments which are suggested by masculine frankness ; they are warned that judicious management is necessary. Thus, although Jacob Ogden, in the first shock of his astonishment, had not replied to his mother in a manner precisely calculated to soothe her, he at once perceived his error, and saw that she must be brought round. In politer spheres, where people beg pardon of each other for the most trifling and even imaginary offences, the duty of begging pardon is so constantly practised that (like all well-practised duties) it is extremely easy. But it was impossible for Jacob Ogden, who had never begged pardon in his life.

“ I say, mother, stop a bit. You’ve gotten a bit

o' brass o' your own, an' I'm layin' down a new mill, and I shall want o' th'* brass I can lay my hands on. I willn't borrow none, not even of my brother Isaac; but if you could lend me about four thousand pound, I could give a better finish to th' new shed."

"Why, Jacob, you never told me as you were layin' down a new mill."

"No, but I should a' done if you'd a' waited a bit. I never right made up my mind about it while last night."

It was not Jacob Ogden's custom to be confidential with his mother about money matters, and she on her part had been too proud to seek a confidence that was never offered; but many little signs had of late led her to the conclusion that Jacob was in a period of unusual prosperity. He had bought one or two small estates for three or four thousand pounds each, and then had suddenly declared that he would lay out no more money in "potterin' bits o' property like them, but keep it while he'd a good lump for summat o' some use." The decision about the new mill proved to Mrs Ogden that the "lump" in question was already accumulated.

* All the. In Lancashire the word *all* is abbreviated, as in Scotland, to a', but pronounced o.

“Jacob,” she said, “how much do you reckon to put into th’ new mill?”

“Why, ’appen about forty thousand; an’ if you’ll lend me four, that’ll be forty-four.”

This was a larger sum than Mrs Ogden had hoped; but she showed no sign of rejoicing beyond a quiet smile.

“And where do you think of buildin’ it?”

“Well, mother, if you don’t mind sellin’ me Little Mouse Field, it’s the best mill-site in all Shayton. There’s that water-course so handy; and it’ll increase the valley* of our land round about it.”

Mrs Ogden was perfectly soothed by this time. Jacob wanted to borrow four thousand pounds of her. She had coal under her little farms, of which the accumulated produce had reached rather more than that amount; and she promised the loan with a facetious hope that the borrower would be able to give her good security. As to Little Mouse Field, he was quite welcome to it, and she begged him to accept it as a present.

“Nay, mother; you shouldn’t give me no presents bout† givin’ summat to our Isaac. But I reckon it’s all one; for all as I have, or shall have, ’ll go to little Jacob.”

* Value.

† Without.

“Eh, how you talk, lad! Why, you’ll get wed an’ have chilther of your own. You’re young enough, an’ well off beside.”

“There’s no need for me to get wed, mother, so long as th’ old woman lasts, an’ who’ll last a long while yet, I reckon. There’s none o’ these young ladies as is kerfle enough to do for a man like me as has been accustomed to see his house well managed. Why, they cannot neither make a shirt nor a puddin’.”

These disparaging remarks concerning the “Girl of the Period” filled (as they were designed to fill) Mrs Ogden’s mind with tranquillity and satisfaction. To complete her good-humour, Jacob unrolled the plans and elevation of his new mill. The plans were most extensive, but the elevation did not strike the spectator by its height; for as the site was not costly, Jacob Ogden had adopted a system then becoming prevalent in the smaller towns of the manufacturing districts, where land was comparatively cheap—the system of erecting mills rather as sheds than on the old five-storeyed model. His new mill was simply a field walled in and roofed over, with a tall engine-house and an enormous chimney at one end. People of æsthetic tastes would see nothing lovely in the long straight lines of roofs and rows of

monotonously-identical windows which displayed themselves on the designs drawn by Ogden's architect ; but to Ogden's eyes there was a beauty here greater than that of the finest cathedral he had ever beheld. He was not an imaginative person ; but he had quite enough imagination to realise the vista of the vast interior, the roar of the innumerable wheels, the incessant activity of the living makers of his wealth. He saw himself standing in the noble engine-room, and watching the unhurried seesaw of the colossal beams ; the rise and fall of the pistons, thicker than the spear of Goliath, and brighter than columns of silver ; the revolution of the enormous fly-wheel ; the exquisite truth of motion ; the steadiness of man's great creature, that never knows fatigue. That engine-room should be the finest in all Shayton. It should have a plaster cornice round its ceiling, and a great moulded ornament in the middle of it ; the gas-lights should be in handsome ground-glass globes ; and about the casings of the cylinders there should be a luxury of mahogany and brass.

“ But, Jacob,” said his mother, when she had duly adjusted her spectacles, and gradually mastered the main features of the plan, “ it seems to me as you've put th' mill all o' one side, and th' engine nobbut half-fills th' engine-house.”

Ogden had never heard of Taymouth Castle and the old Earl of Breadalbane, who, when somebody asked him why he built his house at the extremity of his estate, instead of in the middle of it, answered that he intended to "brizz yint."* But, like the ambitious Earl, Ogden was one of those who "brizz yint."

"Why, mother," he said, "this 'ere's nobbut half the new mill. What can you do with forty-five thousand?"

* Push beyond.

CHAPTER II.

IN the entanglement of human affairs we can seldom recognise, whilst they are actually at work for or against us, the forces that affect our fate ; and as in life a thousand circumstances seem trivial and of no account, on which, nevertheless, hang the fruits which are to ripen in the future, and be the sweet nourishment of our existence or its bitter poison, so in the mimic world of fiction the real importance of persons and events is not to be estimated till the story is fully told.

We may leave Jacob Ogden, the elder, to his incessant production and accumulation. He and his steam-engine are settling the future of people he little concerns himself about. But there is another personage equally absorbed in his own life, equally self-contained, and yet more solitary, whose influence, though widely different in its nature, will be not less effectual and far-reaching.

It is necessary that the reader should begin to know him now.

The Stanburnes of Wenderholme, though popularly regarded as the representatives of the family of Stanburne because they were the wealthiest and most conspicuous bearers of the name, were in fact a younger branch, descended from a brother of Sir Philip Stanburne, who had represented the family in the time of King Henry VIII. This Sir Philip had been implicated in the insurrection known as the Pilgrimage of Grace; but as he had taken no part in the previous risings, and as he had not been one of the most prominent or active of the insurgent gentlemen, his life was spared, though his estates were confiscated. Sir Philip had many friends, and amongst them one or two personages who enjoyed some share of Henry's favour. By their influence a small portion of the confiscated estates was restored to the family, but not to the elder brother. Out of seven fair manors, two only were given back—namely, those of Wenderholme and Stanithburn Tower; and both these were allotted to Henry Stanburne, brother of the attainted knight. Henry Stanburne seems to have been a man of a rational and unromantic type, disposed to make the best of the circumstances in which he found

himself. Two letters from his brother Philip, dated four years after his attainder, and two years after the restoration of the manors, are still preserved at Wenderholme, and afford evidence that Sir Philip lived at Stanithburn Tower by his brother's permission. Other evidence exists to prove that Henry Stanburne confined his generosity to this permission and an allowance sufficient for the most moderate wants of a gentleman. He never bestowed any real property on his unfortunate kinsman, and, in short, treated him much as an eldest brother usually treats a cadet. Circumstances and events had in fact reversed the position of the two, and Henry Stanburne acted towards Sir Philip very much as Sir Philip, had he preserved his original rights, would have acted towards Henry. This state of things appears to have lasted for many years, but Henry Stanburne died first; and perhaps from some feeling of remorse at his own want of generosity, or from an apprehension that his son and successor was not to be relied upon for the continuation of his charity, such as it was, he bequeathed Stanithburn Tower and the small estate belonging to it to Sir Philip in his will. The knight had thus a sure provision for his old age, which was protracted beyond the usual term of human exist-

ence, and in his turn he left the estate to his only son.

Henry Stanburne, who had ever been guided by prudence rather than enthusiasm, acquiesced in the political and religious changes of his time. Had he been the representative of his family, it would never have been exposed to attainder and confiscation. He conformed to Protestantism, and established himself and his descendants in the security which is enjoyed by those who support the powers that be. But Sir Philip, who had suffered in defence of the Church of Rome against the encroachments of King Henry, remained devoted to her till the day of his death; and through all the dangers and disabilities to which a Catholic family was exposed under subsequent reigns, the successive representatives of his name had cherished the same faith. Neither branch at the time of the present history was (if the alteration in the value of money be duly taken into account) either much richer or much poorer than the heirs of the two estates in the time of Queen Elizabeth. There had been fluctuations in their wealth. They had married heiresses at different periods; but the extravagance of a succeeding generation had always brought the families down to their old level again, though they

had never sunk so far below it as to make recovery impossible.

There is no evidence of the least intercourse between the two branches since the time of Sir Philip Stanburne. It is probable that the heir of Wenderholme considered himself aggrieved by the bequest of Stanithburn to his uncle. The distance between the two houses is not sufficient to account for this, since a vigorous rider (and in former times all men were vigorous riders) might traverse it in a day. Indeed, if we consider the changes of feeling which have been brought about by the progress in the mechanical means of locomotion, Stanithburn must have seemed nearer to Wenderholme in the seventeenth century than it does now. The road to it lies across the hills, whose blue masses close the prospect from the front of Wenderholme Hall; and on an exceedingly clear day the Tower or Peel of Stanithburn may be distinguished with the aid of a telescope from the moorland behind the house. The activity of modern progress has not yet approached the grey tower where Sir Philip Stanburne lived in the long retirement of his age. No railway whistle is audible there, no factory chimney is visible from thence; only, when the air is heavy and dull, the sunsets are a little dimmed by the far smoke of Sootythorn.

The present owner of Stanithburn Peel was called Philip Stanburne, after his ancestor. He was twenty-five years old, and a long minority had just barely sufficed to bring his estate round after the extravagance of his father—if, indeed, a man is to be condemned for extravagance who was guilty of no other crime than a simple conformity to the customs of his class. An English gentleman, the representative of an old family, who, in a country where rich men are more than usually plentiful, has to keep house on seven hundred a-year, is in a position where the least carelessness is ruin; and Peter Stanburne, without being either self-indulgent or in any visible way a man of expensive habits, lacked that power of keen and constant attention to trifles which is necessary when a man's income is unequal to his position in the world. He had been hospitable to his friends in a very simple and unpretending way, and he had been kind to his servants and tenants, but his establishment had always been exceedingly limited; and when people who knew him became aware that for several years he had habitually outlived his income, they had only been able to account for it on the supposition of some secret extravagance or vice. His embarrassments, however, required no such explanation, and it did

him great injustice. His crime had been an incapacity to bear solitude, united to a total unfitness for any society but that of gentlemen. There are men who can extract pleasure and profit from human intercourse of almost any kind whatever—who can adapt themselves to any capacity and any rank—and who, therefore, can never be isolated till they are actually shipwrecked on an uninhabited island. But there are also (and these latter are more commonly found) the men of caste and class, to whom intercourse with men outside of their class is less endurable than solitude itself. Peter Stanburne was one of these ; and as solitude was hateful to him, he visited amongst men of his own rank, but of far superior wealth, as much as he possibly could.

Towards the close of Peter Stanburne's life he perceived his error, and determined to do whatever might yet be in his power to repair it. He had a good deal of very unproductive land, which he resolved to plant ; and during his remaining years he never quitted Stanithburn at all except to visit one or two friends who were experienced planters, and whose instructions were of use to him. His wife, who was a lady of his own rank, had a small fortune, which was invested in the improvement of the estate ; whilst one or two

farms in South Lancashire, the remnant of the dower of a former mistress of Stanithburn, were sold to pay Peter Stanburne's debts. He had the satisfaction, in the comparative solitude of his latter years, of seeing the Stanithburn property pass the great turning-point from waste to increase; and he died, after having written the most careful and minute directions for its management, during the minority of his son. He also—and this, perhaps, may have been less judicious—warned his boy to shun the attractions of society, and advised him, if he would be happy, to love the old tower and the estate, and live there in prosperity and peace. His wife survived him a few years, and the affection which bound her to her boy was of that intensely concentrated kind which absorbs all earthly desires. She wished for nothing in this world except with reference to her boy; and the best of her pleasures was to have him near her, in the tranquillity of their solitary home. He passed some years at the Roman Catholic College of Stonyhurst; but his absence was painful to the widow, though she bore it with patient resignation. We are, however, very easily convinced when our wishes coincide with the counsels of our advisers, and Mrs Stanburne was soon persuaded by her doctor that the rules

of Stonyhurst were too rigid for Philip's health. Whether the facts of the case quite justified the doctor's recommendations may be doubtful, but it is certain that Stanithburn agreed with the boy better than any other place; and though his health, even in the prime of manhood, was never robust, it was strong enough to enable him to enjoy life very heartily in the free air of his own hills. A physician acts faithfully by us when he tells us what is best for our health; and the question how much health is to be sacrificed to intellectual training, or how much intellectual discipline to health, is one for parents or the patient himself to settle. If Philip Stanburne had remained at Stonyhurst, his mind would have had all the advantages of the careful education which is given there; but his body thrived better in his own plantations. It is unfortunate for medical men that when the course they recommend is successful it is commonly inferred to have been unnecessary. Thus, because Philip Stanburne grew stronger at the Peel, people said that there had never been any occasion to remove him from Stonyhurst.

The few years that he lived in this way with his mother were the sweetest and happiest of his life, and when they were brought to a close by

the kind lady's death, Philip Stanburne, then just of age, only lamented that he had not seen more of her whilst she lived. He had passed one or two vacations at the houses of the Catholic gentry whose sons were schoolfellows of his at Stonyhurst, and now it seemed to him almost a crime to have left that dear lady alone, that he might enjoy the holidays with his friends. His life became a life of almost absolute solitude, broken only by a weekly visit to a great house ten miles from Stanithburn, where a chaplain was kept, and he could hear mass—or by the occasional visits of the doctor, and one or two by no means intimate neighbours. In country places a difference of religion is a great impediment to intercourse; and though people thought it quite right that Philip Stanburne should be a Catholic, they never could get over a feeling of what they called “queerness” in the presence of a man who believed in transubstantiation, and said prayers to the Virgin Mary. Like many other recluses, he was credited with a dislike to society far different from his real feeling, and much less creditable to his good sense. Habit had made solitude endurable to him, and there was something agreeable, no doubt, in the sense of his independence, but there was not the slightest taint of misanthropy in his whole nature. He

naturally shrank from the society of Sootythorn because it was so strongly Protestant; and there was an earnest and energetic clergyman there who combated Popery with such vigour, that the noise of the controversy filled all the country round about. On the other hand, without being by nature avaricious, he had so keen a sense of duty to the name he represented, that he resolved to improve and increase the Stanithburn estate to the utmost of his ability; and as he had no profession by which money might be earned, he was reduced to mere saving, which injured his reputation in two ways, for it both compelled him to keep out of society and to look very closely to the expenses of his own little establishment.

Philip Stanburne was fishing in the rocky trout-stream that ran below the Peel, when a boy came to him with his letters. The only one of them with which we are concerned was the following:—

“WENDERHOLME, *April 4*, —.

“MY DEAR SIR,—You are no doubt aware that a regiment of militia is to meet for training at Sootythorn, and that I have accepted the lieutenant-colonelcy. Would it be agreeable to you to join us? It would give me much pleasure to

be allowed to propose you to the Lord-Lieutenant for a captain's commission.

“I have to offer an apology for not writing on this subject earlier (there being now so short a time before the first training), but the truth is, I was led to believe that an application like this would be unsuccessful. I was told that you were so busily occupied with improvements at Stanithburn, that your acceptance of a commission was most unlikely. I hope this little difficulty may be overcome. The distance from our headquarters to Stanithburn is not such as to prevent you from visiting your property from time to time, even during the month of our training; and if I can manage to find a good lieutenant for you, there need not be any real difficulty about short leaves of absence.

“Pray excuse this liberty. A militia colonel is naturally anxious to have his regiment properly officered, and so he has to do a little recruiting himself when the opportunity occurs.—I am, my dear sir, yours very faithfully, J. STANBURNE.

“PHILIP STANBURNE, Esq.”

The recipient of this letter was far too minutely acquainted with the history of his family not to be aware that it was the first communica-

tion which had passed from Wenderholme to the Peel for nearly three hundred years; and his nature was sufficiently imaginative to realise the profoundly poetical nature of the fact. He looked up to the old Peel, whose tower, grey as the rocks around it, took the full sunshine of the fresh April morning, and then he looked to the hill behind Wenderholme, faintly blue in the remote distance. What distance? what remoteness? "It seems a long way off," thought Philip Stanburne, "but really, how near it is! Why, a horse could traverse it in a day, and a pigeon in half an hour. A railway train crosses twenty such spaces between sunrise and the evening; and here are two houses, inhabited by men of the same blood, that have been separated for centuries by mere coldness—no downright, honest quarrel, but a long traditional sulk." He knew all about John Stanburne, of course; every Stanburne of the Peel had known all about every Stanburne of the Hall for the last nine generations—whom they married, and what children they had, and all the main facts of their lives. This information always came to the Peel somehow, because it always interested the inhabitants of the Peel. But no Stanburne of the Peel had ever, since the death of the old knight who took

part in the luckless Pilgrimage of Grace, received any direct communication whatever from Wenderholme—not so much as the mere formal announcement of a marriage or a death; nor had the chiefs of the two houses ever once spoken to each other. And yet any hatred or jealousy which might have caused the first estrangement had utterly died out long ago, but in its place there was a haughty reserve and pride. Neither Stanburne would make one step in advance, and it seemed as likely that the stone houses themselves would quit their foundations and meet in some field between them, as that their owners would come together in amity.

Like all solitary men, Philip Stanburne had acquired meditative habits, and as his temperament was of the order in which imagination naturally predominates, if circumstances are favourable to its freedom, the reader will easily understand that this letter from Wenderholme set the whole imaginative machinery in motion. The history of his family was to Philip Stanburne a subject of the intensest interest. He had little of the pride of birth—he had nothing of the pride of social position—but he had in an unusual degree the sentiment of ancestry; and there were points in the history of the Stanburnes

which could only be effectually cleared by a reference to papers that might be presumed to exist at Wenderholme. Philip Stanburne was not rich, but he would have given many bank-notes to be allowed to ransack all the archives there. He had dreaded to ask for permission to do this, from an apprehension that his application might be considered a mere pretext for scraping acquaintance; and now the opportunity had come. It was this consideration, rather than any serious intention of joining the militia, for which he felt himself little suited, that induced him to reply as follows to his new and not unwelcome correspondent:—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I feel flattered by the kind proposal in your letter, but fear that I should not be of much use to you as a recruit. I am so little acquainted with military affairs that it is difficult for me to answer positively without having a little previous conversation with the adjutant or yourself. Would you kindly name a day and place where I might have the honour of meeting you? Having no engagements whatever, I may promise beforehand to keep any appointment you may make.—I remain, my dear sir, yours very truly,

PHILIP STANBURNE.

“Colonel STANBURNE, &c. &c.”

CHAPTER III.

THREE days after writing the note which concluded our last chapter, Philip Stanburne was again fishing at the place where he had received the Colonel's letter, and, by a natural effect of the association of ideas, he began to think about it, and to wonder why the Colonel had not answered. "His letter was very civil," Philip thought, "and yet it is not so civil to leave me for days without making an appointment that I asked for, or at least telling me that he cannot make it, if he has other engagements. I wonder what sort of a fellow he is.

Just then his reverie was interrupted by a rustling of the branches behind him, and there stood our friend the Colonel, slightly embarrassed by that timidity which is natural to all Englishmen in circumstances that make it especially necessary to be perfectly at ease.

"I—I beg your pardon, Mr Stanburne. I—

I'm the recruiting sergeant, you know, who wrote to you the other day."

Philip Stanburne instantly laid his fishing-rod on the grass, and offered his hand to the Colonel. He was perhaps the more timid man of the two, being the more solitary; but they were both timid men, and at this particular minute they were ridiculously afraid of each other. The Colonel had heard very exaggerated accounts of Philip Stanburne's hatred of society, and felt himself, as an intrusive member of society, the object against which all that hatred would now naturally be concentrated and directed; whilst the supposed misanthropist was afraid of the Colonel as a possible man of the world, a character he particularly dreaded as most unlikely to sympathise with his own. Besides this, he had his apprehensions as a housekeeper, and asked himself whether there was anything to lunch. Philip Stanburne was not much in the habit of taking lunch at the Peel. He was out all day, either to look after his workmen or for his amusement as a sportsman, and carried his lunch, which was of the most frugal description, in his pocket. His first object was to open communications with the garrison of his castle, notwithstanding the presence of the enemy.

“Don’t let me interrupt you fishing,” said the Colonel; “do go on, and let me watch you and learn something. I’ll sit down here and smoke. May I offer you a cigar? I wish I could fish; but then if I could, I haven’t got a decent stream to fish in. There are no streams at Wenderholme, except a little brook that comes down the valley behind the house; but you’ve got a glorious one here at the Peel—really, it *is* fine. It’s as good as the Highlands.”

Philip busied himself with his fly-book, and the Colonel had time to study him a little. He was tall, though not quite so tall as the Colonel, and there was a slightness in his build which indicated the natural delicacy of his constitution; but as his daily life was the healthiest that a human being can lead, there was nothing approaching the appearance of the valetudinarian. His complexion, derived from his mother, was singularly fair, and his hair silky and light; in short, in the language of physiology, he was evidently an almost pure type of the nervous temperament, with just enough infusion of the sanguine to give him necessary energy. He had but one vice—he was already, at the age of twenty-five, an excessive smoker. His life was so solitary that he needed some.

companionship, and he had two companions—his dog and his pipe. Like all men who are strongly addicted to the pipe, he cared comparatively little for cigars, and smoked that which the Colonel had just offered him rather to please his visitor than for his own gratification.

There is a freemasonry amongst the votaries of tobacco which often serves to bridge over the first chasm that separates perfect strangers; and these two felt rather relieved when the light incense of their havannahs rose in the pure spring air.

“It is very kind of you to come to see me,” said Philip; “I had proposed to go to Wenderholme.”

“I hope you will *often* come to Wenderholme. The distance is not great. It can hardly be more than twenty miles, and it is a very pleasant drive. The roads are not quite so good, though, on the hillside here as they are in the plain. It is curious, is it not, that there should have been so little communication between two branches of the same family living so near to each other? As you are the head of the Stanburnes, I ought, perhaps, to have waited for you to make the first step; but being an older man, and a mawid man, and having such a capital excuse as this recruit-

ing business, I took the liberty of writing to you, and then your answer encouraged me to see you personally. Not that the militia was merely a pretext—I hope you'll join us; really I mean that, you know. The wedgiment is in want of good officers, and it seems to me that you're just the fellow we want. *Do* join us, now, and oblige a poor colonel, who hardly knows where to turn to get his complement of captains."

The last sentence of Colonel Stanburne's little speech contained a downright fib. He had any number of candidates for his captaincies; his real difficulties, and very serious difficulties they were, consisted in the paucity of subalterns. He had not even been able to get a lieutenant for every company; and as for ensigns, he had none, and was beginning to abandon the hope of ever having any. The truth was, that John Stanburne had long desired to open communication with the Peel, but had always shrunk from doing so without some real reason; and now it was quite true that he wanted Philip to join the regiment, though not in the interest of the public service, to which he was by no means indispensable.

Philip Stanburne, like all recluses, had a dread of the outer world in general, but was on that very account the more accessible to the kindness

of such individual representatives of that outer world as happened to come within the narrow orbit of his life. This Colonel Stanburne seemed to him less and less terrible every minute, and the terrors of regimental existence for twenty-eight days in the year diminished at the same time. If it had not been for the irresistible temptation of the archives at Wenderholme, there cannot be the least doubt that the Colonel's letter would have met with a decided refusal; for the last thing in the world that Philip Stanburne would have been likely to do of his own free-will was to exchange the fresh air of his own land, and the flowery banks of his own stream, in the very sweetest of all the months of the year, for a bedroom at Mr Garley's Thorn Inn at Sootythorn.

The two cigars were not yet extinguished when the commission was positively accepted. "And now that I have done such a good day's work," said the Colonel, "if you please, I want something to eat. I didn't like to tell you how hungry I was before, but one may ask a brother officer for a feed."

Philip led the way to the Tower with a feeling of some anxiety as to the entertainment he might be able to lay before his guest. Any deficiency

in this respect could not be attributed to poverty, for he was quite sufficiently well to do to live comfortably; but he contented himself with so little that his cook had got into very idle habits, and cooked less and less every year. In fact she had now reached that point that she hardly cooked anything at all, and Philip's solitary dinners were poorer than those of any shopkeeper in Sootythorn. Still he never complained, but ate contentedly whatever was given to him, looking forward always to the solace of his pipe, which seemed to him an ample compensation for the deficiencies of his table. There can be no doubt that he was an uncommonly good Catholic in his observance of the ordinances that relate to fasting; but, unlike some of his brethren, he observed less piously the festivals of his Church. As he never had any guests, his hermit-like habits were not interrupted by that glaring light which is thrown upon a man's table when he sees it through the eyes of another.

The Tower or Peel of Stanithburn, which the new friends now approached, and of which they caught glimpses as they followed the windings of the stream, was one of the most southerly of the towers of defence which are scattered north and south of the Scottish border. It had little

pretension to architectural beauty, and lacked altogether that easily-achieved sublimity which in so many Continental buildings of a similar character is due to the overhanging of *machi-coulis* and *tourelles*. It possessed, however, the distinguishing feature of a battlement, which, still in perfect preservation, entirely surrounded the leads of the flat roof. Beyond this, the old Tower retained no warlike character, but resembled an ordinary modern house, with an additional storey on the top of it. The windows, which were numerous, had been pierced in the old walls by a Stanburne of the eighteenth century, who preferred daylight to architectural consistency, and were of the kind so familiar to modern Englishmen in the streets of every town. It is unnecessary to observe that many openings of any kind (were they even filled with the purest Gothic tracery and glass) are the surest means of destroying the architectural expression of a medieval tower of defence; and that of all windows that it would be possible to select, the modern sash-window achieves this the most completely. In order, however, that nothing might be wanting to give a thoroughly commonplace appearance to the edifice, the moderniser had put before the front door one of those clas-

sical porticoes, consisting of two pillars and a shallow stone cistern on the top of them, which are supposed to lend dignity to the habitation of a gentleman. The pillars were of no particular style, but bore, perhaps, a less distant resemblance to the Doric than to any other of the five orders. The marvel is that he had left the battlement and leads; but it so happened, fortunately for any remnant of character which the Tower still retained, that the enterprising gentleman had been stopped by want of means. It had been part of his plan to cast down the battlement altogether, and to replace the leads by a neat roof of blue slate; but the other "improvements" had turned out more costly than he had anticipated, and he had not money enough to go on. His successor cared nothing about the house one way or the other, except as a place to dwell in; and then came a breath of the new interest in the works of the middle ages which has arisen in the nineteenth century. Three or four antiquaries or architects had at intervals come to look at Stanithburn Peel, and these visits had given the owner a novel pride in it. Henceforth the battlements were safe.

Whatever injury the Philistinism of inartistic country gentlemen might have inflicted upon the

Tower itself, they had not been able to destroy the romantic beauty of its site. The hill that separates Shayton from Wenderholme is of sandstone; and though behind Twistle Farm and elsewhere there are groups of rocks of more or less picturesque interest, they are not comparable to the far grander limestone region about the Tower of Stanithburn. The Tower itself is situated on a bleak eminence, half surrounded by a curve of the stream already mentioned; but a mile below the Tower the stream passes through a ravine of immense depth, and in a series of cascades reaches the level of the plain below. Above Stanithburn Peel, on the other hand, the stream comes from a region of unimaginable desolation—where the fantastic forms of the pale stone lift themselves, rain-worn, like a council of rude colossi, and no sound is heard but the wind and the stream, and the wild cry of the plover.

“I have heard,” said the Colonel, “that the name which your house still keeps, and from which our own name comes, is due to some stone in your stream—stone in the burn, or stane i’ th’ burn, and so to Stanithburn and Stanburne. Is there any particular stone here likely to give a ground for the theory, or is it only a tradition?”

“I have no doubt,” said Philip Stanburne, “of the accuracy of tradition in this instance. Come and look at the stone itself.”

He turned aside from the direct path to the Tower, and they came again to the brink of the stream, which had here worn for itself two channels deep in the limestone. Between these channels rose an islanded rock about thirty feet above the present level of the water. A fragment of ruined building was discernible on its narrow summit.

As the two men looked together on the stone from which their race had taken its name centuries ago, both fell under the influence of that mysterious sentiment, so different from the pride of station or the vanity of precedence, which binds us to the past. Neither of them spoke, but it is not an exaggeration to say that both felt their relationship then. Had not the time been when Stanburne of the Peel and Stanburne of Wenderholme were brothers? A fraternal feeling began to unite these two by subtle, invisible threads.

“What’s that fragment of building on the rock?” asked the Colonel.

“A remnant of a small chapel. There must have been a bridge—very likely a wooden bridge—to the rock formerly. It is quite inaccessible

now. I hope to restore it all some day ; but I mean the chapel to be beautiful, and cannot quite afford it at present."

Colonel Stanburne, though really, as we have said, quite as timid as Philip, had a certain amount of swagger in his manner, which was a part of the *genre* which, for some unaccountable reason, he thought it necessary to adopt. This made him somewhat alarming to the recluse, as he threw himself on a sofa in Philip's parlour, and declared that he was dying of inanition.

Philip Stanburne's establishment was a very small one, and the men were always out in the woods, except when absolutely necessary at home. It happened, therefore, on the present occasion, that there was nobody in the house except the housekeeper, Mrs Sutcliffe, and a young kitchen-girl, who led a life of absolute subjection under her despotic authority. This Mrs Sutcliffe was at the same time Philip's cook, and the reader is already aware that she cooked as little as possible. In fact she had not been endowed by nature with that capacity to take a pride and pleasure in such labours, which is the mark of the artistic vocation. She hated cooking, and the less she practised the worse she did it.

When Philip rang his bell it was Mrs Sutcliffe

who answered it in person. She had a theory that the kitchen-girl ought to be kept out of Philip's way—for the kitchen-girl was pretty; but the precaution was a very unnecessary one, for he was as yet remarkably indifferent to women, except that he was afraid of them.

"Mrs Sutcliffe," said the master of the house, "we want some lunch."

"Lunch, sir—yes, sir; what would you like to have, sir?"

"Let us have some cold beef, if there is any. You like cold beef, I daresay, Colonel Stanburne?"

The Colonel heartily assented, but Mrs Sutcliffe looked unpleasantly serious. "Please, sir, there is no cold beef."

"Well, then, give us some cold mutton. There's sure to be some cold mutton—we killed a sheep only last week."

Mrs Sutcliffe disappeared, and returned after an absence of a few minutes. "Please, sir, there is no cold mutton—only a few bones, sir, that I meant to make some soup of for your dinner, sir;" and then she added, "I'd intended to kill a fowl for your dinner, sir, but it cannot be got ready all at once."

"Well, hang it," said Philip, "give us ham and eggs."

“The ham’s just finished, sir, but I daresay I may find some fresh eggs.”

Such conversations with Mrs Sutcliffe were of frequent occurrence when Philip was alone, and then they seemed natural enough. If he was told that there was no meat, it seemed to him, like the absence of sunshine, an inevitable want that it was useless to vex himself about in the present, or to try to obviate for the future. But the presence of Colonel Stanburne set these familiar facts in a new light, and it occurred to Philip, for the first time in his life, that regularity in his housekeeping was merely a question of expenditure and determination. So he looked at Mrs Sutcliffe with an expression in his eyes that she had never seen there since she came to live at Stanithburn Peel, and he said,—

“Mrs Sutcliffe, I wonder you don’t manage the house better. I give you *carte blanche*.”

“Well, sir, I know you let me have the cart whenever I require it; but I’ve been so busy in the house lately, and it’s such a long way to Rigton.”

Colonel Stanburne could not keep his gravity at this, and exploded in sonorous laughter. Mrs Sutcliffe, much astonished and somewhat hurt, made the best of her way to the kitchen, where

she found the faithful Fyser, who, as the reader may perhaps remember, was Colonel Stanburne's own especial attendant.

"What's the Colonel laughing so loud about?" said Fyser; "I can hear him down here."

"He's laughin' because he's weak for hunger, I reckon. When they're weak and hungry, if they start laughin' they cannot stop theirselves."

"Why, then, you should give him something to eat."

"There *is* nout."

Fyser immediately makes his way to the door of the room where his master is, easily guided thereto by the sound of his manly voice. He taps at the door. "Come in." Enter Fyser.

"Please, sir, I should wish to speak to you private."

"What's the matter now — something about the horses, I suppose? Pray excuse me for one moment;" and the Colonel came out into the hall.

"Beg pardon, sir, but the housekeeper says there's nothing to eat."

"It's very sad, Fyser—I'm dying of hunger."

"Well, sir, as I didn't know you would be stoppin' here to lunch, I put up your luncheon in the dog-cart in case you was hungry on the

road; and if I might be allowed to serve it, there'd be plenty both for you and the other gentleman."

Delicacy is worth a sacrifice, and the Colonel bore the little inconveniences which it sometimes imposes without giving them a second thought. But they seemed hard to-day. He had a fine healthy appetite, he had breakfasted early, he had driven his tandem twenty-five miles, he had breathed the keen air of the Yorkshire hills.

"Fyser, what have you got in your basket?"

"A cold roast-duck, sir, and a cold roast-chicken, and a tart of some sort, and cheese, and a bottle of white Burgundy, such as you generally take for lunch."

"Well, now, Fyser, you must tell nobody about your provisions—d'ye hear? Keep 'em quiet in the dog-cart."

"Yes, sir," said Fyser, rather astonished, for he had fully intended to serve the repast which was due to his forethought in Philip Stanburne's dining-room.

"It's a great pity," said Philip, when the Colonel went back to him, "that I caught no fish this morning. Suppose we went back to the river and tried again. I know a very good pool that was not disturbed this morning. It is very pos-

sible that we might find something there." The Colonel, however, preferred an egg on the table to a fish as yet in his native element, and said so. Mrs Sutcliffe reappeared, and expressed her regret that the hens had not laid any eggs.

The end of it was, that they lunched with a remnant of old cheese (delicious, no doubt, for people who appreciate cheese in a state of corruption) and a jug of ale. The Colonel had a profound disgust for old cheese. A mite sickened him, and a grub made him shudder and feel cold along the spine; but he swallowed two or three morsels manfully, with the help of much bread and beer.

"Won't you have some sherry?" said Philip. The Colonel preferred half a wine-glass of neat brandy, as being more likely to end the lives of the inhabitants of the cheese. Then he tried to forget his miseries with a cigar, his secret thoughts still turning sadly to the cold roast-duck in the dog-cart.

They went into the ill-kept garden, following grass-grown walks between uncultivated beds. Strongly contrasting with all the rest, one little spot, about twenty yards by ten, was surrounded by a wire fence with network, and evidently cultivated with the most scrupulous care.

“This bit is my mother’s garden,” said Philip. “I was her gardener in the last years of her life, and cultivated this spot for her; and we tended her flowers together. I keep it still in the same way. I cannot afford to have a regular gardener; my men are generally employed about the estate, and more productively.”

“Would you like to look over the inside of the house?” Philip added.

They went through all the rooms—very commonplace rooms for the most part, furnished in the latter end of the eighteenth century. The only thing to distinguish them from rooms in a house a hundred years old was the great thickness of the wall, visible at every window. In the lower storey it was fully eight feet thick, and in one room nearly twelve feet.

“I am just beginning,” said the owner of the Tower, “a work of restoration, but in a very slow and quiet way, as becomes a man of limited income. I can carve both in wood and stone myself—not in a refined way, like a highly-trained sculptor, but about as well as the rude artists who worked all over the country in the Tudor times. In the same way I can paint, too—that is, illuminate in oil—when I want it for decoration. I am not what is called an artist in these days—that

is, a man of great technical accomplishment, with a scientific knowledge of the figure—but I am not exactly what is called an amateur either. Amateurs usually aim at more than they can accomplish with the amount of study they give ; but I aim at nothing that may not be done with some taste and a moderate amount of labour. Come and look at my workshop.”

Philip led the Colonel to a large room on the second floor. A joiner was at work at a bench at one end of it ; at the other end was another bench, with tools scattered over it as if a workman had recently quitted it. The joiner was planing a massive piece of oak, and on the unoccupied bench was another heavy block of the same wood partially carved. Many fragments of joiners' work, more or less ornamented with carving, leaned against the wall and in the corners of the extensive workshop.

“It is curious,” observed Philip Stanburne, “that although I can carve quite as well as the country carvers in Henry VIII.'s time, I cannot approach a good modern joiner, such as James Whitaker here, in the use of the plane and in mortising. The reason is, that carving is freer work, and when quite rude, as mine is, does not need much accuracy of hand. We have been

making some wainscot lately, and Whitaker did the joiner's work much better than it was usually done in old wainscot, and incomparably better than I could have done it; but when I set him to carve, his carving was rather dry and mechanical. Wasn't it, Whitaker?"

"I cannot tell right how it is, sir," answered Whitaker, "but when you do the carvin' and me the joinery, things gets on best. It seems easy enough to cut out a hornymint same as them grapes and leaves for the cornish of your new study; but when I do it, there's no life in it, and when you do it, it's just same as th' ould carvin' as was done i' th' time o' Queen Elizabeth. I fancy as I'm 'appen rather too partikler with my measurin'."

"It has been fortunate for me," said Philip to the Colonel, who was now busy examining a panel of his handiwork, "that I was too poor to employ the class of carvers—half artists, half mechanics—who usually do restorations of this kind. My poverty has given me a very delightful occupation, which a richer man would naturally have left to paid workmen, both from the idea that the workmen would do it better, and because, if he had tried, he would not have had the perse-

verance to get over the first difficulties. I dislike mechanical carving so much that I should have required accomplished artists, who would have expected high pay. And, after all, their work would not have been what I wanted. It would have been too perfect in form, too scientific, to harmonise well with an old building like this. The only rooms that are restored as yet are my study and one bedroom, besides the chapel. We go on very slowly, James Whitaker and I, but there are signs that we shall be rather more expeditious in the future. I am beginning to carve much more rapidly and more certainly; besides, the chapel cost more labour than any other room is likely to cost us."

After duly visiting the chapel and the other restored rooms, the Colonel took his leave, and the tandem rolled swiftly on the road towards Wenderholme. When they were about five miles from the Peel, and in a quiet place remote from the dwellings of men, the Colonel began to feel a longing for cold roast-duck, which, however, he stoically resisted. Fyser had similar longings, for his own provisions lay unopened along with those of his master. He often conversed with the Colonel when they were out together in this way,

and these conversations were agreeable both to master and servant. Fyser sometimes began them, as in this instance.

“Do you find it rather coolish this afternoon, sir? would you like a topcoat? I brought a light one and one rather heavier for you, sir, in case you might require it.”

“You did right, Fyser; it *is* cool. I’ll put the coat on when we come to the next rise.”

“Most remarkable weather, sir, for the time of the year; it’s changed very sudden durin’ the last few days. Now, a week since, it was so ’ot that I’d quite lost my happetite, but this cool weather ’as brought it back again. It’s most extrordinary how this wind makes one hungry. Don’t you feel it so, sir, yourself?”

“Well, yes; no doubt, no doubt. But I’m not very hungry just now, Fyser. We had lunch at the Peel only about an hour ago.”

“Perhaps you might like just a wing of cold roast-duck, sir; it’s a very nice duck. Might I take the basket out, sir?”

“But how am I to eat and drive?”

“I can take the reins, sir, whilst you eat. But it would be much pleasanter just to stop by the roadside. It would rest the ’orses a little.”

“Colonel Stanburne pulled up at a pleasant spot, where there was half an acre of green grass between the hedge and the road. The hedge was already beginning to be fragrant with blossom, the grass was deliciously fresh, and as the place was sheltered from the cool breeze of which Mr Fyser had complained, there could be no inconvenience on the score of temperature. The horses were taken from the dog-cart, and turned loose to enjoy the young sweet grass — sweeter to them than the best corn at Wenderholme. Fyser laid a white napkin on this natural lawn, and a railway rug beside it, and served his master with the gravity of the butler at the Hall.

“If you’re hungry, too, Fyser, sit down and eat. Eat the chicken; I’ve demolished the whole of the duck. Didn’t you say there was a tart? Give me some tart.”

The rest of the drive was more agreeable for both of them. When he got back, the Colonel attempted to describe Stanithburn to Lady Helena. “Why, Helena,” he said, “Philip Stanburne has a chapel in his house; and a magnificent one, too—really most magnificent.” On which her ladyship, who was something of an archæologist, asked him what sort of architecture, what cen-

ture, &c. But the Colonel could only reply that he “believed it was Gothic — yes, decidedly Gothic—Elizabethan, you know, and that sort of thing; but it was really very fine—all carved—and it was Philip himself, by George! who had done all the carving; quite a clever fellow, only he lived a great deal too much by himself.”

CHAPTER IV.

NOT many days after the little events narrated in the preceding chapter, Mr Philip Stanburne awoke in a small bedroom on the second floor of the Thorn Inn, or Thorn Hotel, at Sootythorn. It was a disagreeable, stuffy little room; and, as is often the case in the bedrooms of English inns, an extensive four-poster covered fully one-half the area of the floor. There was the usual wash-hand stand, and close to the wash-hand stand a chair, and on the chair the undress uniform of a militia officer. Philip Stanburne lay in the extensive four-poster, and contemplated the military equipment, of which the most brilliant portions were the crimson sash, and the bright, newly-gilded hilt of a handsome sword. As it was only the undress uniform, there was nothing particularly striking in the dress itself, which consisted of a plain dark-blue frock-coat, and black trowsers with

narrow red seam. Nevertheless, Captain Stanburne felt no great inclination to invest his person with what looked very like a disguise. His instincts were by no means military; and the idea of marching through the streets of Sootythorn with a drawn sword in his hand had little attraction for him.

When he drew up his blind, the view from the window was unpleasantly different from the view that refreshed his eye every morning at Stanithburn Peel. The Thorn Inn was higher than most of the houses in Sootythorn, and Philip Stanburne had a view over the roofs. Very smoky they all were, and still smokier were the immense chimney-stalks of the cotton-mills. "One, two, three, four," began Philip, aloud, as he counted the great chimneys, and he did not stop till he had counted up to twenty-nine. The Thorn Inn was just in the middle of the town, and there were as many on the other side—a consideration which occurred to Philip Stanburne's reflective mind, as it sometimes occurs to very philosophical people to think about the stars that are under our feet, on the other side of the world.

"What a beastly place it is!" thought Philip Stanburne. "I wish I had never come into the

militia. Fancy me staying a month in such a smoky hole as this! I wish I were back at the Peel. And just the nicest month in the year, too!" However, there he was, and it was too late to go back. He had to present himself at the orderly-room at half-past nine, and it was already a quarter to nine.

On entering the coffee-room of the hotel he found half-a-dozen gentlemen disguised like himself in military apparel, and engaged in the business of breakfast. He did not know one of them. He knew few people, especially amongst the Protestant gentry; and he literally knew nobody of the middle class in Sootythorn except Mr Garley the innkeeper, and one or two tradesmen.

Philip had no sooner entered the coffee-room than Mr Garley made his appearance with that air of confidence which distinguished him. Mr Garley was not Philip Stanburne's equal in a social point of view, but he was immensely his superior in *aplomb* and knowledge of the world. Thus, whilst Captain Stanburne felt slightly nervous in the presence of the gentlemen in uniform, and disguised his nervousness under an appearance of lofty reserve, Mr Garley, though little accustomed to the sight of military men, or of gentlemen wearing the appearance of military

men, was no more embarrassed than in the presence of his old friends the commercials. "Good morning, Captain Stanburne," said Mr Garley; "good morning to *you*, sir; 'ope you slep well; 'ope you was suited with your room."

Philip muttered something about its being "rather small."

"Well, sir, it *is* rather small, as you say, sir. I could have wished to have given you a better, but you see, sir, I kep the best room in the 'ouse for the Curnle; and then there was the majors, and his lordship here, Captain Lord Henry Ughtred, had bespoke a good room more than six weeks ago; so you see, sir, I wasn't quite free to serve you quite so well as I could have wished. Sorry we can't content *all* gentlemen, sir. What will you take to breakfast, Captain Stanburne? Would you like a boiled hegg, new-laid, or a little fried 'am, or shall I cut you some cold meat; there's four kinds of cold meat on the sideboard, besides a cold beefsteak-pie?"

As he finished his sentence, Mr Garley drew a chair out, the seat of which had been under the table, and, with a mixture of servility and patronage (servility because he was temporarily acting the part of a waiter, patronage because he still knew himself to be Mr Garley of the Thorn

Hotel), he invited Philip Stanburne to sit down. The other gentlemen at the table had not been engaged in a very animated conversation, and they suspended it by mutual consent to have a good stare at the new-comer. For it so happened that these men were the swell clique, which had for its head Captain Lord Henry Ughtred, and for its vice-captain the Honourable Fortunatus Brabazon; and the swell clique had determined in its own corporate mind that it would have as little to do with the snobs of Sootythorn as might be. It was apprehensive of a great influx of the snob element into the regiment. There was a belief or suspicion in the clique that there existed cads even amongst the captains; and as the officers had not yet met together, a feeling of great circumspection predominated amongst the members of the clique. Philip Stanburne ventured to observe that it was a fine morning; but although his next neighbour admitted that fact, he at once allowed the conversation to drop. Mr Garley had given Philip his first cup of tea; but, in his temporary absence, Philip asked a distinguished member of the swell clique for a second. The liquid was not refused, yet there was something in the manner of giving it which might have turned the hottest cup of tea in Lancashire to a lump of

solid ice. At length Lord Henry Ughtred, having for a length of time fixed his calm blue eyes on Philip (they were pretty blue eyes, and he had nice curly hair, and a general look of an overgrown Cupid), said,—

“Pray excuse me ; did I not hear Mr Garley say that your name was Stanburne ?”

“Yes, my name is Stanburne.”

“Are you Colonel Stanburne’s brother, may I ask ?”

“No ; the Colonel has no brothers.”

“Ah, true, true ; I had forgotten. Of *course*, I knew Stanburne had no brothers. Indeed, he told me he’d no relations—or something of the kind. You’re not a relation of his, I presume ; you don’t belong to his family, do you ?”

Philip Stanburne, in these matters, had very much of the feeling of a Highland chief. He was the representative of the Stanburnes, and the Colonel was head of a younger branch only. So when he was asked in this way whether he belonged to the Colonel’s family, he at once answered “no,” seeing that the Colonel belonged to *his* family, not he to the Colonel’s. He was irritated, too, by the tone of his questioner ; and, besides, such a relationship as the very distant one between himself and Colonel Stanburne was

rather a matter for poetical sentiment than for the prose of the outer world.

Mr Garley only made matters worse by putting his word in. "Beg pardon, Capt'n Stanburne, but I've always 'eard say that your family was a younger branch of the Wendrum family."

"Then you were misinformed, for it isn't."

"Perhaps it isn't just clearly traced out, sir," said Mr Garley, intending to make himself agreeable; "but all the old people says so. If I was you, sir, I'd have it properly traced out. Mr Higgin, the spinner here, got his pedigree traced out quite beautiful. It's really a very 'andsome pedigree, coats of arms and all. Nobody would have thought Mr Higgin 'ad such a pedigree; but there's nothin' like tracin' and studyin', and 'untin' it all hup."

Philip Stanburne was well aware that his position as chief of his house was very little known, and that he was popularly supposed to descend from some poor cadet of Wenderholme; but it was disagreeable to be reminded of the popular belief about him in this direct way, and in the hearing of witnesses before whom he felt little disposed to abate one jot of his legitimate pretensions. However, pride kept him silent, even after Mr Garley's ill-contrived speech, and he sought a diversion in

looking at his watch. This made the others look at their watches also ; and as it was already twenty-five minutes after nine, they all set off for the orderly-room, the swell clique keeping together, and Philip Stanburne following about twenty yards in the rear.

The streets of Sootythorn were seldom very animated at ten o'clock in the morning, except on a market-day ; and though there was a great deal of excitement amongst the population of the town on the subject of the militia, that population was safely housed in the fifty-seven factories of Sootythorn, and an officer might pass through the streets in comparative comfort, free from the remarks which would be likely to assail him when the factories loosed. With the exception of two or three urchins who ran by Philip's side, and stared at him till one of them fell over a wheelbarrow, nothing occurred to disturb him. As the orderly-room was very near, Captain Stanburne thought he had time to buy a pocket-book at the bookseller's shop, and entered it for that purpose.

Whilst occupied with the choice of his pocket-book he heard a soft voice close to him.

"Papa wishes to know if you have got Mr Blunting's Sermons on Popery."

“No, Miss Stedman, we haven’t a copy left, but we can order one for Mr Stedman if he wishes it. Perhaps it would be well to order it at once, as there has been a great demand for the book, and it is likely to be out of print very soon, unless the new edition is out in time to keep up the supply. Four editions are exhausted already, and the book has only been out a month or two. We are writing to London to-day; shall we order the book for you, Miss Stedman?”

The lady hesitated a little, and then said, “Papa seemed to want it very much—yes, you can order it, please.”

There was something very agreeable to Philip Stanburne’s ear in what he had heard, and something that grated upon it harshly. The tone of the girl’s voice was singularly sweet. It came to him as comes a pure unexpected perfume. It was amongst sounds what the perfume of violets is amongst odours, and he longed to hear it again. What had grated upon him was the word “Popery;” he could not endure to hear his religion called “Popery.” Still, it was only the title of some Protestant book the girl had mentioned, and she was not responsible for it—she could not give the book any other title than its own. Philip Stanburne was examining a quantity

of morocco contrivances (highly ingenious, most of them) in a glass case in the middle of the shop, and he turned round to look at the young lady, but she had her back to him. She was now choosing some note-paper on the counter. Her dress was extremely simple—white muslin, with a little sprig; and she wore a plain straw bonnet—for in those days women *did* wear bonnets. It was evident that she was not a fashionable young lady, for her whole dress showed a timid lagging behind the fashion.

When she had completed her little purchases Miss Stedman left the shop, and Captain Stanburne was disappointed, for she had given him no opportunity of seeing her face; but just as he was leaving she came back in some haste, and they met rather suddenly in the doorway. “I beg your pardon,” said the Captain, making way for her—and then he got a look at her face. The look must have been agreeable to him, for when he saw a little glove lying on the mat in the doorway, he picked it up rather eagerly and presented it to the fair owner. “Is this your glove, Miss—Miss Stedman?”

Now Miss Stedman had never in her life been spoken to by a gentleman in military uniform with a sword by his side, and the fact added to

her confusion. It was odd, too, to hear him call her Miss Stedman, but it was not disagreeable, for he said it very nicely. There is an art of pronouncing names so as to turn the commonest of them into titles of honour; and if Philip had said "your ladyship," he could not have said it more respectfully. So she thanked him for the glove with the warmth which comes of embarrassment, and she blushed, and he bowed, and they saw no more of each other—that day.

It was a poor little glove—a poor little cheap thread glove; but all the finest and softest kids that lay in their perfumed boxes in the well-stocked shops of Sootythorn,—all the pale grey kids and pale yellow kids which the young shopmen so strongly recommended as "suitable for the present season,"—were forgotten in a month, whereas Alice Stedman's glove was remembered for years and years.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Captain Stanburne got to the orderly-room he met Fyser, who was driving the Colonel's tandem slowly in the direction of the Thorn Inn. The horses had evidently been driven fast; their shining coats were varnished with perspiration, and flecked with dashes of white foam. Fyser was always so smart and tidy that he scarcely could be smarter or tidier, but there was something statelier than usual in his appearance, which Philip perceived, but could not account for. The truth was, that Mr Fyser had got a new hat, and on the hat affixed a cockade.

The orderly-room was a little old Dissenting chapel with a schoolroom attached to it, and a rather large courtyard which had formerly served as a playground for the youthful Dissenters who were educated there. The Dissenters of the present day have overcome that objection to the

beautiful which seems to have prevailed amongst them formerly, and many leading members of different denominations have liberally encouraged the erection of places of worship which, for richness of design and elaborate perfection of execution, are comparable to the marvels of the past. But the pious inhabitants of Sootythorn, who had built the little Salem Chapel in question in days when their body was poorer and less numerous than it is now, had not as yet realised the utility of æsthetics in religion, and they prayed with great fervour in a place which was only a chapel because it was used as a chapel, and which, when it ceased to be so used, might serve any purpose that required a place of its dimensions. Thus, when we say that the orderly-room was an old chapel, the reader need not picture to himself a scene of visible desecration such as is too frequently to be met with in France, where beautiful churches of the best Gothic epochs were pillaged at the Revolution, and are used to this day for the stabling of horses or the storing of the more massive kinds of merchandise. There you see the graceful curves of the groined vault rising over barrels of wine or piles of fuel, and the shattered tracery filled with rough boards where the jewellery of stained glass once gleamed

in the transparency of its splendour. If the orderly-room at Sootythorn had been a religious edifice of that kind, it would have been ill chosen for the business of a militia regiment, but when Philip Stanburne entered it he saw nothing to remind him that the simple room had ever been dedicated to a higher use. Captain Eureton, the Adjutant, had, with the aid of Mr Bettison the joiner, achieved wonders of orderly arrangement in the way of pigeonholes, and shelves, and boxes, and drawers. Eureton was a great master in the art and science of order, and as he stood surrounded by the officers it began to be felt, though as yet in the gentlest possible way, that he not only knew how to put and keep papers in their places but men.

The reader is requested to remember that this was not only the first day on which Colonel Stanburne's regiment met for that particular training, but the first day on which it ever met at all. The militia, though an old institution in England, had not been resorted to for many years as a means of national defence, and to men of Philip Stanburne's generation it was a new experiment. There was a sprinkling of old soldiers both amongst officers and men, and this leaven, it was hoped, would leaven the whole lump.

But as yet the lump had not been brought in contact with the leaven—had not, in fact, until this very day, aggregated itself into a lump at all. Most of the officers were unknown to each other, and many of them so slightly known to the Colonel that it was with difficulty that he remembered their names. The day when a newly-organised regiment meets for the first time is not an agreeable day. Natural relations have not had time to establish themselves; the public opinion of the mess about its individual members has not had time to form itself; and there exists a good deal of stiffness and awkwardness, due to the timidity of some and the self-conceit of others, and to a general feeling that men have not yet settled into their places. Colonel Stanburne was anxious to get his officers over this point as soon as possible, and with that intent, when all were assembled, made them a little speech. From the following verbatim report of it the reader will perceive that the Colonel, though not such a speech-maker as the warriors in Xenophon, knew how to say what suited the occasion. It was prefaced by an introduction from the Adjutant.

“Gentlemen,” said Captain Eureton, “please cease your conversations for a little time. The Colonel is so good as to say a few words to us.”

“ Captain Eureton and I,” said Colonel Stanburne, “ have had some experience of regimental life, and we quite agree in the desire that this regiment should become, I may say, a model—so far as it may be in our power to make it one. You cannot expect me to compliment you at so *very* early a period of your regimental existence; you have not done much yet, but at any rate nothing has as yet occurred to diminish your good name. I remember a *very* small boy who, being sent to school uncommonly early in life, was too young to have a chance of a prize—so the head-master kindly made him a present of a book, and wrote in it that it was a prize for knowledge yet to come. If I am to thank you or praise you to-day, it must in the same way be for knowledge yet to come. We shall find, I fear, that some of the men will be rather difficult to deal with. I have had a look at them this morning, and I must confess that, for the present, they seem rather a rough set. Don’t let this discourage you. It is quite surprising how soon the effects of discipline show themselves. In a month’s time the men will look different—they will be soldiers, or, if not quite that, still something very like it, when we separate. In your dealings with them, please try to be very steady and firm.

Many things will occur, especially at first, that may put you out of temper, or at least try your temper very much. In little difficulties, such as you are very likely to meet with, I should recommend you to consult the Adjutant at once. Captain Eureton is a most experienced officer, and you may rely upon his advice.

“I don't know that I have anything else to say, except that it is most desirable that we should know each other as soon as possible. That's the good of the mess. We shall meet at mess every evening, and soon know each other very well. I have not time to introduce you to each other this morning in a formal way, but I wish you would all consider yourselves introduced, and break the first ice as soon as ever you can. I hope Mr Garley will give us good dinners, and, so far as my experience of him goes, I have no doubt he will. We shall require to be well kept, for we've a good deal of hard work before us during the next twenty-eight days.”

After this address the Adjutant went into some details of business, with which it is unnecessary to trouble the reader, and informed the officers that as the orderly-room yard had been too small for the men to assemble in, they had been sent to the parade-ground. So the officers

all went to the parade-ground at once—field-officers and Adjutant on horseback, the rest on foot. Philip Stanburne followed the others. He knew nobody except the Colonel and the Adjutant, who had just said “Good morning” to him in the orderly-room; but they had trotted on in advance, so he was left to his own meditations. It was natural that in passing the bookseller’s shop he should think of Miss Stedman, and he felt an absurd desire to go into the shop again and buy another pocket-book, as if by acting the scene over again he could cause the principal personage to reappear. “I don’t think she’s pretty,” said Philip to himself—“at least, not really pretty; but she’s a sweet girl. There’s a simplicity about her that is very charming. Who would have thought that there was anything so nice in this beastly Sootythorn?” Just as he was thinking this, Philip Stanburne passed close to one of the blackest mills in the place—an old mill,—that is, a mill about thirty years old, for mills, like horses, age rapidly; and through the open windows there came a mixture of bad smells on the hot foul air, and a deafening roar of machinery, and above the roar of the machinery a shrill clear woman’s voice singing. The voice must have been one of great power, for it predominated over

all the noises in the place; and it either was really a very sweet one or its harshness was lost in the noises, whilst it rose above them purified. Philip stopped to listen, and as he stopped, two other officers came up behind him. The footpath was narrow, and as soon as he perceived that he impeded the circulation, Philip went on.

“That’s one o’ th’ oudest mills i’ Sootythorn,” said one of the officers behind Captain Stanburne; “it’s thirty year oud, if it’s a day.”

The broad Lancashire accent surprised Captain Stanburne, and attracted his attention. Could it be possible that there were officers in the regiment who spoke no better than that? Evidently this way of speaking was not confined to an individual officer, for the speaker’s companion answered, in the same tone,—

“Why, that’s John Stedman * mill, isn’t it?”

“John Stedman? John Stedman? it cannot be t’ same as was foreman to my father toward thirty year sin’?”

When Philip Stanburne heard the name of Stedman he listened attentively. The first speaker answered “Yes, but it is—it’s t’ same man.”

“Well, an’ how is he? he must be well off. Has he any chilther?”

* In the pure Lancashire dialect the apostrophe is omitted.

“Just one dorter, a nice quiet lass, ’appen eighteen year old.”

“So she’s the daughter of a cotton-spinner,” thought Philip, “and a Protestant cotton-spinner, most likely a bigot. Indeed, who ever heard of a Catholic cotton-spinner? I never did. I believe there aren’t any. But what queer fellows these are to be in the militia; they talk just like factory lads.” Then, from a curiosity to see more of these extraordinary officers, and partly, no doubt, from a desire to cultivate the acquaintance of a man who evidently knew something about Miss Stedman, Philip left the causeway, and allowed the officers to come up with him.

“I beg your pardon,” he said; “no doubt you are going to the parade-ground. Will you show me the way? I was following some officers who were in sight a minute or two since, but they turned a corner whilst I was not looking at them, and I have lost my guides.”

To Captain Stanburne’s surprise he was answered in very good English, with no more indication of the Lancashire accent than a clearly vibrated *r*, and a certain hardness in the other consonants, which gave a masculine vigour to the language, not by any means disagreeable. The

aspirate, however, was too frequently omitted or misplaced.

“We are going straight to the parade-ground ourselves, so if you come with us you cannot go wrong.” There was a short silence, and the same speaker continued, “The Colonel said we were to consider ourselves introduced. I know who you are—you’re Captain Stanburne of Stanithburn Peel; and now I’ll tell you who we are, both of us: I’m the Doctor—my name’s Bardly. I don’t look like a doctor, do I? Perhaps you are thinking that I don’t look very like an officer either, though I’m dressed up as one. Well, perhaps I don’t. This man here is called Isaac Ogden, and he lives at Twistle Farm, on a hill-top near Shayton, when he’s at home.”

This queer introduction, which was accompanied by the oddest changes of expression in the Doctor’s face, and by a perpetual twinkle of humour in his grey eye, amused Philip Stanburne, and put him into a more genial frame of mind than his experience of the swell clique at breakfast-time. Isaac Ogden asked Stanburne what company he had got, and on being told that it was number six, informed him that he himself was only a lieutenant.

“He’s lieutenant in the grenadier company,”

said the Doctor, "and on Sunday morning we shall see him like a butterfly with a pair of silver wings.* He's only a chrysalis to-day; his wings haven't budded yet. He's very likely put 'em on in private—most of them put on their full uniform in private, as soon as ever it comes from the tailor's. It's necessary to try it on, you know—it *might* not fit. The epaulettes would fit, though; but they generally take their epaulettes out of the tin box and put them on, to see how they look in the glass."

"Well, Doctor," said Stanburne, "I suppose you are describing from personal experience. When your own epaulettes came you looked at yourself in the glass, I suppose."

Here an indescribably comic look irradiated Dr Bardly's face. "You don't imagine that *I* have laid out any money on epaulettes and such gear? The tailor tried to make me buy a full uniform, of course, but it didn't answer with me. What do I want with a red coat, and dangling silver fringes over my shoulders? I've committed one piece of tomfoolery, and that's enough—I've bought this sword; but a sword might just possibly be of use

* For the information of some readers, it may be well to explain that the epaulettes of flank companies, which were of a peculiar shape, used to be called wings.

for a thief. There was a man in Shayton who had an old volunteer sword always by his bedside, and one night he put six inches of it into a burglar; so you see a sword *may* be of use, but what can you do with a bit of silver fringe?"

"But I don't see how you are to do without a full uniform. How will you manage on field-days, and how will you go to church on Sundays?"

"Get leave of absence on all such occasions," said the Doctor; "so long as I haven't a full uniform I have a good excuse." The fact was, that the Doctor's aversion to full dress came quite as much from a dislike to public ceremonies as from an objection to scarlet and silver in themselves. He had a youthful assistant in the regiment who was perfectly willing to represent the medical profession in all imaginable splendour, and who had already passed three evenings in full uniform, surrounded by his brothers and sisters, and a group of admiring friends.

They had turned down a lane by this time that led gradually out of the town—a narrow black lane of coal-ashes, between thorn-hedges, whose young leaves were already covered with soot. After following this black lane nearly a mile, the officers arrived at the parade-ground, which was

nothing more than a very large pasture that had been rented for the purpose.

“Now,” said the Doctor, “what d’ye think of the raw material, eh, Captain Stanburne?”

Philip Stanburne was certainly surprised. Rather more than a thousand ragamuffins were scattered about the field in irregular groups, and the bright scarlet of the sergeants’ new jackets, which was sprinkled amongst the mass, only served to make the rags of the men look more ragged, and the dull colours of their old clothes duller.

“Didn’t you say that you had got number six company?” asked the Doctor. “Well, it’s the very worst of the whole lot; it’s composed entirely of Shayton chaps and low Irish.”

At this moment the Adjutant called in a loud voice for “Captains of companies;” and Philip Stanburne, with the other captains, soon formed a group round the mounted officers. The Adjutant, in a speech which it is not necessary to repeat, gave some explanations to the captains, chiefly relating to billets, and then called the sergeants, telling them to get the companies together. Philip Stanburne found that his sergeant was a tall wiry old soldier who had seen service in India; and when his company was assembled, he found that

the Doctor's account of it was only too true—it was decidedly the worst-looking company in the field. When the roll of the regiment was called over some odd incidents occurred.

“James Mulligan!” shouted the Adjutant; and as there was no answer, he called out, “James Mulligan!” a second time. There was a brief pause, but a man in Stanburne's company made an awkward sort of sign that he wished to speak. This caught the Adjutant's eye, and he said, “Does anybody know anything about James Mulligan?”

“Know him, sir; don't I know him, that's all? He was the friend o' my youth!”

“Well, can you tell me why he isn't here?”

“Alas! sir, I would greatly prefer to reveal the justification to your private ear.”

“Out with it, man; you're keeping the whole regiment waiting!” Eureton was beginning to be angry, and everybody else was beginning to be amused.

“It's a grievous necessity, sir, that has prevented James Mulligan from having the honour to signify his respect for you, sir, by his corporeal presence on this auspicious occasion.”

The Adjutant was aware that the regiment was in a state of suppressed laughter, and his notions

of military propriety were so strict that he would have greatly preferred the possible explosion of a bombshell in the midst of it. Eureton got very angry. His face became as red as a sergeant's jacket, and he shouted to the poor Irishman with an energy that scattered the flowers of his rhetoric as a whirlwind the blossoms from an apple-tree,—

“WHY is not Mulligan present? Tell me at once, with none of your damned fine speeches!”

“Because he's on a sea voyage.”

“He has deserted, then. Put him down as a deserter.”

“I protest agin that,” said the Irishman; “James Mulligan is no deserter. He's a sowl above it. He's faithful to his colours!”

“Then, why did he leave the country?”

“*Becas he was thransporrted!*”

Shortly afterwards, when another man's name was called, and he did not answer, a friend of his passed a note to the Colonel written by the absentee himself, in which he very politely expressed his great regret that he should be unable to take part in the first year's training, owing to the fact that he was confined in the Preston House of Correction; and as gentlemen in the House of Correction share with gentlemen in the House of

Commons the privilege of absence from their regiments, the excuse was accepted as valid.

The day was a tiresome idle day for everybody except the Adjutant, who shouted till his throat was sore, and the sergeants, on whom fell the real work of the companies. After lunch, the important matter of billets had to be gone into, and it was discovered that it was impossible to lodge all the men in Sootythorn. One company, at least, must seek accommodation elsewhere. The junior captain must therefore submit, for this training, to be banished from the mess, and sent to eat his solitary beefsteak in some outlandish village, or, still worse, in some filthy and uncouth little manufacturing town. His appetite, it is true, might so far benefit by the long marches to and from the parade-ground that the beefsteak might be eaten with the best of sauces; but the ordinary exercises of the regiment would have been sufficient to procure that, and the great efforts of Mr Garley at the Thorn might have been relied upon for satisfying it. So the junior captain was ordered to take his men to Whittlecup, a dirty little town, of about six thousand inhabitants, four miles distant from Sootythorn; and the junior captain was Philip Stanburne.

Behold him, therefore, marching at the head of

his ragged rabble on the dusty turnpike road! The afternoon had been uncommonly hot for the season of the year; and a military uniform, closely buttoned across the breast, and padded with cotton wool, is by no means the costume most suitable for the summer heats. There were so few lieutenants in the regiment (there was not one ensign) that a junior captain could not hope for a subaltern, and all the work of the company fell upon Philip Stanburne and his old sergeant. It was not easy to keep anything like order amongst the men. They quarrelled and fought during the march; and it became necessary to arrange them so as to keep enemies at a distance from each other. Still, by the time they reached the precincts of Whittlecup several of the men were adorned with black eyes; and as a few had been knocked down and tumbled in the dust by their comrades, the company presented rather the appearance of a rabble after a riot than of soldiers in her Majesty's service. Philip Stanburne's uniform was white with dust; but as the dust that alighted on his face was wetted by perspiration, it did not there remain a light-coloured powder, but became a thick coat of dark paste. Indeed, to tell the truth, the owner of Stanithburn had never been so dirty in his life.

Now there was a river at the entrance to Whittlecup, and over the river a bridge; and on the bridge, or in advance of it (for the factories had just loosed), there stood a crowd of about three thousand operatives awaiting the arrival of the militiamen.

The Lancashire operative is not accustomed to restrain the expression of his opinions from motives of delicacy, and any consideration for your feelings which he may have when isolated diminishes with the number of his companions. Three factory lads may content themselves with exchanging sarcastic remarks on your personal appearance when you are out of hearing, thirty will make them in your presence, three hundred will jeer you loudly; and from three thousand, if once you are unlucky enough to attract their attention, there will come such volleys of derision as nobody but a philosopher could bear with equanimity.

Not only was the road lined on both sides with work-people, but they blocked it up in front, and made way for the militiamen so slowly, that there was ample time for Philip Stanburne to hear every observation that was directed against him. Amidst the roars of laughter which the appearance of the men gave rise to, a thousand special commentaries might be distinguished.

“Them chaps sowdiers! Why, there’s nobbut one sowdier i’ th’ lot as I can see on.”

“Where is he? I can see noan at o’.”

“Cannot ta see th’ felly wi’ th’ red jacket?”

“Eh, what a mucky lot!”

“They’ll be right uns for fightin’, for there’s four on ’em ’as gotten black een to start wi’.”

“Where’s their guns?”

“They willn’t trust ’em wi’ guns. They’d be shootin’ one another.”

“There’s one chap wi’ a soourd.”

“Why, that’s th’ officer.”

“Eh, captain!” screamed a factory girl in Philip’s ear, “I could like to gi’ thee a kiss, but thou’s gotten sich a mucky face!”

“I wouldn’t kiss him for foive shillin’,” observed another.

“Eh, but I would!” said a third; “he’s a nice young felly. I’ll kiss him to - neet when he’s washed hissel!”

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN STANBURNE never precisely knew how he reached his inn on that memorable evening. He had not passed the bridge before his company, undistinguishable from the factory people by dress, was broken up, and mingled with the crowd in hopeless, and, for the present, irremediable disorder. Amidst the jeers of the populace, the Captain arrived at the principal square or open place of Whittlecup, and seeing high above the heads of the rabble the painted image of an enormous bell, of that powerful but somewhat crude azure which is obtained by the liberal mixture of Prussian-blue with white-lead, he knew it to be his own billet, the Blue Bell Inn, and did what he could to arrive at the door thereof. The observations of the factory girls on the young gentleman's face were only too fully confirmed by an inspection of it in the looking-glass.

The straggling members of the company having now been collected in front of the inn-door, a group of innkeepers naturally formed itself there also, for the innkeepers were expecting the militiamen as guests; and though they were certainly, of all imaginable arrivals, the least likely to be profitable to the innkeepers of Whittlecup (her Majesty giving one halfpenny per head daily for lodging-money), they were received, nevertheless, without any appearance of unwillingness. As the sergeant distributed the billets, and called the name of the alehouse written upon each, the keeper of it announced himself in some such phrase as "That's me," or "Them's my chaps," or "Come, my lads, and I'll show you th' road;" and so in a very short time the men were all safely housed. When the Captain inspected the billets, he found every mess in a state of advancing conviviality. The innkeepers were treating them, without any expectation of payment—a too liberal hospitality, which afterwards proved a serious impediment to discipline.

Philip Stanburne had had so much to do about his company that he had found no time to dine; and on returning to the Blue Bell he ordered supper instead of dinner, as it was now nearly ten o'clock. His portmanteau had been sent after

him from Sootythorn, and as the military duties of that day were at an end, it was a pleasure to resume his ordinary dress. It is true that there was an evening costume in the portmanteau, consisting of a shell-jacket of the brightest possible scarlet, and a pretty dark-blue waistcoat, with silver braid and buttons; but Philip Stanburne's instincts were not of the kind which leads a man to sport scarlet when he can avoid it—and he especially dreaded the idea of blazing by himself, like a solitary peony, in the quiet parlour at the Blue Bell.

If it had been possible to have a private sitting-room, the Captain would have greatly preferred it. Like all men who are accustomed to solitude, he had learned the art of being happy with his own thoughts, or (at times, when his own thoughts were not bright enough to afford him much entertainment) with the thoughts of some favourite author. On the other hand, he had never acquired the still more valuable secret of interesting himself in men and women, especially when they were not of his own class; and the parlour of an inn—which is perhaps of all places in the world the best for studying mankind at one's ease—seemed to him a highly disagreeable sort of place, where a man is always liable to be intruded upon.

Thus it by no means added to his prospects of enjoying his solitary repast when he perceived, on entering the parlour, that there were already two men in it, one on each side the fire, in the polished arm-chairs of stained ash which were the orthodox furniture of the better sort of inns at Whittlecup.

The Captain's knife and fork had been so laid that he had a full view of these men as he sat at table. They had been smoking, for each had a brilliant copper spittoon by the side of his arm-chair, and a clay pipe on his own corner of the chimney-piece; but there was no visible tobacco-smoke in the room, nor any present intention, apparently, of creating it. For the present the two contented themselves with sipping brandy-and-water in perfect silence. One of them was a short stout man with grey hair, and whiskers of the same colour, only a little whiter, that met under his neatly-shaven chin; the other was a tall and vigorous man, apparently at least fifteen years younger than his companion, with a bushy head of red hair and a very florid complexion. It was the red man who spoke first.

“We're goin' to have your parson to preach at Whittlecup on Sunday, and a many 'll go to hear him, for he's very well liked i' Whittlecup.”

“What is he comin’ to preach ’ere for? Is it a charity sermon? Is it Propagation?”

“Nothin’ o’ th’ sort. It’s nobbut our parson as wants to go on the spree. He reckons he isn’t so well just now, and so he mun go and play him for a fortnit at Harrogate. I cannot make out where he finds th’ brass. He owes money all up and down, and there’s eight or ten tradesmen i’ Whittlecup as could stop his outin’ if they were so minded.”

“Does he drink as much as he used doin’?”

“Why, no, I cannot say as he does; but he follows worse.”

“How so? what d’ye mean?”

“Lasses.”

Here the grey man expressed his sense of astonishment and disapproval by a prolonged whistle.

“Why, there’ll be th’ malitias ’ere on Sunday. Robson tells me as they’ve come into Whittlecup to-night.”

“Ay, and a bonny lot they look, too,” said the red man, who, being an inhabitant of Whittlecup, had been present at the entry of Captain Stanburne’s company. “You never saw such a set o’ ragamuffins in your life.”

“Why, haven’t they got red jackets same as reglar sowdiers?”

“Nowt o’ th’ sort. They look more like five-score Irish haymakers.”

“And who’s th’ officer?”

“A young chap out o’ Yorkshire—same name as what d’ye call him, o’ Wendrum Hall.”

“Stanburne?”

“That’s it, that’s it. He’s the only one o’ th’ lot with a uniform, except th’ sergeant.”

“He doesn’t wear a uniform just now, however,” observed Captain Stanburne. But his hearers were far too slow of comprehension to understand the hint.

“Beg pardon, sir,” said the red man; “but I saw him in uniform myself about an hour since.”

“You don’t see him in uniform now. “I’m glad to get back into plain clothes again. My name is Stanburne.”

“Hope you will excuse us, Mr Stanburne—Captain Stanburne I should say,” replied the elder of the two men; “we meant no offence.”

“No offence was taken, but it seemed as well to tell you that the person you were talking about was in the room.”

“Quite right, sir; quite right. One may easily speak of a gentleman, believing him to be absent, in a way that might hurt his feelings if he was present. Not that we should have said anything

against you, sir, because we don't know anything. You don't belong to this neighbourhood, I believe."

"No; I live on the Yorkshire side of Sootythorn—about thirty-five miles from Sootythorn—at a place called Stanithburn Tower or Stanithburn Peel."

"I know the place," said the older man; "it's a very beautiful country. There are many curious dells in the limestone formation about there, and I have been there occasionally to seek for some rather rare plants which are to be found amongst the rocks just above Stanithburn Peel. I must have trespassed sometimes on your land, Captain Stanburne."

"You are quite welcome to do so, for such a purpose."

"Perhaps you may be a botanist yourself. If you are, you live in a place very favourable to the study of certain classes of plants."

"Unfortunately, though I live constantly out of doors I know nothing about botany. The mere finding of the name of a plant has always seemed an insuperable difficulty, except when it is in flower, and even then it is by no means easy."

"There are books that would help you over that, and the flora of this part of the country is really not extensive enough to burden a man's

memory very much. Now that you have done your supper, Captain Stanburne, perhaps you would not object to the smell of tobacco. It's disagreeable when one is eating, even to habitual smokers. I am a great smoker myself, and I cannot endure to eat in a cloud of tobacco."

Philip Stanburne answered by producing a well-seasoned meerschaum and a well-filled tobacco-pouch, and drew his arm-chair away from the table. The grey man had a certain attraction for him, and he seemed to improve rapidly on acquaintance. When the pipes were lighted, he continued,—

"I got the taste for botany when I was a factory lad at Shayton many years ago. I used to go on the hills on a Sunday afternoon, and I met two or three Manchester botanists there who were older than myself, but not richer, and who knew every plant that grew wild in our country. I learned a little geology, too, in quarries and coal-mines, but merely local geology; and I well recollect what a wonderful new sensation I got from your limestone district the first time I saw it. But I never had leisure enough to follow these pursuits as I could have wished. I began life in the humblest possible circumstances, and have been a hard-working man to this day."

“You used to live at Shayton,” observed Philip. “We have two men in our regiment from Shayton—the doctor, and a lieutenant—a Mr Ogden.”

“Ogden! Why, I used to be foreman at old Mr Ogden’s mill, and he allowed me a share of the profits. We had a run of good years, and it enabled me to start on my own account. I haven’t been to Shayton for many years. Mrs Ogden, who is a woman with a will, thought her husband treated me too kindly, and it was she who prevented him from taking me into partnership, which he would have done rather than let me come to Sootythorn. The officer in your regiment must be one of her two sons. Is his name Isaac or Jacob?—Isaac, is it? why, then, he’s the eldest. I could like to see him very well, and I *will* see him. He’ll recollect my name if you mention it to him, Captain Stanburne. My name’s Stedman—John Stedman.”

The beginning of Mr Stedman’s speech had prepared Philip Stanburne for its conclusion. Nevertheless he felt a slight shock of emotion when he heard the name. “So this is Miss Stedman’s father,” he thought; but he did *not* think, “I wonder how I should like him for a father-in-law,” because he had not reached that point yet. Some shadowy idea of this kind may

have flitted across his brain, but if it had shaped itself definitely, he would have rejected it as ludicrous and absurd. The ideas, however, which intend to take a permanent lodging in the mind are careful not to present themselves in visible shape at first. They come in a gaseous state, and solidify gradually afterwards.

Mr Stedman's companion, the florid man, turned out to be a calico-printer of Whittlecup. His name was Joseph Anison, as he told Philip Stanburne, very simply adding, "If you feel lonely, sir, sometimes of an evening, during your stay in Whittlecup, and would like to amuse yourself with a game at billiards, I've a good table at my house, and should be very glad to see you. Anybody will tell you where I live—outside the town, near the river, about a mile above the bridge."

"You'll hear a very good preacher on Sunday, Captain Stanburne," said Mr Stedman; "our incumbent at Sootythorn, Mr Blunting—a very eloquent man."

Philip was already aware that Mr Stedman was strongly Protestant, and hesitated slightly as he answered that, being a Catholic, he should hear mass in Saint Agatha's at Sootythorn. There was a perceptible change in Mr Stedman's

manner after this. They had come upon a dividing line. He had been very easy in his previous conversation; he now became more strictly polite, and even, perhaps, a little ceremonious. It would be an injustice to the good people of Sootythorn to say that they were divided by religious animosities of any virulent kind, but the members of the two Churches had always lived so much apart that they really did not know each other. They never entered each others' houses, and if they met by chance in some public and neutral place—such as the parlour of an inn—the gulf between them was acknowledged by a degree of politeness unusual in the ordinary relations of life. In this way they had lived side by side for generations; but of late the Rev. Abel Blunting—an earnest and truly pious Evangelical clergyman, who sincerely believed that for a religion to do good every detail of it must be historically true, and who had been endowed by nature with strong combative instincts and corresponding powers, both physical and intellectual—had awakened a sterner spirit of resistance to the encroachments of Rome, and was supported in this warfare by a Protestant association of laymen, which had John Stedman for its president. Stedman had been an ardent Free-trader, and a supporter of the Ten Hours'

Bill, and these victories had left his powers of opposition without sufficient resistance to keep him happy. He had conquered poverty, too, and in some considerable degree had conquered ignorance also — had educated himself beyond the common learning of men of business. He needed resistance, and he found it in “Popery”—an institution which, though not particularly flourishing in Sootythorn itself, was big enough elsewhere to be worth attacking, even in its most insignificant outposts. It will therefore be readily understood that Mr Anison’s invitation to Philip Stanburne was not followed by a similar one from John Stedman; and when the three separated for the night, the chance of a meeting between Miss Stedman and the young gentleman on whom she had made so favourable an impression seemed as remote and improbable as ever.

It was lucky for Captain Stanburne that all the factory people were just shut up in the mills at the hour of early parade. A little crowd of townspeople and young children gathered round the men, but without interfering with the business of the hour. The company was formed in square, three chairs were set in the middle, and as there happened to be three professional barbers amongst the men, they set to work with great

energy, and did not cease until every man in the company was shaven and shorn. Their greatest merit was rapidity. They had not that delicate, that caressing, manner which distinguishes the accomplished *coiffeur*, but neither had they his exasperating indifference to the value of the patient's time. This was one step towards a soldier-like appearance, and another was made in Sootythorn that day by the clothing of the men. It was a fine warm morning, and the men did not require a roof to change their dress. The scene of the change of costume had little which might have gratified that great artist who drew the soldiers hastily dressing themselves after bathing in the Arno, but it would have rejoiced the heart of George Cruikshank. Since the men changed their clothes with various degrees of rapidity, they might be simultaneously viewed in all the stages of the great metamorphosis. One man had a pair of trousers and a cap, but still retained a ragged old swallow-tail; another had begun by trying on a red jacket, which contrasted oddly with his battered black hat and his old fustian trowsers. It took the men some time to find garments anything near a fit. A few exceptionally fortunate ones were clothed almost immediately, but some individuals of peculiar bodily

conformation could hardly get fitted at all. The uniform was not elegant—the cloth was coarse in texture and dull in tint, and the cut of the coat, with its little tails behind, was anything but graceful or becoming. Nevertheless the men looked better and better as their old clothes gradually disappeared in bundles, and the Captain saw himself at the head of a much more military-looking company than that which had made its entry into Whittlecup on the preceding evening, amidst the derisive jests and the ironical cheers of the populace.

Those cheers, and other jests of equal elegance and good taste, were heard once more when the company entered Whittlecup that evening in the glory of regimentals. The entry on the preceding evening had been so very disagreeable to Captain Stanburne that he determined on the present occasion to protect his august person by a body-guard. First marched a vanguard, four abreast, and at a distance of twenty yards came the main body in the same order. The open space between the two was protected on each side by men in single file, and in the said open space marched Captain Stanburne, very much at his ease. It was a great satisfaction to him in this position to think that no factory girl could

get at him. These precautions were by no means superfluous, for the crowd was greater than on the preceding evening, and quite as noisy. The bridge, and the approach to it, were black with thousands of spectators, and the noise of their voices might be heard a mile off, like the roar of a great tumult. The militiamen advanced, however, without flinching, and as they seemed so steady and determined, the mob gradually made way for them. They were greeted with shouts of laughter and sarcastic expressions of admiration. The day before they were laughed at because they had no uniforms, and this day they were laughed at because they *had* uniforms. Apparently the population of Whittlecup had a natural gift of satire, which was not likely to lack sufficient reasons for exercising itself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE officers' mess was rather a good thing for Mr Garley. He charged four-and-sixpence a-head for dinner without wine; and although both the Colonel and the large majority of his officers were temperate men, a good deal of profit may be got out of the ordinary vinous and spirituous consumption of a set of English gentlemen in harder exercise than usual, and more than usually disposed to be convivial. Even the cigars were no inconsiderable item of profit for Mr Garley, who had laid in a stock large enough and various enough for a tobacconist. He had cigars to suit every taste; and the boxes were adorned with Spanish names so very long and sonorous and magnificent, that the present writer can no more remember them than he can remember the blazon of the heraldic decorations which accompanied them. There were thin cigars and fat cigars,

strong cigars and mild cigars, little cigars and big cigars, straight cigars and cigars which were supposed to derive some mysterious advantage from being crooked; but however various in these respects, all the cigars at the Thorn Inn had one quality in common—that of being very dear—all those, I mean, which found their way into the officers' room; but there was a box of threepennies down below-stairs for the commercials.

A dense cloud of smoke filled the card-room, and through it might be discerned a number of officers in red shell-jackets reposing after the labours of the day, and wisely absolving nature from other efforts, in order that she might give her exclusive care to the digestion of that substantial repast which had lately been concluded in the mess-room. There was a party of whist-players in a corner, and the rattle of billiard-balls came through an open door.

Captain Eureton's servant came in and said that there was an innkeeper from Whittlecup who desired to speak to the Adjutant. The Captain left the card-room, and the officers scarcely noticed his departure, but when he came back their attention was drawn to him by an exclamation of the Colonel's. "Why, Eureton, what's the matter now? how grave you look!"

The Adjutant came to the hearth-rug where John Stanburne was standing, and said, "Is not Captain Stanburne a relation of yours, Colonel?"

"Cousin about nine times removed. But what's the matter? He's not ill, I hope."

"Very ill, very ill indeed," said Eureton, with an expression which implied that he had not yet told the whole truth. "There's no near relation or friend of Captain Stanburne in the regiment, is there, Colonel?"

"None whatever; out with it, Eureton—you're making me very anxious;" and the Colonel nervously potted with the end of a new cigar.

"The truth is, gentlemen," said Eureton, addressing himself to the room, for every one was listening intently, "a great crime has been committed this evening. Captain Stanburne has been murdered—or if it's not a case of murder it's a case of manslaughter. He has been killed, it appears, whilst visiting a billet, by a man in his company."

The Colonel rang the bell violently. Fyser appeared—he was at the door, expecting to be called for.

"Harness the tandem immediately."

"The tandem is at the door, sir, or will be by

the time you get down-stairs. I knew you would be wantin' it as soon as I 'eard the bad news."

The Doctor was in the billiard-room, trying to make a cannon, to the infinite diversion of his more skilful brother officers. His muscular but not graceful figure was stretched over the table, and his scarlet shell-jacket, whose seams were strained nearly to bursting by his attitude, contrasted powerfully with the green cloth as the strong gas-light fell upon him. Just as he was going to make the great stroke a strong hand was laid upon his arm.

"Now then, Isaac Ogden, you've spoiled a splendid stroke. I don't hoften get such a chance."

"You're wanted for summat else, Doctor. Come, look sharp; the Colonel's waiting for you."

In common with many members of his profession, Dr Bardly had a dislike to be called in a hurried and peremptory manner, and a disposition, when so called, to take his time. He had so often been pressed unnecessarily that he had acquired a general conviction that cases could wait—and he made them wait, more or less. In this instance, however, Isaac Ogden insisted on a departure from the Doctor's usual customs, and threw his grey military cloak over his shoulders,

and set his cap on his head, and led him to the street - door, where he found the tandem, the Colonel in his place with the Adjutant, Fyser already mounted behind, and the leader dancing with impatience.

The bright lamps flashed swiftly through the dingy streets of Sootythorn, and soon their light fell on the blossoming hedges in the country. Colonel Stanburne had been too much occupied with his horses whilst they were in the streets; but now on the broad open road he had more leisure to talk, and he was the first to break silence.

“You don’t know any further details, do you, Eureton?”

“Nothing beyond what I told you. The inn-keeper who brought the news was the one Captain Stanburne was billeted with, and he quitted Whittlecup immediately after the event. He appears quite certain that Captain Stanburne is dead. The body was brought to the inn before the man left, and he was present at the examination of it by a doctor who had been hastily sent for.”

“Beg pardon, sir,” said Fyser from behind, “I asked the innkeeper some questions myself. It appears that Captain Stanburne was wounded in

the head, sir, and his skull was broken. It was done with a deal board that a Hirish militiaman tore up out of a floor. There was two Hirish that was quarrellin' and fightin', and the Captain put 'em both into a hempty room which was totally without furnitur', and where they'd nothink but straw to lie upon; and he kep 'em there under confinement, and set a guard at the door. And then these two drunken Hirish fights wi' their fists—but fists isn't bloody enough for Hirish, so they starts tearin' up the boards o' the floor, and the guard at the door tried to interfere between 'em, but, not havin' no arms, could do very little; and the Captain was sent for, and as soon as hever one o' these Hirish sees him he says, 'Here's our bloody Captain—I'll send him to hell-fire blazin';' and he aims a most tremendous stroke at him with his deal board, and it happened most unfortunate that it hit the Captain with the rusty nail in it."

"I wonder it never occurred to him to separate the Irishmen," observed Eureton, in a lower tone, to the Colonel. "He ought not to have confined them together."

"Strictly speaking, he ought not to have placed them in confinement at all at Whittlecup, but sent them at once under escort to headquarters.

But I suppose he wished to save his men useless fatigue, and thought it would be as well to bring the prisoners in to-morrow morning, when the whole company might serve for escort."

"What's this that we are meeting?" said the Adjutant. "I hear men marching."

The Colonel drew up his horses, and the regular footfall of soldiers became audible, and gradually grew louder. "They march uncommonly well, Eureton, for militaimen who have only had a couple of days' training; I cannot understand it."

"There were half-a-dozen old soldiers in Captain Stanburne's company, and I suppose the sergeant has selected them as a guard for the prisoners."

The night was cloudy and dark, and the lamps of the Colonel's vehicle were so very splendid and brilliant that they made the darkness beyond their range blacker and more impenetrable than ever. As the soldiers came nearer, the Colonel stopped his horses and waited. Suddenly out of the darkness came a corporal and four men with two prisoners. The Colonel shouted, "Halt!"

"Have you any news of Captain Stanburne?"

"He's not quite dead, sir, or was not when we left."

“Which is the fellow who assaulted him?”

The corporal indicated one of the two prisoners, who presented the usual appearance of an Irish blackguard after a row. He was strongly bound, and the blood which had trickled from several wounds in the head and face had coagulated in dark lines and patches. His uniform was torn, and he was still visibly drunk, though his drunkenness translated itself now rather by a bestial stupidity than by excitement.

“What’s the man’s name?”

“Patrick O’Sullivan.”

“Colonel,” said the Doctor, “as young Stanburne is not dead yet, hadn’t we better get to Whittlecup as soon as possible? I may be of use.”

The tall wheels rolled along the road, and in a quarter of an hour the leader had to make his way through a little crowd of people in front of the Blue Bell.

The Doctor was the first in the house, and was led at once to young Stanburne’s room. The Whittlecup surgeon was there already. No professional men are so ticklish on professional etiquette as surgeons are, but in this instance there could be little difficulty of that kind. “You are the surgeon to the regiment, I believe,” said the

Whittlecup doctor; "you will find this a very serious case. I simply took charge of it in your absence."

The patient was not dead, but he was perfectly insensible. He breathed faintly, and every few minutes there was a rattling in the throat, resembling that which precedes immediate dissolution. The two doctors examined the wound together. The skull had been fractured by the blow, and there was a tremendous gash down the cheek produced by the nail in the board. The face was extremely pale, and so altered as to be scarcely recognisable. The innkeeper's wife, Mrs Simpson, was moistening the pale lips with brandy.

When the Colonel and Captain Eureton had seen the patient, they had a talk with Dr Bardly in another room. The Doctor's opinion was that there were chances of recovery, but not very strong chances. Though the patient had enjoyed tolerably regular health in consequence of his temperate and simple way of living, he had by no means a robust constitution, and it was possible—it was even probable—that he would succumb; but he *might* pull through. Dr Bardly proposed to resign the case entirely to the Whittlecup doctor, as it would require constant attention, and the surgeon ought to be on the spot.

“This poor young man is strangely situated,” said the Adjutant; “we must write to his relations.”

“I really hardly know whether he has any relations that it would be of any use writing to. He has cousins out in Canada, it appears, who would be glad if he would die; and if he dies, somebody must write to them, but it’s no use writing to them now.”

“He’s a Roman Catholic,” said Eureton, “and consequently he must have a priest somewhere to confess him. We ought to find him out.”

The priest at Sootythorn will know all about that; he must be sent for. I say, Eureton, wouldn’t it be right to have extreme unction administered? You and I could die without extreme unction; but Philip Stanburne is a Roman Catholic, you know, and a *real* Roman Catholic, and no doubt it would be his wish to have extreme unction. We ought to act in this rather from his point of view than our own. It *can* do him no harm. It sometimes frightens patients, and makes ’em think they’re going to die when they aren’t; but he’s insensible, and cannot be frightened. Fyser will fetch the priest from Sootythorn with the tandem, and we’ll wait here, all three of us.”

Some of the more respectable inhabitants of Whittlecup who had not yet gone to bed came to ask after the unfortunate young gentleman. There had been a little party that evening at Mr Joseph Anison's, which had prevented him from retiring at his usual very early hour, and he presented himself to the Colonel in the parlour of the Blue Bell. As soon as the patient was well enough to be removed, he begged that he might be transferred to Arkwright Lodge, his own habitation, where indeed there were many more of the conveniences and luxuries of life than at the principal inn at Whittlecup. The Doctor said it would be a good thing when the sufferer was convalescent—if ever he *were* convalescent.

When Fyser drove back to Sootythorn to fetch the Roman Catholic priest he was also commissioned to bring back with him an officer to command Philip Stanburne's company. As Mr Isaac Ogden was senior lieutenant, this duty naturally fell to him, since Captain Stanburne had no subaltern of his own.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WEEK after the event narrated in the preceding chapter Philip Stanburne was out of danger; and as he was able to sit in a chair, the doctor recommended a removal to Arkwright Lodge, where there were private sitting-rooms, and a large garden, in which the invalid might enjoy more perfect repose than was easily attainable at the Blue Bell.

The Lodge was not very far from Whittlecup—little more than a mile from the outskirts of the town; but there was a spur of hill between, which sheltered the calico-printer's residence so effectually that it was as quiet as if it had been in the remote country. The house was almost new; and as it had been built at a time of unusual prosperity in trade, the expenditure upon it had been lavish. Mr Anison belonged to a class of tradesmen with whom men like Jacob Ogden have very little in

common. The goal which he proposed to himself was wealth, but during the journey towards it he liked to travel at his ease. He had not the intensity of Jacob Ogden's thirst for gold, nor that renunciation of other sources of happiness which is the asceticism of money-getting. "It 'ud be a bitter thought for me," said Jacob Ogden to himself, in moments of solitary reflection, "if I were to get wed, and then count up when I coom to be an old felly how mich poorer I were nor I should 'ave been if I hadn't been such a fool." Joseph Anison, like most men in the habit of money calculations, had made estimates of the amount which his wife and family had cost him, and were likely to cost him, but without any of that bitterness which the bachelor mind associates with such estimates. He was clearly aware that his three daughters and his handsome spouse prevented him from becoming one of the magnates of the land; but the position of a magnate did not seem worth the sacrifice of half his nature. Without being less attentive to business than Jacob Ogden in business hours, Mr Anison was not so perpetually absorbed by it. He was less ambitious, less anxious, more capable of rest and of enjoyment. When he had built Arkwright Lodge he had had no thought of improving his social position by

a fine house, but it had seemed to him that it would be pleasant to see all his family well housed, in the pure fresh air, with a broad lawn for the girls, and a billiard-room for himself and his old friends. And few men enjoyed their prosperity more than Joseph Anison enjoyed his, because few were less selfish in their prosperity. He was not precisely what is called a gentleman, because he had little polish of manner, and little perception of delicate shades in character and behaviour; but he had the qualities of a nature at once kindly and robust. Like Isaac Ogden, and many other men in their rank of life, Anison spoke the Lancashire dialect a good deal with people who understood it, but had purer English at his command when the occasion required it. His dialect, however, was very different from that spoken at Shayton, being neither so uncouth nor so original and energetic. The Whittlecup people speak a language slightly more refined even than the language of Sootythorn, and Sootythorn, as everybody knows, is incomparably above Shayton.

Philip Stanburne arrived at the Lodge on a fine afternoon in Mrs Anison's comfortable carriage. Mr Anison had come for him in that equipage to the Blue Bell, and it was perhaps the first time

that he had ever travelled alone therein, for a state-carriage was a recent institution in the family, consequent upon the building of the Lodge, and Mr Anison generally walked down to the works, and made longer journeys in his old gig. As Captain Stanburne was not in a condition to bear vibration, the coachman had orders to drive as slowly as he could.

“I’m afraid you’ll be rather dull in our house,” said Mr Anison; “however, there are three girls, and, by the by, I believe they’re expecting a visitor to-morrow. But I’ve asked your brother officer, Mr Ogden, to come to see us when he can find the time. If there is any one else in the regiment at Sootythorn that you would like to see, I’ll go and call upon him, and ask him to come to the Lodge.”

Philip said how much he was obliged, but added that, in his present condition, he was not strong enough to bear society. The only officer he wished to see was the Colonel, and the Colonel would probably come to the Lodge frequently, with Mr Anison’s kind permission.

When they got to the house Mrs Anison came to the carriage, and was a good deal shocked at her guest’s appearance. He was very pale, and so weak that he could not get out of the carriage

without assistance. Once safe in the drawing-room, he sank down in an easy-chair, exhausted.

Mrs Anison might have felt some embarrassment about her guest if he had been perfectly well, but in his evident need of care a simple and natural relation established itself at once. "Joe," she said to her husband, "give Mr Stanburne a glass of wine. What wine would you like best? I think port would do you most good. Bring a glass of port, Joe." During Mr Anison's absence, his wife occupied herself in arranging a pillow behind Philip's head. The head was all covered with bandages.

"I'm very glad to see you in such a nice way, Mr Stanburne," the lady said; "I hope you will soon get better, but this will be a dull place for you. My husband is out all day at the works. Do you find that you are well enough to be able to read?"

"The doctor won't let me read, and that was the worst of my position at the inn. The days seemed very long in my little bedroom there. But it is variety enough for me now to look at the objects in this room—it looks so fresh and spacious. I am so weak that nothing seems real to me, but this change of scene is very delightful."

“ Well, Mr Stanburne, as I’m to be your nurse I must enjoy the exercise of a little authority. When people are in your state, though they cannot take a share in things, they like to look on, and so I don’t think it is necessary to keep you *too* quiet, or leave you *too* much by yourself. We will just go on living as usual, and you shall listen or talk as you like; and when you are tired you shall be wheeled into your own room, which is on the ground-floor.” Mrs Anison had thoughtfully established a bed in a pleasant morning-room, which was well provided with books and cheerful-looking furniture, and had a charming view across the open country, with the blue hills of Shayton in the distance.

She was a strong healthy woman, maturely handsome, and so full of good temper, good sense, and kindness, that no one could help liking and esteeming her. She was not an intellectual person, but she had one of those rich well-balanced natures which the truly intellectual may occasionally envy and can never despise. Her father had begun life as a linen-draper in Sootythorn, and afterwards became a banker there. His family had been too numerous for every member of it to receive a very considerable inheritance at his death; but his daughters were all fine girls, and

had connected themselves with a class which, in the trenchant subdivisions of an English country town in those days, was considered greatly superior to that to which he originally belonged. So it came to pass that, without any affectation of ladyhood, or any ambition to rise out of her natural sphere, Mrs Anison had as good manners as any lady in the neighbourhood of Sootythorn. Her husband was less refined. She had been the eldest daughter, and had married before her father had attained his ultimate position, so that in point of gentility hers had not been the best match made in that family; but her good sense easily passed over Joseph Anison's shortcomings, such as they were, and her criticisms of him were limited to gentle sarcasms about his Lancashire idioms. "You really must teach me the Lancashire dialect, love," she would sometimes say; "I miss so many of your good things. When you are witty you always speak Lancashire, and then I cannot understand you, which is quite provoking. Couldn't you be witty in pure English, Joseph?" When thus attacked, "Joseph" revenged himself by saying what a shame it was for a Sootythorn woman not to know her own native tongue; and spoke more Lancashire than ever. Yet he was capable of speaking English when he liked—not

aristocratic English, certainly, but a correct and masculine language perfectly intelligible to every one.

The evening passed so pleasantly for Philip Stanburne that he forgot his weakness as he sat in his easy-chair. In fact he began to realise the uncommon advantages of his position. Nobody expected anything from *him*. He was not to talk unless he liked; and the three young ladies, of whom, in his ordinary health, he might have felt considerably afraid, were merely the prettiest figures in a pretty domestic picture, which made no claim upon his exertion, but which he could amuse himself by studying at his ease. One of the few questions that Mrs Anison had addressed to her patient had related to music. "They were a musical family," she said, "and were accustomed to have music in the evening; but if Mr Stanburne found that it tired him he must say so."

"It's lucky cousin Charley isn't here with his cornet-à-piston," said Miss Margaret.

"Madge is just as terrible with her piano," Mr Anison observed. "Mother, what if you were to play some quiet music on your harmonium?"

Mrs Anison quietly laid down her work and went to her instrument. "It is perhaps rather rash in me to attempt music that Mr Stanburne

must often have heard better performed," she said, and then sat down and played one of Mozart's masses, with little abridgment, from beginning to end. They were, as Mrs Anison had observed, a musical family, and their faculties of attention were not easily fatigued, if only the music and the performance of it were good of their kind.

So wonderful is the power of music in awakening the imagination, and in sustaining it when awakened, that the whole scene became transfigured before Philip Stanburne as he listened to that seventh mass. There was a chimney-piece in the room of pure white marble, and on it there were vases of flowers, and rather an exceptional luxury of candles. As Philip gazed on these, his eye fastened finally on a large white rose, and then gradually the whole room darkened around him, and the clusters of candles glittered like golden constellations in the darkness, and out of the darkness came the rich rolling music, and then, behold, a vision of architecture!—a labyrinth of dark-grey columns, a height of echoing harmony in the far-above reverberating vaults! And central in the vision stood the illuminated altar, behind which, arch behind arch, receded haunts of tenebrous mystery. And before the blaze of the

golden altar, with its starry multitudinous flames, bowed the vestmented priests, ministering.

A cloud of incense ascended, and poised itself at the height of the triforium. Then the lights grew dim, and the music faint and remote, and round the cloud, or out of it, silver-winged angels became visible, and in the centre of it there was one white rose. And the priests sang, "*Rosa mystica, ora pro nobis!*"

CHAPTER IX.

THEY dined at two at Arkwright Lodge, and breakfasted at nine. Mr Anison never breakfasted at home, except on Sundays and extraordinary occasions. He had a room at the works where that meal was served to him. He got up every morning at five, and was at the works before the hands arrived.

A little after nine Philip Stanburne heard a gentle tap at his door, and when he said "Come in," Mrs Anison entered with a small tray. "As I am your nurse," she said, "I venture to come into your room." The tray looked very bright and attractive; there was a tiny silver teapot for one person, and everything belonging to the teapot. In the way of food there was a brilliant little trout.

"Perhaps you may have a man-servant at home that you would like to have here with you, Mr

Stanburne ; but, till he comes, you will find our coachman, Daniel, a very quiet and gentle sort of man, and he has so little to do that I have ordered him to answer your bell."

Philip had been very sufficiently attended to at the inn, and had not felt it necessary to ask for anybody from Stanithburn Peel. In fact he had no man-servant. He had two or three men in his woods, but not a servant able to attend to him. As for Mrs Sutcliffe, his housekeeper, she was necessary in the house ; and if the truth must be told, her master felt rather happy to escape from her than otherwise. All this he explained to Mrs Anison.

"Well, when you feel inclined to get up, Daniel will act as your valet. What a pity it is that the doctor won't let you read ! He'll come here at ten o'clock, I believe, and we must try to get him to remove that restriction. We expect a guest here to-day, a young lady, who is thought pretty, and is certainly very agreeable. She is going to stay a week or a fortnight."

"I am in a very odd position," thought the Captain. "I am surrounded by nothing but girls. There are three in the house already, and there's another coming—that makes four. It's positively alarming ! There isn't a male creature to speak

to except the worthy calico-printer himself, and there isn't very much in common between us ; and besides, if there were, he says he is only at home about an hour for dinner, and in the evenings. Fancy spending all the days with these girls !” Some young men in the Captain's position would have enjoyed the prospect of a week or two passed in society of this kind, but to him it appeared alarming.

He stayed in his own room as long as he decently could. The doctor's visit was a pretext until the doctor's departure. After that his patient idled away an hour or two with that sublime indifference to the value of time which is the privilege of invalids. He suffered very little now except from weakness, and even his weakness, being on the way of improvement, was rather a luxury. In fact there are two degrees of weakness—that which agitates and that which calms ; and his was of the latter. He was in a state of dreamy indifference about most things. The view from his room was wide and beautiful, the sunshine full and bright, the easy-chair as comfortable as possible. The doctor had said that though he might not read yet there could be no objection to his amusing himself by looking at prints ; and all the little collection of such things at Arkwright

Lodge had been placed at his service. They were not always excellent artistically, but they amused him.

The invalid presented himself at dinner with a head-dress somewhat more becoming than his bandages of the preceding evening. The doctor had dressed the wound so as to allow of it being entirely hidden by a cap, and Philip possessed a pretty purple velvet smoking-cap, with gold embroidery and a tassel, which on being assumed rather improved his appearance than otherwise.

“It is odd,” said Mrs Anison, when they were all seated at the dinner-table, “that Lissy has not come this morning. We expected her to dinner.”

Just as she spoke there was a rumbling of wheels, and a carriage passed the window. “It’s a Sootythorn fly,” said Miss Margaret; “it must be Lissy.”

Philip Stanburne did not feel particularly interested in “Lissy”—it would have been a relief to him if “Lissy” had postponed her visit till his departure. The general idea of a girl unknown was not attractive to him.

The three young ladies left the room together to welcome their friend. There was a confusion of girl-voices in the hall, and Philip Stanburne

listened for that of the new-comer. It conveyed nothing to him beyond the fact that she was young, and could laugh and talk like other young women. The fly repassed the window on its way to the stables, where the horse was to have a feed. Philip suddenly felt interested in the fly, and watched for it. When it passed it proved to be a yellow fly ; but seeing that it was now empty, little could be gathered from it concerning its recent occupant. There was rather a long pause of expectation whilst the young ladies were upstairs.

“I rather expected that her father would have come with her,” said Mr Anison. “He must be very busy, or else at Manchester, as she has come by herself. You should have sent the carriage to fetch her, my dear.”

Just then the girl-voices descended the staircase, and came towards the dining-room door. It opened ; and Philip Stanburne felt a shock of surprise, for the guest was Alice Stedman. They were formally introduced, and both were a little embarrassed. They could not say that they had spoken to each other, and neither felt inclined to avow a recollection of so brief and accidental an interview as that at the bookseller’s shop. There was a perceptible blush on both their faces, which

Mrs Anison noticed, but attributed to mere shyness.

Alice Stedman had seen very little of the world, but she felt at home at the Lodge, where the Anisons treated her as one of the family. In a strange house, she would have taken refuge in perfect silence; but here, although on the present occasion the officer in the odd-looking smoking-cap intimidated her a little, she answered Mr Anison's questions with more than "yes" and "no." Alice Stedman was one of rather a large class of English girls, found chiefly in pious provincial families of middle rank, who stand midway between the extreme simplicity and ignorance of the French *jeune fille* and the rather too knowing self-reliance of the London Girl of the Period. They are quiet in manner and in dress, they have never been inside a theatre, they have read nothing that cannot be read aloud, and they know little about the ways and opinions of men; but yet they are not absolutely ignorant of the great facts of life, as the French girl is. So, on the other hand, though their minds have been to some extent cultivated, they have not received that education in worldliness which, whilst it makes some young ladies so perfectly capable of taking care of themselves and of attending to their own

interest, is acquired at the expense of a freshness which, if once lost, can never be imitated or replaced.

Here let me pause to confess to the reader a glaring deficiency in one aspiring to be a teller of tales. A lady-novelist can always tell you what all her personages wear. She is as accurate in that respect as the Court newsman himself. But what is a male writer to do? How can he tell you what his characters wore *when he does not know himself?* You would not have him tell lies consciously, would you? When Alice Stedman came into the room just now, all that I noticed about her dress was, that she wore something pinkish, and looked in a general way very nice. It must have been muslin, for it seemed to me very light and fluffy; but what the pattern of it was, and what it cost a-yard, I no more know than if I had never seen it.

Mr Anison's manner towards the young lady was a happy mixture of the polite and the paternal. She had come to their house—the dear, dingy, little old house in Whittlecup—when she was a child, and ever since then the intercourse between the families had been constant. Since her mother's death Alice Stedman had found in the Anisons something more than friends—they were almost

relations; they were as accessible as relations, and less critical. Her real relations were working people at Shayton; and as Miss Stedman was at the same time a rather highly educated young lady and a very good Christian, there had been a long conflict in her mind about intercourse with them. Christian humility said she ought to love them and visit them; but ladyhood (which was not the less genuine that she was the first lady of her race) had objections to intercourse of this kind. In this case, as in thousands of others when people avoid poor relations, the severance was due rather to feelings of embarrassment than to pride. Alice Stedman really did not know what to say to the loud-voiced factory lasses who were her cousins; she had not that dramatic faculty which is capable of easy intercourse with every variety of the human. But she breathed freely at the Lodge, in an atmosphere of gentle kindness and not too elaborate refinement. Unfitted for low life by her tastes and education, she was equally unfitted for the great world by her simplicity and unworldliness, by her inexperience of life, by her deferential instincts, and lack of critical acumen and assurance. In a room with strange great ladies she would have been dumb

—in a room with factory lasses she would have been equally embarrassed; but she was merry and intelligent at the Lodge.

“Why, Missy Lissy,” said Mr Anison (an old rhyming termination that had been invented when she was a child), “how does it happen you didn’t bring your father with you? What is he doing? Is he gone botanising?”

“Papa came with me as far as Whittlecup, but he said he would call at the inn and leave his name for Mr Ogden, the officer there.”

“Well, this is intelligible; but he might have left his name and come on with you. Mr Ogden cannot be in Whittlecup now; he must be drilling his men with the rest of the regiment at Sootythorn.”

“Papa came to the fly and said I must come here by myself, as Mr Ogden was unwell, and he meant to stay with him for an hour or two. Mr Ogden had not left Whittlecup to-day.”

“He must be seriously ill,” observed Philip Stanburne, “to have missed both parades. Even if he were in Sootythorn now, he would be late for afternoon parade.”

“Whittlecup appears to be an unlucky place

for militia officers," said Mrs Anison. Philip was inexperienced in the art of paying compliments, but he tried his hand at one now, stimulated by the presence of a certain young lady. "It seemed to be a place," he said, "where any mishaps that might befall them met with very ample compensations."

CHAPTER X.

THE history of Lieutenant Ogden's illness may be very briefly narrated. The Blue Bell was an inn, and it had the smell and the associations of an inn. The dominant odour was a mixture of spirituous evaporations with the fragrance of tobacco. You could not tread the sanded flags of the entrance without meeting this rich composite perfume. In the nostrils of Isaac Ogden it was sweeter than a bank of violets; and assuredly no bank of violets ever held forth a temptation so insidious and so continual.

It was clear that after the labours of the day—labours of a severity to which the recluse of Twistle Farm was wholly unaccustomed—refreshment was an absolute necessity. The Lancashire mind, and especially that concentration of it which is to be found in Shayton, does not believe that human energy can be sustained under its

labours without the help of alcohol. Horses, it is true, drink water, and a good deal is expected from them, especially in the way of carting; but men are so differently constituted! Do horses eat meat? Certainly not; therefore it is nonsense to argue in favour of teetotalism from their example and capabilities. The carnivora, it is true, are large meat-eaters, and they are water-drinkers at the same time, whilst remarkable for muscular energy; but man has wants of his own.

The received theory at Shayton on this subject was, that the human organism positively needed continual stimulation—that it could not get on without it—that if the said stimulation were imprudently interrupted, lamentable consequences must ensue. And the truth of this theory was maintained by the experience of every man in the place. For if a Shaytonian ever by accident committed the imprudence of passing an hour without alcoholic stimulation, did he not, during that hour, experience great inconvenience, and a feeling of general unfitness for the duties, as well as an indisposition to share in the pleasures, which absorb the life of a man? Was his head clear enough to do business, or his finger steady on the trigger? In a word, could he act in a manly and

efficient way—in a way satisfactory to himself, and likely to inspire respect in the minds of others? He knew by experience that he could not; that alcohol in some form or other was necessary to him; and he did not inquire too minutely whether nature had intended it to be a necessity or habit had made it one. Perhaps in the natural sluggishness of the Shayton mind this stimulation may have been necessary, during one or two generations, to enable it to come up with the rapidity of modern ideas. A Shaytonian without his glass was subject to a good deal of retardatory friction in the intellectual regions; and nothing had yet been discovered which diminished this friction so well as spirituous liquors.

Mr Isaac Ogden had for many weeks displayed a strength of resolution that astonished his most intimate friends. Without meanly taking refuge in the practice of total abstinence, he had kept strictly within the bounds of what in Shayton is considered moderation. Since little Jacob's nocturnal adventure on the moors, the repentant father had observed two great rules—1. Not to drink spirits in his own house; 2. Never to enter an inn. He drank ale and wine at home, and spirits when he went to Milend; but never in quantity sufficient to produce anything approach-

ing to intoxication. The customs of the mess at Sootythorn were not likely to place him in the power of his old enemy again; for although the officers were not severely abstinent, their utmost conviviality scarcely extended beyond the daily habits of the very soberest of Shaytonians, so that our friend Dr Bardly, whom nobody ever saw tipsy, and who would have been unfeignedly astonished if anybody had told him that he "drank," was the greatest consumer of alcohol in the regiment. The privates in Captain Stanburne's company who came from Shayton, and perhaps one or two Irishmen, would no doubt have greatly excelled the Doctor in this respect, had their means been equal to their desires.

Viewing the matter, therefore, from the standpoint of his personal experience, Dr Bardly looked upon Ogden as now the most temperate of men. It is true that as a militia officer he could not follow that good rule of his about not entering inns, for the business of the regiment required him to visit a dozen inns every day, and to eat and sleep in one for a month together; and it is obvious that the other good rule about not drinking spirits at Twistle Farm could not be very advantageous to him just now, seeing that, although it was always in force, and although the

sense that it had not been broken may have given tone to Mr Ogden's moral fibre, it was practically efficacious only during his residence under his own roof. It seems a pity that he did not legislate for himself anew, so as to meet his altered circumstances; but the labours of regimental duty appeared so onerous that extraordinary stimulation seemed necessary to meet this extraordinary fatigue, and it would have appeared imprudent to confine himself within rigidly fixed limits which necessity might compel him to transgress. So in point of fact Mr Ogden was a free agent again.

Whilst Philip Stanburne had remained at the Blue Bell, Lieutenant Ogden had been in all respects a model of good behaviour. He had watched by Philip's bedside in the evenings, sometimes far into the night, and the utmost extent of his conviviality had been a glass of grog with the Whittlecup doctor. But the day Philip Stanburne was removed to Mr Anison's house, Lieutenant Ogden, after having dined and inspected his billets, began to feel the weight of his loneliness, and he felt it none the less for being accustomed to loneliness at the Farm. A man who lives almost alone bears with equanimity the solitude of his own home, because there is companionship for him in the familiar objects by which he is

surrounded ; but transplant the same man to an inn, or put him into lodgings, and he will want somebody to talk to as much as the most gregarious of his species. Captain Stanburne's illness, and the regular evening talk with the Whittlecup doctor, had hitherto given an interest to Isaac Ogden's life at the Blue Bell, and this interest had been suddenly removed. Something must be found to supply its place ; it became necessary to cultivate the acquaintance of somebody in the parlour.

It is needless to trouble the reader with details about the men of Whittlecup whom Mr Ogden found there, because they have no connection with the progress of this history. But he found somebody else too, namely Jeremiah Smethurst, a true Shaytonian, and one of the brightest ornaments of the little society that met at the Red Lion. When Jerry saw his old friend Isaac Ogden, whom he had missed for many weeks at James Hardcastle's, his greeting was so very cordial, so expressive of good-fellowship, that it was not possible to negative his proposition that they should "take a glass together." Mr Ogden had "taken a glass" every night lately with the Whittlecup doctor, and felt none the worse for it. Indeed he always felt so tired of an evening in consequence of his marches

to Sootythorn and back, and his hard exercise on the parade-ground there, and his long walk round the scattered billets after he returned, that "a glass of something" seemed needful to his rest. For when the muscular system has been well wearied, a glass of grog makes its repose more tranquil, and incomparably more delightful.

Now the keeper of the Blue Bell Inn knew Jerry Smethurst. He knew that Jerry drank more than half a bottle of brandy every night before he went to bed, and without giving Mr Ogden credit for equal powers, he had heard that he came from Shayton, which is a good recommendation to a vendor of spirituous liquors. He therefore, instead of bringing a glass of brandy for each of the Shayton gentlemen, uncorked a fresh bottle and placed it between them, remarking that they might take what they pleased—that there was 'ot warter on the 'arth, for the kettle was just bylin, an' there was shugger in the shugger-basin.

The reader foresees the consequences. After two or three glasses with his old friend, Isaac Ogden fell under the dominion of the old Shayton associations. Jerry Smethurst talked the dear old Shayton talk, such as Isaac Ogden had not heard in perfection for many a day. For men

like the Doctor and Jacob Ogden were, by reason of their extreme temperance, isolated beings—beings cut off from the heartiest and most genial society of the place—and Isaac had been an isolated being also since he had kept out of the Red Lion and the White Hart.

“ Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men ? ”

That abandonment of the Red Lion had been a moral gain—a moral victory—but an intellectual loss. Was such a fellow as Parson Prigley any compensation for Jerry Smethurst? And there were half-a-dozen at the Red Lion as good as Jerry. He was short of stature—so short, that when he sat in a rocking-chair he had a difficulty in giving the proper impetus with his toes; and he had a great round belly, and a face which, if not equally great and round, seemed so by reason of all the light and warmth that radiated from it. It was enough to cure anybody of hypochondria to look at Jerry Smethurst's face. I have seen the moon look rather like it sometimes, rising warm and mellow on a summer's night; but though anybody may see that the moon has a nose and eyes, she certainly lacks expression. It was pleasant to Isaac Ogden to see the friendly old visage before him once again. Genial and

kind thoughts rose in his mind. Tennyson had not yet written "Tithonus," and if he had, no Shaytonian would have read it—but the thoughts in Ogden's mind were these :—

"Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance,
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?"

The "goal of ordinance," at Shayton, being death from *delirium tremens*.

Mr Smethurst would have been much surprised if anybody had told him that he was inducing Ogden to drink more than was good for him. It seemed so natural to drink a bottle of brandy! And Jerry, too, in his way, was a temperate man—a man capable of self-control—a man who had made a resolution and kept it for many years. Jerry's resolution had been never to drink more than one bottle of spirits in an evening; and, as he said sometimes, it was "all howin' to that as he enjy'd sich gud 'ealth." Therefore, when Mr Simpson had placed the bottle between them, Mr Smethurst made a little mental calculation. He was strong in mental arithmetic. "I've 'ad three glasses afore Hogden coom, so when I've powered him out three glasses, the remainder 'll be my 'lowance." There-

fore, when Isaac had mixed his third tumbler, Jerry Smethurst rang the bell.

“Another bottle o’ brandy.”

Mr Simpson stood aghast at this demand, and his eyes naturally reverted to the bottle upon the table. “You’ve not finished that yet, gentlemen,” he ventured to observe.

“What’s left in it is my ’lowance,” said Mr Smethurst. “Mr Hogden shalln’t ’ave none on’t.”

“Well, that *is* a whimmy gent,” said Mr Simpson to himself—but he fetched another bottle.

They made a regular Red Lion evening of it, those two. A little before midnight Mr Smethurst rose and said Good-night. He had finished his bottle, and his law of temperance, always so faithfully observed, forbade him one drop more. The reader probably expects that Mr Smethurst was intoxicated; but his genial nature was only yet more genial. He lighted his bed-candle with perfect steadiness, shook Ogden’s hand affectionately, and mounted the stair step by step. When he got into his bedroom he undressed himself in a methodical manner, laid his clothes neatly on a chair, wound his watch up, and when he had assumed his white cotton nightcap, looked at himself in the glass. He put his tongue out, and held the candle close to it. The result of

the examination was satisfactory, and he proceeded to pull down the corner of his eyes. This he did every night. The bugbear of his life was dread of a coming fit, and he fancied he might thus detect the premonitory symptoms.

Meanwhile Mr Ogden, left by himself, took up the 'Sootythorn Gazette,' and when Mr Simpson entered he found him reading, apparently. "Beg pardon, sir," said Mr Simpson, "but it's the rule to turn the gas out at twelve, and it's a few minutes past. I'll light you your bed-candle, sir, and you can sit up a bit later if you like. You'll find your way to your room."

Ogden was too far gone to have any power of controlling himself now. The type danced before his eyes, the sentences ran into one another, the sense of the phrases was a mystery to him. He kept drinking mechanically; and when at length he attempted to reach the door, the candlestick slipped from his hand, and the light was instantly extinguished.

A man who is quite drunk cannot find the door of a dark room—he cannot even walk in the dark; his only chance of walking in broad daylight is to fix his eye steadily on some object, and when it loses its hold of that, to fasten it upon some other, and so on. Ogden stumbled

against the furniture and fell. The deep insensibility of advanced drunkenness supervened, and he lay all night upon the floor. The servant-girl found him there the next morning when she came to clean the room.

Of course he could not go to Sootythorn that day to the parade-ground. His body was stiff, and his stomach was grievously out of order. When Mr Stedman came to Whittlecup, Lieutenant Ogden was in bed, and had already received Dr Bardly's visit. Ogden was in very low spirits, and Mr Stedman, from a feeling of loyalty to the family, resolved to stay with him till he got better. Mr Jeremiah Smethurst had left Whittlecup in the course of the morning.

Now when Dr Bardly had seen his patient, and learned all about the causes of his indisposition, he drove back very fast to Sootythorn, and instead of staying at Sootythorn to mess, he went on to Shayton directly. His own house is down to your left when you get to Four-lane-ends, and the beast he drove knew this, and wanted to turn down there as usual. "Nay, nay, my lass," said the Doctor; "we're boun' to Milend first."

"Well, Mrs Ogden," said the Doctor, "I've come wi' bad news for you this time. Your Isaac's made a beast of himself once more. He

lay all night last night dead drunk upo' th' parlour-floor o' th' Blue Bell Inn i' Whittlecup."

"Why—you don't say so, Dr Bardly! Now, really, this is provokin', and 'im as was quite reformed, as one may say. I could like to whip him—I could."

"Well, I wish you'd just go to Whittlecup and take care of him while he stops there. If he'd nobbut stopped at Sootythorn I could have minded him a bit mysen, but there's nout like his mother for managin' him."

Little Jacob was staying at Milend during his father's military career, and so Mrs Ogden objected—"But what's to become o' th' childt?"

"Take him with ye—take him with ye. It'll do him a power o' good, and it'll amuse him rarely. He'll see the chaps with their red jackets, and his father with a sword, and a fine scarlet coat on Sundays, and he'll be as fain as fain."

So it was immediately decided that Mrs Ogden and little Jacob should leave for Whittlecup as soon as they possibly could. A fly was sent for from Mr Hardcastle's of the Red Lion, and Mrs Ogden hastily filled two large wooden boxes, which were her portmanteaus. Little Jacob was at the parsonage with the youthful Prigleys, and

had to be sent for. Mrs Ogden took the decanters from the corner cupboard, and drank two glasses of port to sustain her in the hurry of the occasion. "Well, who would have thought," she said to herself, as she ate a piece of cake—"who would have thought that I should go and stop at Whittlecup? I wonder how soon Mary Ridge will have finished my new black satin."

CHAPTER XI.

PHILIP STANBURNÉ'S first afternoon with the four young ladies was rather embarrassing both for him and for them. It is not easy to keep up a conversation with a set of girls who are always letting it drop. When men let a conversation drop we feel no embarrassment. We read the newspaper or puff our tobacco in silence, and leave our taciturn companions to ruminate in peace—we are not responsible for their pleasure, we are not in any way obligated to keep them amused. But a man finds himself in a very different position when surrounded by non-conversational young women. Every time they look dull he feels that it is his fault, that it is a proof of his incompetence—of his unfitness for feminine society—of his ignorance of the art of being agreeable. Philip Stanburne had an uneasy sense that he was a failure; but we have

seen men of far more brilliant conversational powers than Philip Stanburne's utterly paralysed by an audience of girls. It is not every man who can discourse to young ladies as the French professors do at the Sorbonne ; and if he could, that is not the sort of talk which would answer in a drawing-room.

At last Philip gave up the task as impossible, and pretended to look at his prints. But if the girls had little to say, they were pleasant objects of contemplation, and Philip did not study his prints so assiduously as the living nature before him. There was Margaret Anison, the eldest—a tall woman of twenty, with a merry open countenance and bright eye—an eye that quailed before nobody, and had won her the reputation amongst the severer old maids of Whittlecup of being “a bold girl.” She was as straight as a grenadier, and almost as strong too, and being blessed with perfect health and an undisturbed nervous system, behaved with a degree of self-possession that was not thought quite becoming in a virgin. She never blushed, but her dark complexion (inherited from her mother) showed the rich blood in the cheeks permanently. As to whether she was beautiful or not might be a question. She would have looked well in a

picture, but a good statue could scarcely have been made from her. She was tolerably, though not quite perfectly, good-natured, and that is perhaps as much as can be said for her heart; she was perfectly clear-headed, and that is all which may safely be predicated of her intellect.

The second sister, two years younger, had more of the sanguine temperament of her father. His hair, which was red, was inherited by his daughter Sarah in the modified hue of auburn. She had his blue eyes, too, and much of his energy and decision. The youngest was a girl of fifteen, more decidedly pretty than either of the others. In her the two temperaments had been almost equally balanced; the hair was brown, but not dark—the eyes were grey—and the general physical development, if it did not promise the fine stature of Margaret, or the fulness of the other, gave hopes of a more perfect form.

Alice Stedman was utterly different from her friends. Her face was generally pale, and her complexion exquisitely clear and transparent, so that when she blushed (and in spite of her paleness she blushed easily, and for the most insufficient reasons, to her great personal discomfort) the colour showed itself at once, from the faintest imaginable rose-tint. "I wish I were

a negro woman," thought poor Alice many a time, "for then nobody could tell when I was blushing—it would be all hidden under my black skin. I wish I *had* a black skin." Other people, however, would not have thought this an improvement; and even the blushes which made her so miserable added greatly to the delicate charm she had. As Philip Stanburne watched her now, by that great mighty Margaret Anison, he thought her the most feminine creature in the room—the most ideal maiden. She had a way of looking up from her work when she was spoken to, and pausing, and then suddenly looking down again, which for some unaccountable reason seemed to Philip the prettiest possible expression of attention. "I should like to make her look up at *me* in that way," he thought.

"Miss Stedman," he said, with an alarming abruptness.

She looked up at once, but it was not the look he wanted—not the quiet listening look, as if the eyes, and not the ears, were listening. It was a glance of surprise, and almost alarm. Philip felt as if he had put his hand on some sleek animal to caress it, and frightened it away from him. It was necessary, however, to go on as quickly as possible now.

“ I beg your pardon ; pray excuse my curiosity. May I ask if your father, Mr Stedman, is not a botanist ? ”

“ Oh yes,” said Alice, relieved ; “ papa is very fond of botany.”

“ Then no doubt he is the same Mr Stedman I had the pleasure of spending an evening with in the inn at Whittlecup about a week since, the night before my accident. He said he had been in my neighbourhood to seek for plants.”

Miss Stedman laid her work on her lap, and looked at Philip with a rather puzzled expression. “ In your neighbourhood,” she said ; “ is that far from here ? ”

“ About thirty miles off : Stanithburn Peel, in Yorkshire.” It was plain from Alice’s face that she had never heard of the place before.

“ I—I don’t know. He may have been there when I was at school.”

And the work was resumed at once. “ Another failure ! ” thought Philip. Then he began to notice Alice Stedman’s hands. “ What uncommonly pretty hands they are,” he thought ; “ I never saw such hands before in my life ! ” They were rather plump, and of a warm white, with taper fingers slightly curved backwards ; and as she turned her work, there were rapid, supple

movements, clearly indicative of a neat and quick dexterity as far as possible removed from awkwardness. The arms, meanwhile, were perfectly quiescent, and the face placid, the eyelids hiding the eyes, as Alice looked down upon her work.

“I wish I knew something about botany,” thought Philip. “Very likely she’s a botanist herself, as her father is one.” Putting this thought into a question, he ventured to say,—

“Probably, Miss Stedman, as Mr Stedman is a botanist, you are one also.”

“Oh no,” she answered quickly; “indeed I am not.”

“Don’t believe her, Mr Stanburne,” said Margaret Anison; “she tells fibs. She has drawn every plant that grows within ten miles of Sootythorn. Her drawings are very much esteemed by botanists. I heard a gentleman say that he would give a great deal of money for them if they were on sale.”

“Ah! it is very well, Miss Stedman, to hear other evidence about you than your own.”

Alice began to be afraid that she was “going red,” and the fear made her blush very perceptibly. Her voice was slightly indignant when

she spoke, and she had a surprised look which became her very well.

“Indeed I don’t tell fibs, Madge Anison. I am not a botanist at all. I draw the plants for papa, but I cannot remember their Latin names—a botanist knows them all.”

“But if you know the form and colour of the plants, as you must know them when you have drawn them carefully, surely you must be a botanist in a certain sense—in a far higher sense, I should say, than the man who knows the Latin names *without* remembering the plants themselves as you must remember them.”

“There, Missy Lissy, what have you got to say to that, I wonder?”

Alice Stedman was so utterly unaccustomed to flattery, however delicate, that it embarrassed her more than a woman of the world could easily believe. She had an uncomfortable feeling that she had somehow got herself into a sort of scrape, and only wished to be well out of it.

“Real botanists would not call me one,” replied Alice.

“Well, now, that’s positively impertinent and ungrateful too, Miss Alice Stedman,” went on Madge, pitilessly. “Mr Stanburne kindly pays

you a little compliment, and you return it by telling him that he is not a real botanist. How do *you* know that he is not a real botanist? You never saw him before to-day, did you?"

"No—yes—no, certainly not—except——"

"Upon my word, Mr Stanburne, this young lady *does* tell fibs—she does indeed. I ask her if she's seen you before, and she says she has and hasn't in the same breath. Lissy, you surprise me!"

"I wish you wouldn't tease Lissy so, Madge," said Miss Sarah; "you are most provoking—you are indeed. If I were Lissy I would hate you, I would."

"You *have* seen Mr Stanburne before, then, haven't you? Avow it."

This time poor Alice *did* "go red" under Margaret's steady gaze. The two other young women suspended their occupations to look at her. Philip Stanburne thought it necessary to interpose.

"I believe—indeed I think I may say that I am quite sure—that I had the pleasure of seeing Miss Stedman in a bookseller's shop in Sooty-thorn a few days ago."

"You have an uncommonly good memory, Captain Stanburne," said Margaret, "to remember every young lady you meet by accident in shops."

“I am far from laying claim to so good a memory as that. On the contrary, I forget faces very easily, but I do not forget Miss Stedman’s.”

“Do you hear *that*, Missy Lissy? Captain Stanburne declares that he can never forget your face. Upon my word you have made an impression.”

“Really, Madge,” said Alice, “I wish you would let me alone—you are too bad. I cannot tell what’s the matter with you to-day.”

Margaret jumped from her chair and gave Alice Stedman a kiss on each cheek, then sat down to the piano and thundered a complicated harmony. Gradually this subsided, and gave place to a waltz, whose voluptuous movement she accented artistically. She stopped abruptly, and sighed loudly enough to be heard by her sister Sarah.

“Well, Margaret, what on earth are you sighing about like that?”

“It’s enough to make anybody sigh to play waltzes and never dance them. We haven’t been to a dance for an age. There were only two last winter in all Sootythorn, and there wasn’t one in Whittlecup. We live like nuns in convents. Arkwright Lodge *is* a convent, and Alice Stedman is the model nun. *She* never thinks about

dances, but it's because she can't dance—isn't it, Lissy? You'd be giddy if you tried to waltz—wouldn't you?"

"There are two sorts of giddiness," said Alice, demurely.

"Do you hear, Captain Stanburne? She insinuates that I am morally giddy, whereas she, the model nun, is only physically so. That's just the way with her; she looks so gentle, and soft, and nice, that she takes people in. Don't let her take *you* in, Captain Stanburne! She says the severest things sometimes."

Here the waltz was resumed, at first rather too vigorously to be a just interpretation of its sentiment; but as this excess subsided, the movement was more delicately marked. When it was finished, Margaret Anison closed the piano and said, "I wonder when we shall hear a waltz in a ball-room."

"Not for a long time," answered Miss Sarah; "it is not the time of the year. You will have to wait till Christmas."

"Not the time of the year! This comes of living in the country. They dance continually in London during May and June, and why shouldn't we, in the country? We are as strong as they are, and we need amusement a great deal more.

They can go to the opera, and to theatres and concerts. We've no theatre at all, and only one miserable choral society's concert every year, when the fiddlers all play out of tune. The only thing we *can* do is to dance, and our rustic usages forbid us that."

A bright idea occurred to Philip Stanburne, and he politely asked whether, in case he could induce the militia officers to give a ball, the young ladies would do him the honour to accept his invitation. His proposition was very warmly received by all except Alice Stedman—she remained quite silent.

"And you, Miss Stedman," said Philip, "would *you* go to the ball?"

"I—I am afraid I couldn't."

"Ha, ha! Captain Stanburne, you don't know what an obstinate young Puritan you have to deal with. You'll never get Alice to go to a ball. Why, she has only been to three dances in her life, and they were quite private little affairs. Her papa won't let her dance anything but quadrilles, and he positively forbids her both public balls and theatres."

"I don't know that he quite forbids them, Margaret, but I know papa would rather I didn't go to them, so I never ask to go."

“He would refuse, if you did.”

“I’m not sure that he would refuse—indeed I feel certain he would give his consent, but it would be rather against his wish, and so I would never ask for it.”

“What a good girl you are, Alice!” said Miss Sarah; “I wish we were as good.”

“Nonsense!” interposed Margaret. “She’s not really good; she only gives up pleasures that she’s quite indifferent about. She would rather knit stockings for her papa than dance.”

“You say nothing but unkind things about Alice to-day, Margaret; couldn’t you be rather more charitable, and give her credit for a little self-denial?”

“Quite willingly, though not about dancing. She really doesn’t care about dancing; but she cares about dress—she is the most dress-loving woman in Sootythorn.”

“Margaret!”

“Nay, wait a little, Missy Lissy. You are the most dress-loving woman in Sootythorn, and you dress like—like Alice Stedman (*c’est tout dire*), because you give half your allowance to poor factory girls when they’re ill. I’m ordered to acknowledge your self-denial, and I acknowledge it.”

This observation led Philip Stanburne to compare the two young ladies more consciously than he had hitherto done. Miss Anison was splendid in silk and jewellery, and Miss Stedman, though on a visit to her friends, was as simply dressed as she well could be. But the simplicity became her, as the splendour became Margaret Anison; and perhaps it may have been due quite as much to a delicate feminine instinct as to economy.

CHAPTER XII.

MRS OGDEN and her grandson reached Sootythorn rather late that evening—namely, about eight o'clock; and as it happened that she knew an old maid there—one Miss Mellor—whose feelings would have been wounded if Mrs Ogden had passed through Sootythorn without calling upon her, she took the opportunity of doing so whilst the horse was baited at the inn. The driver took the fly straight to the Thorn; and when Mr Garley saw a lady and a little boy emerge therefrom he concluded that they intended to stay at his house, and came with his apologies for want of room. “But we can let you 'ave a nice parlour, mum, to take your tea, and I can find you good bedrooms in the town.”

Mrs Ogden declined these obliging propositions, in the hope that Miss Mellor would offer her a night's lodging. It was not that she loved Miss

Mellor so much as to desire to stay longer under her roof than was necessary to keep her in a good temper, but she had made sundry reflections on the road. "If I stop at th' Thorn they'll charge me 'appen 'alf-a-crown for my bedroom, and Jane Mellor 'ad a nice spare bedroom formerly. It really is no use throwin' money away on inn-keepers. And then there's our tea; they'll make me pay eighteenpence or two shillin' fo' it at Garley's, and very likely charge full as much for little Jacob. It's quite enough to 'ave to pay seven shillings for th' horse and fly." And in any case there would be time to get on to Whittlecup after the horse had had his feed.

But Miss Mellor, who had not been to Shayton or heard direct news of Shayton for several years, was so delighted to see Mrs Ogden that she would not hear of her going forward that night. "It's lucky I 'appened to be at 'ome," said Miss Mellor, "for I'm often out of an evening." It was lucky, certainly, for little Jacob, who got a much better tea than he would have done at the Thorn Inn, with quantities of sweet things greatly to his taste. Little Jacob was convinced that there was nobody in the world so kind and generous as his grandmother, yet he conceived an affection for Miss Mellor also before the close of the evening,

and voluntarily gave her a kiss when he went to bed, which gratified the good woman's tender heart exceedingly. Like many old maids, she had a manner with children that won them very rapidly. She won them by the offer of mental and corporeal pleasures — a small collection of toys and picture-books supplying the first, whilst the latter were given through the infallible medium of goody. Little Jacob was not yet old enough to be above these bribes, and he bestowed his affections in exchange for them.

As Mrs Ogden breakfasted with her friend in the morning she did not reach Whittlecup till eleven o'clock. The Lieutenant had left for Sootythorn at the usual early hour, and his brief indisposition was over. But his mother was resolved that a recurrence of it should be averted; and to that end she sought private lodgings in Whittlecup, as far as possible from the temptations of the Blue Bell. Whittlecup was not a place where lodgings were much in demand. No human being would entertain the notion of going there for pleasure or for study; but there were two or three resident bachelors who lived in lodgings, an articled clerk or two, and an old gentleman who had property in the place. The said old gentleman lived over a shoemaker's shop;

and as he had gone to Buxton for the summer, he had given permission to his landlady to relet his apartments during his absence. Here, then, did Mrs Ogden establish herself; and she got another bedroom in the same house for the Lieutenant, who was exercising his men at Sootythorn in ignorance of these changes.

“The devil take the people,” said Isaac Ogden, when he got back to the Blue Bell, and had gone as usual to his bedroom there—“the devil take the people, they’ve hidden all my things!”

Just then came a gentle knock at the door, and the servant-maid entered. “Please, sir, your mother’s come, and she says you aren’t to sleep here any more, sir; and she’s fetched your things to lodgings that she’s took over Mr Wood’s, the shoemaker’s.”

It is at all times vexatious and humiliating to the independent spirit of a man to be disposed of by female authority, but it is most especially so when the authority is one’s mamma. A grown-up man will submit to his mother on most points if he is worth anything, but the best of sons does not quite like to see his submission absolutely taken for granted. In this case there was an aggravation in the look of the servant-girl. Notwithstanding the respectful modesty of her tone,

there was just a twinkle of satire in her eye. It was plain that she was inwardly laughing at the Lieutenant. "Damn it!" he said, "this house is good enough for me; I don't want to leave it." Yet he *did* leave, nevertheless.

The next day was Sunday, and it was a satisfaction to Mrs Ogden to think that Isaac would be professionally compelled to attend public worship. Little Jacob was one of the crowd of spectators who gathered round the company when it was mustered for church-parade. He was proud of his resplendent papa—a papa all scarlet and silver; and it was a matter of peculiar anxiety with him that they should sit in the same pew. Mr Ogden gratified him in this respect, and the child felt himself the most important young personage in Whittlecup. A steady attention to the service is not commonly characteristic of little boys; and on this occasion little Jacob's eye was so continually caught by the glitter of his father's gold sword-knot and the silver embroidery on his sleeve, that he followed the clergyman much less regularly than usual. The Anisons were at church, of course; and their pew was very near to the one the Ogdens occupied. All the ladies at Arkwright Lodge dressed well, especially on Sundays; and as they were fine-looking women, the Lieu-

tenant had pleasure in beholding them. There was Miss Stedman also, and her father—for Mr Stedman had stayed all night at the Lodge, that he might spend a quiet Sunday there with his friend. Another reason why Mr Stedman came to Whittlecup to pass this particular Sunday was because his favourite preacher, the Rev. Mr Blunting, officiated. Mr Blunting's sermons were usually rather long. He had been known to preach an hour and a half, and the average length of his discourses was an hour; but if they were long they were always interesting, and delivered with a clearness and vigour which, in moments of impassioned earnestness, rose to eloquence. The length of a sermon is not always to be measured by the church-clock. If it is dull and stupid, twenty minutes of it are long; but if it is rich and suggestive, an hour of it may seem too short. Mr Stedman had heard hundreds of Mr Blunting's discourses without satiety; and it was always a disappointment to him when any other preacher (except one of the great Evangelical luminaries) filled the pulpit at Sootythorn. Let us sit a little in the Anisons' pew, and watch for him as he comes slowly up the aisle.

He has a great local fame, and is perhaps a little conscious of it. For twenty miles round

Sootythorn his name is a household word. He preaches in Manchester sometimes, and speaks from the platform at the great Protestant meetings there. Though his fame is exclusively local—though nobody in London has heard of him—his name is known to as many human beings as the names of some who have what is called celebrity. His great purposes possess him far too exclusively to leave room for the vanity of self-congratulation about his own notoriety, but the knowledge of it adds a certain weight and dignity to his carriage. As he comes up the aisle from the vestry, preceded by the sexton with his wand, his large and vigorous body seems impelled by successive thrusts, as a galley by strokes of the oar. The broad shoulders seem as if they carried some great invisible burden that gives them a habitual stoop. The eye looks steadily forward to an imaginary point on its own level. The wide mouth is firmly closed, but the nostrils are dilated above the long upper lip. What a remarkable face it is! How utterly destitute of beauty, yet how attractive! And when the manly voice rolls over the rapt multitude, and the eye flashes the electricity of earnestness, what wonder that men's hearts are moved!

Abel Blunting was not a university man. He

had been bred at some theological college in the north, and sprang directly from the people. His father still pursued his calling as a cobbler in a town between Sootythorn and Manchester. His own income was not large, and he had several children; yet he educated his two brothers for the Church, and would have relieved the old man from the necessity of labour; but when old Blunting had tried idleness for a week or two, he found his happiness rather diminished than augmented thereby, and returned to his last, to which he had ever since steadily adhered. In some respects his humble origin had been a decided advantage to the preacher. The moderation of the upper classes is perilous to earnestness; and a man who has just enough religion to be *comme il faut*, though he is likely to be a much more liberal and tractable member of society than Abel Blunting, can never have his inward heat. He had not the least trace of that spirit of philosophical equity which characterises this age, and which springs in a great measure from its indifference. He used the most vehement language in his controversies—he softened no expression, he consented to no courtesy which involved anything approaching to a concession. He called St Agatha's a mass-house, and the priests mass-mongers, and their service a

mummery, and their doctrine a lie. He was equally vigorous in withstanding the assaults of the infidel. These displays of energy did not, however, require any great amount of moral courage, considering that "Popery" in Sootythorn was an eminently quiet and conciliatory religion, anxious to recommend itself to the approval of moderate men of every creed, and returning soft answers to its assailants'; whilst the "assaults of the infidel" consisted of timid and carefully-worded pieces of critical literature published in London, and read privily in Sootythorn by two or three gentlemen, whose heretical opinions did not embolden them enough for any outward expression of rebellion. I am far, however, from desiring to imply that Mr Blunting was destitute of courage when I say that little courage was needed for what he did. Don Quixote did not need much courage when he charged the flock of sheep; yet he was equally ready to tilt against knights in armour, if only he could have found any. And yet it must be admitted that nothing is so favourable to boldness of utterance as the consciousness that you are backed by a strong party, and it may not have been the result of pure accident that Mr Blunting's combative powers had been so finely developed. He had met with just sufficient opposition

to stimulate him, but had never encountered that crushing opposition of an utterly overwhelming and resolved majority which either teaches a man the arts of the most extreme moderation or condemns him to absolute silence.

On the present occasion Mr Blunting preached on the subject of the militia. There was a military element in his mind, and a strong political bias. When he talked about Joshua and Sisera, there was a glowing warmth in his appreciation of military valour, which would have been better appreciated by a congregation of Cromwell's soldiers than by the raw militiamen before him. Then he came to the actual state of Europe, the attitude of France, the dangers that menaced Turkey, the insidious advances of the Colossus of the north. Mr Stedman felt rather disappointed—something yet was wanting to the perfection of the discourse. At last the something came, and Mr Stedman was satisfied. "It was owing," said the preacher, "to her *Protestantism* that England was preserved from danger. God protected her as a reward for her resistance to the Antichrist of the Seven Hills." When this point was reached, Mr Stedman settled himself yet more comfortably in his corner of Mr Anison's pew, and, though the sermon had already lasted forty minutes, listened

eagerly for what might yet remain of it. He heard what he had often heard before, yet he took fresh pleasure in it—satisfaction far deeper than any which can be derived from novel and unfamiliar doctrine.

When the service was over, Joseph Anison went straight to Mr Ogden's pew and reminded him that he had promised to dine that day at Arkwright Lodge. When they got out of the church, Isaac presented his mother to Mr Anison, and to Mrs Anison also, who joined them in the midst of that ceremony. This was followed by a polite little speech from Mrs Anison (she was an adept in polite little speeches), to the effect that, as Mr Ogden had kindly promised to eat a dinner and pay his first call at the Lodge at the same time, his duties in the militia having prevented him from calling during the week, perhaps they might hope that Mrs Ogden would allow them to call upon her at once at her lodgings, and then would she come with her son to the Lodge to spend the afternoon? So when the militiamen were disbanded, the Anisons accompanied the Ogdens to the lodging over Mr Wood's, the shoemaker.

It was a very fine May morning, and they had all come on foot. There are families in Sooty-thorn (perhaps also there may be families out of

Sootythorn) who, though living within a very short distance of their parish church, go thither always in their carriages—on the same principle which causes the Prince of Wales to go from Marlborough House to St James's Palace in a state-coach—namely, for the maintenance of their dignity. But though the Anisons' carriage was an institution sufficiently recent to have still some of the charms of novelty, they dispensed with it as much as possible on Sundays.

The young ladies had gone slowly forwards towards the Lodge with Mr Stedman and the clergyman, who had a standing invitation to dine there whenever he came to Whittlecup. Mrs Ogden's great regret in going to dine at the Lodge was for the dinner she left behind her, and she did not hesitate to express it. "It seems quite a pity," she said, "to leave them ducks and green peas—they were such fine ducks, and we're all of us very fond o' ducks, 'specially when we've green peas to 'em." After this little speech, she paused regretfully, as if meditating on the delightfulness of the ducks, and then she added, more cheerfully, "But what—ducks are very good cold, and they'll do very well for supper to-morrow night, when our Isaac comes back from Sootythorn."

The dinner at the Lodge was good enough to compensate even for the one left untasted at the shoemaker's, and nobody did better justice to it than the Rev. Abel Blunting. A man may well be hungry who has preached vehemently for seventy minutes, and eaten nothing since seven in the morning, which was Mr Blunting's habitual breakfast-hour. He was a very agreeable guest, and worth his salt. He had a vein of rich humour approaching to joviality, yet he drank only water. On this matter of teetotalism he was by no means fanatical, but he said simply that in his office of minister it was useful to his work amongst the poor. Mrs Ogden sat next to him at table, and was perfectly delighted with him. The Rev. Abel perceived at once what manner of woman she was, and talked to her accordingly. When he found out that she came from Shayton, he said that he had a great respect for Shayton, it was such a sound Protestant community—there was not a single Papist in the place—Popery had no hold *there*. Unfortunately, when Mr Blunting made this observation, there happened to be a lull in the talk, and it was audible to everybody, including Philip Stanburne, who sat in a state of happiness between Alice Stedman and Madge Anison. Poor Mrs Anison

began to feel very uncomfortable, but as Mr Blunting sat next to her, she whispered to him that they had a Roman Catholic at table. This communication not having been loud enough to be heard by Mrs Ogden, who, never having sat down with a Roman Catholic in her life, was incapable of imagining such a contingency, that lady replied,—

“Shayton folk believe i’ th’ Bible.”

“And may I ask,” said Philip, very loudly and resolutely from the other end of the table, “what Catholics believe in?”

“Why, they believe i’ th’ Koran.”*

The hearers—and everybody present had heard Mrs Ogden distinctly—could not credit their ears. Each thought that he must be mistaken—that by some wholly unaccountable magic he had heard the word “Koran” when it had been pronounced by no mortal lips. Nobody laughed—nobody even smiled. There is a degree of astonishment which stuns the sense of humour. Every one held his breath when Mr Blunting spoke.

“No, ma’am,” he said, respectfully, “you are

* The author is quite aware that this answer passes the bounds of probability, but he heard it given on an occasion somewhat similar by a lady of great wealth in the manufacturing district. He would never have dared to *invent* it.

somewhat mistaken. You appear to have confounded the Papal and the Mohammedan religions."

What Mrs Ogden's answer may have been does not matter very much, for Mr and Mrs Anison both saw the necessity for an immediate diversion, and talked about something else in the most determined manner. On reflection, Philip Stanburne thought his Church quite sufficiently avenged already. "As I believe in the Koran," he said to Miss Anison, "I may marry four wives. What an advantage that will be!"

"You horrible man!"

"Why am I a horrible man? Why are you so ungracious to me? The Sultan and the Viceroy of Egypt are like me—they believe in the Koran—and they act upon their belief as I intend to do. Yet a Christian queen has been gracious to them. She did not tell them they were horrible men. Why should you not be gracious to me in the same way? When I have married my four wives, you will come and visit me, won't you, in my palace on the Bosphorus? Black slaves shall bring you coffee in a little jewelled cup, and your lips shall touch the amber mouth-piece of a diamonded chibouque."

"But then your four wives will all be Orientals, and I shall not be able to talk to them."

“And if you believe in the Koran,” said Miss Stedman, “you ought to show it by refusing to drink wine.”

“Ah, then, I renounce Mohammed, that I may have the pleasure of drinking wine with you, Miss Stedman!” This was said with perfect grace, and in the little ceremony which followed, the young gentleman contrived to express so much respect and admiration for his fair neighbour, that Mrs Anison took note of it. “Mr Stanburne is in love with Alice,” she said to herself.

“Would you renounce your religion for love?” asked Madge Anison, in a low tone.

Philip felt a sudden sensation, as if a doctor had just probed him. Garibaldi felt the corresponding physical pain when Nélaton found the bullet.

He turned slowly and looked at Madge. There was a strange expression about her lips, and the perennial merriment had faded from her face. “Are you speaking seriously, Miss Anison, I wonder?”

The talk was noisy enough all round the table to isolate the two completely. Even Miss Stedman was listening to her loud-voiced neighbour, the Lieutenant. Madge Anison looked straight

at Philip, and said, "Yes, I *am* speaking seriously."

"I believe I should not, now. But nobody knows what he may do when he is in love."

"You *are* in love."

This time the room whirled, and the voices sounded like the murmur of a distant sea. In an instant Philip Stanburne passed from one state of life to another state of life. A crisis, which changed the whole future of four persons there present, occurred in the world of his consciousness. His imagination rioted in wild day-dreams; but one picture rose before him with irresistible vividness—a picture of Alice kneeling with him under a canopy, before the high altar at St Agatha's.

A slight pressure on his left arm recalled him to the actual world. The ladies were all leaving their seats, and Madge had kindly reminded him where he was.

"A sad place for drinking is Shayton," observed Mr Blunting, as he poured himself a glass of pure water. "I wonder if one could do any good there?"

"They're past curing, mostly, are Shayton folk," answered John Stedman. "Are not they, Mr Ogden?"

“There’s one here that is, I’m afraid,” answered Isaac, with much humility.

Mr Blunting inquired, with sympathy in his tone, whether Mr Ogden had himself fallen under temptation. When Isaac confessed his backslidings of the past week, the reverend gentleman requested permission to see him in private. Isaac had a dislike to clergymen in general, and in matters of religion rather shared the latitudinarian views of his friend Dr Bardly; but he was in a state of profound moral discouragement, and ready to be grateful to any one who held out prospects of effectual help. So it ended by his accepting an invitation to take tea at the parsonage at Sootythorn.

“If you take tea with Mr Blunting,” said Joseph Anison, “you must mind he doesn’t inoculate you with his own sort of intemperance, if he cures you of your little excesses. He drinks tea enough in a year to float a canal-boat. It’s a terribly bad habit. In my opinion it’s far worse than drinking brandy. The worst of it is that it makes men like gossip just as women do. Stick to your brandy-bottle, Mr Ogden, like a man, and let Mr Blunting empty his big teapot!”

CHAPTER XIII.

WHILST the gentlemen were still in the dining-room, Mr Blunting saw a horse pass the window—a riderless, yet harnessed horse—followed by another horse in an unaccustomed manner; and then came a lofty vehicle, drawn by the latter animal. I have described this equipage as it appeared to Mr Blunting; but the experienced reader will perceive that it was a tandem, and by the association of ideas will expect to see Fyser and the Colonel.

Colonel Stanburne came into the dining-room, and soon made himself at home there. He had never happened to meet Joseph Anison or Mr Stedman, but he knew the incumbent of Sootythorn slightly, and the other two men were his own officers, though he had as yet seen very little of either of them. The Stanburnes of Wenderholme held a position in all that part of

the country so far above that to which their mere wealth would have entitled them (for there were manufacturers far richer than the Colonel), that Joseph Anison felt it an honour that the head of that family should have entered his gates. "He's only calling on young Stanburne," thought Joseph Anison; "he isn't calling upon us."

"I came to thank you and Mrs Anison," said the Colonel, "for having so kindly taken care of our young friend here. He seems to be getting on uncommonly well; and no wonder, when he's in such good quarters."

"Captain Stanburne is gaining strength, I am glad to say," replied the master of the house. "He rather alarmed us when he came here, he seemed so weak; but he has come round wonderfully."

"I am very much better, certainly," said the patient himself.

The commanding officer hoped he would be fit for duty again at an early date, but; for reasons which the reader may easily divine, the young gentleman did not intend to be fit for duty quite so soon. The duties of a militia officer may be very delightful, but they are less delightful than the society of the one particular young lady whom

we most ardently admire. So Captain Stanburne declared that he did not feel strong enough yet to be equal to the march and the drill; that he was subject to frequent sensations of giddiness, which would make him most uncomfortable, if not useless, on the parade-ground; and that, in a word, he was best for the present where he was. This declaration was accompanied by due expressions of regret for the way in which he abused the kind hospitality of the Anisons—expressions which, of course, drew forth from the good host a cordial renewal of his lease. They had become rather more intimate now, and Joseph said, “Stop as long as you like, Captain—stop as long as you like; for you eat no more than a mouse, and you drink same as a tomtit.”

“And what have you done with the Irishman who nearly killed him?” asked Mr Anison of the Colonel. “I’ve heard nothing about him. If you’d had him shot, we should have heard of it.”

“It was a perplexing case. If you consider the man a soldier, the punishment is most severe—in fact it is death, even if he did not mean to kill. But we hardly could consider him a soldier—he had had no military experience—a raw Irish labourer, who had literally not worn a uniform more than twenty-four hours. I have been un-

willing to bring the man before a court-martial. He is in prison still."

"He has been punished enough," said Philip. "Pray consider him simply as having been drunk. Irishmen are always combative when they are drunk. It was not a deliberate attack upon me as his officer. The man was temporarily out of his senses, and struck blindly about him."

It having been settled that the Irishman was to be pardoned on the intercession of Captain Stanburne, the Colonel begged to be presented to Mrs Anison. "He had not much time," he said, looking at his watch; "he had to be back in Sootythorn in time for mess, and he was anxious to pay his respects to the lady of the house."

So they all went into the drawing-room. After the introductory bows, the Colonel perceived our friend, little Jacob (who had retreated with the ladies); but as he had not quite finished his little speech to Mrs Anison about her successful nursing, he did not as yet take any direct notice of him. When the duties of politeness had been fully performed, the Colonel beckoned for little Jacob, and when he came to him, laid both hands on his shoulders.

"And so you're here, too, are you, young man?"

I thought you were at Shayton with your grand-mamma."

Lieutenant Ogden came up at this instant to excuse himself. "My mother only came to Whittlecup yesterday, Colonel, and she brought my little boy with her." Mrs Ogden approached the group.

"I'm little Jacob's grandmother," she said, "and I'm mother to this great lad here" (pointing to the Lieutenant), "and it's as much as ever I can do to take care of him. What did you send him by himself to Whittlecup for? You should have known better nor that; sending a drunkard like him to stop by hisself in a public-house. If he's a backslider now, it's 'long o' them as turned him into temptation, same as a cow into a clover-field. I wish he'd never come into th' malicious (militia) —I do so."

The Colonel was little accustomed to be spoken to with that unrestrained frankness which characterises the inhabitants of Shayton, and felt a temporary embarrassment under Mrs Ogden's onslaught. "Well, Mrs Ogden, let us hope that Mr Isaac will be safe now under your protection."

"Safe? Ay, he is safe now, I reckon, when he's gotten his mother to take care of him; and there's more on ye as wants your mothers to take care on ye, by all accounts."

“Mother,” said the Lieutenant, “you shouldn’t talk so to the Colonel. You should bear in mind how he kept little Jacob at Wenderholme Hall.”

Mrs Ogden was pacified immediately, and held out her hand. “I thank you for that,” she said, “you were very kind to th’ childt; and I’ve been doin’ a piece of needlework ever since for your wife, but it willn’t be finished while Christmas.”

“Mother, you shouldn’t say ‘your wife’—you should say ‘her ladyship,’” observed the Lieutenant, in a low tone.

“My wife will be greatly obliged to you, Mrs Ogden. I hope you will make her acquaintance before you leave the regiment; for I may say that you belong to the regiment now, since you have come to be Lieutenant Ogden’s commanding officer.”

Mrs Anison had been first an astonished and then an amused auditor of this colloquy, but she ended it by offering Mrs Ogden a cup of tea. Then the Colonel began to talk to Mrs Anison. He had that hearty and frank enjoyment of the society of ladies which is not only perfectly compatible with morality, but especially belongs to it as one of its best attributes and privileges. Good women liked the Colonel, and the Colonel liked good women; he liked them none the less when

they were handsome, as Mrs Anison was, and when they could talk well and easily, as she did. Some women are distinguished by nature; and though Mrs Anison had seen little of the great world, and the Colonel had seen a good deal of it, the difference of experience did not place a perceptible barrier between them. The time seemed to have passed rapidly for both when the visitor took his leave.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE next morning Philip Stanburne felt strong enough to walk out in the garden with the young ladies. The garden was well laid out; the arrangement of it had been due in a great measure to Mrs Anison's good taste, and the scientific or botanical part of the work had been Mr Stedman's. The great defect in a new garden, and in the grounds about new houses generally, is the absence of full-grown trees; but the Anisons had considered this question in choosing a site for their new house, and had purchased an estate, some parts of which were rich in great oaks and sycamores. Some of the finest of these had been enclosed in the garden about the Lodge, and gave it an aspect very different from the miserable inchoate appearance of the grounds which generally surround new mansions. The garden was divided by a sunk fence from a large field, which more

pretentious people than the Anisons would have called a park, and the field contained a few trees as fine as any in the garden. These had for the most part existed formerly in hedgerows, but when Joseph Anison removed the hedges to make his park, he had been careful to preserve them, and each stood now in solitary grandeur, protected from the cattle by a circumference of iron railing. Mr Anison was rather extravagant in iron railing—there were miles of it in the vicinity of the house; and it must be admitted that no kind of fence, not even the lofty well-finished brick wall, conveys more effectually the information that you are in the neighbourhood of a rich man. Yet neither in this nor in any other variety of his expenditure did Mr Anison trouble himself much about the effect on the minds of others. He liked to have a good house, because it was pleasant and healthy to be well lodged; he liked the old trees, because old trees seemed to him majestic and beautiful objects; and he liked iron railing, because of all kinds of fencing it was the neatest and most orderly.

There was a great sweep of lawn before the house, sloping gently to the sunk fence, and the house itself was clearly visible from the little park. It was a plain stone building, with a well-

finished front, and long sash-windows; devoid of architectural beauty, yet at the same time free from those glaring solecisms and failures which so often result from pretensions ill sustained. All that it pretended to be it was—namely, a very neat and comfortable habitation, rather elegant than not, but with a sort of negative elegance, consisting in the firm rejection of what the vulgar think handsome—not in the choice and adoption of what is beautiful. The degree of taste which there was about the place was due in a great measure to Mrs Anison, and she had succeeded so far as this, that her house and its belongings had nothing which ridicule might fasten upon—a fact not fortunate for the present writer, who might else have entertained the reader with a description much more amusing than that which he has just perused.

Mrs Anison, in removing to the new house, had not abandoned her old habits of domestic economy; and as she spent the whole of every morning, until their early dinner, in looking after her servants, the young people were left to entertain each other as they best could. “You haven’t seen the garden yet, Captain Stanburne,” said Miss Anison; and so she led him all over it. The other girls went with them.

Philip Stanburne's shyness had rapidly yielded to the sweet influences of the society in which he found himself; nevertheless, since Miss Anison's observation at dinner, he had rather avoided Alice Stedman, not intentionally, but from a feeling of persistent anxiety as to consequences. Since his manner towards Miss Stedman had betrayed to a spectator like Margaret Anison something more than simple politeness towards an agreeable young lady, it became necessary to exercise self-control, at any rate over his outward behaviour. And the difficulty was, that on reflection he could detect nothing in his outward behaviour since Miss Stedman's arrival which could have betrayed him. He had been simply courteous—he had behaved as he believed a man ought always to behave to ladies, and yet Margaret Anison accused him of being in love. Philip Stanburne's surprise would have been greatly increased if he had been aware that Mrs Anison had arrived at precisely the same conclusion with her daughter.

The romantic reader may justifiably find fault with Philip Stanburne for giving himself, under these circumstances, a little time for reflection, but he cannot in fairness blame the author for having so represented him. As a matter of fact, when the young gentlemen of the present genera-

tion fall in love, or proceed to an open avowal of their attachments, or place themselves in a position which is likely to make such an avowal inevitable at a more or less distant period, they withdraw into the inner chamber of their consciousness, and hold council with many considerations. Such is their admirable prudence that they will not listen to the allurements of Passion before Reason has given her opinion upon the point. The only danger is, that Reason may be secretly allied with Passion, and propound Passion's arguments in her own colder but more cogent language.

If any rational and worldly-minded adviser had said to Philip Stanburne a month before, "Why don't you look out for some well-to-do cotton-spinner's daughter in Sootythorn? you might pick up a good fortune, that would mend the Stanithburn property, and you might find a nice well-educated girl, who would do you quite as much credit as if she belonged to one of the old families"—if any counsel of this kind had been offered to Philip Stanburne then, before he saw Alice Stedman, he would have rejected it at once as being altogether inadmissible. *He*, the representative of the house of Stanburne, connect himself with a family of cotton-spinners! He, the dutiful son of the Church, ally himself with

a member of one of those heretical sects who insult her in her affliction ! Our general views of things may, however, be very decided, and admit, nevertheless, of exception in favour of persons who are known to us. To hate Protestants in general—to despise the commercial classes as a body—is one thing ; but to hate and despise a gentle maiden, whose voice sounds sweetly in our ears, is quite another thing.

“She’s as perfect a lady as any I ever saw,” thought Philip, as she walked before him. A closer social critic might have answered, that although Alice Stedman was a very admirable and good young woman, absolutely free from the least taint of vulgarity, she lacked the style and “go” of a young lady of the world. Her deficiency in this respect may, however, have gone far to produce the charm which attracted Philip. Alice had not the *aplomb* of a fine lady, nor the brilliance of a clever woman ; but nature had given her a stamp of genuineness which is sometimes effaced by the attrition of society.

“It’s wrong of me to have taken possession of you, Captain Stanburne,” said Margaret Anison ; “I see you are longing to be with Alice Stedman—you would be a great deal happier with her ;” and, without consulting him further, she called

her sister, adding, "I beg pardon, Lissy, but I want to say something to Sarah."

Of course, as Miss Anison had some private communication to make to her sister, Philip and Alice had nothing to do but *s'éloigner*. The young gentleman offered his arm, which was accepted, and they went on down a deviously winding walk. Alice looked round, and seeing nobody, said, "Hadn't we better wait, or go back a little; we have been walking faster than they have." Philip did as he was bid, not precisely knowing or caring which way he went. But the young ladies were not there.

"I think," he said at last, "we should do better to go in our first direction, as they will expect us to do. Very likely Miss Anison may have taken her sister to the house, to show her something, and they will meet us in the garden again, if we go in the direction they calculate upon." So they turned round and walked down the winding path again.

"You often come to this place, I believe," said Philip. "The Anisons are old friends of yours, are they not, Miss Stedman?"

"Oh yes; I come to stay here very often. The Anisons are very kind to me."

"They are kind to me also, Miss Stedman, and

yet I have no claim of old acquaintance. A fortnight since I did not even know their name, and yet it seems to me now as if I had known them for years. *You* are rather an older acquaintance, Miss Stedman. I had the pleasure of seeing you at Sootythorn before I came to Whittlecup."

Alice looked up at her companion rather archly, and said, "You mean in the bookseller's shop?"

"Yes, when you came to buy a book of sermons. Shall I tell you what book you ordered? I remember the name perfectly. It was 'Blunting's Sermons on Popery.'"

"So you were listening, were you?"

"I wasn't listening when I heard your voice for the first time, but I listened very attentively afterwards. My attention was attracted by the title of the book. You know that I am a Catholic, Miss Stedman?"

"Yes," said Alice, very briefly, and in a tone which seemed to endeavour not to imply disapprobation.

"And perhaps you know that Catholics don't quite like to hear their religion called 'Popery.' So I was a little irritated; but then I reflected that as the title of the book was so, you could not order it by another name than the name upon its

title-page." Here there was a pause, as Alice did not speak. Philip resumed,—

"Is the Mr Blunting who dined here yesterday the author of the book you ordered, Miss Stedman?"

"Yes;" and then she added, in defence of Mr Blunting against any evil thoughts concerning him which might arise in Philip's mind, "he is a very good preacher, and I like him very much, and so does papa."

Philip rather admired his companion for this little evidence of stoutness. "Of course, I have never heard Mr Blunting preach," he said; "but I thought him a very agreeable man yesterday when he dined here. His conversation is certainly good and attractive. He's not handsome, though, is he, Miss Stedman?"

It had never before occurred to Alice to inquire whether her reverend friend was personally beautiful or not. The idea was so novel to her that her mind scarcely knew how to receive it. At last she said, "He's a very excellent man;" and Philip came to the conclusion that for the future it would be as well to avoid allusions to the reverend gentleman's personal appearance. Perhaps, also, they might get on better if the conversation were turned to some subject other than the

particular one upon which they had been educated from infancy to disagree.

“I had scarcely any chance of talking with Mr Stedman yesterday,” said Captain Stanburne; “but we had a conversation together at the inn at Whittlecup, which I should be very glad to renew at some future opportunity. Mr Stedman could teach me a great deal that I should be delighted to know. I live entirely in the country and much alone, and the study of nature in some form is the best pursuit for a man situated as I am. Many men try painting in water-colours or oil, but it is too discouraging to do bad work in the artistic way. I would rather study botany and geology, if I were sufficiently advanced to go on without any other guidance than such as may be afforded by books.”

“Papa would be very glad to help you, I am sure, but he is very busy, and you live a long way from Sootythorn. Papa is a cotton-manufacturer, you know, and his business ties him very much.”

“Do you live *in* Sootythorn, Miss Stedman?”

“Not far out of the town. Indeed our house is surrounded by buildings now. It used to be quite in the country.”

“I—I should like to call upon Mr Stedman

very much when I am quite well again, just to ask him to direct my studies, you know. When do you return home? I would call after your return, and beg you to introduce me to Mr Stedman."

"I should think that you would scarcely need an introduction to papa, since you were with him all yesterday afternoon and Saturday evening, besides the evening which you say you spent with him in the inn at Whittlecup." Here Miss Alice laughed demurely.

"I mean a—a botanical introduction, you know."

"And what sort of an introduction is a botanical introduction?"

Philip looked at his companion and laughed—they were beginning to be on friendly terms. "Shall I tell you what I mean, Miss Stedman?" he continued.

"Perhaps it is not necessary."

"Yes, it is necessary, or it will be necessary, and I will tell you now. I should like you to be at Sootythorn when I call upon Mr Stedman, because—because I should like to see you again after we separate here."

Alice said nothing, and she did not withdraw her hand from Philip's arm. He went on, more boldly still.

“I should like to see you again. How soon do you leave this place?”

“Papa is coming to fetch me this evening,” said Alice, in a low and rather regretful tone.

“This evening! I thought you were going to stay at least a week.”

“I came for a week, and I generally stay rather longer than the time fixed.”

“Does Miss Anison know of this sudden departure? I have not heard her mention it.”

“Nobody knows yet except Mrs Anison. Papa told her, when he went away last night, that he would want me at home.”

“I wish you had been staying longer.”

“You are very kind.”

“There is no knowing when I shall see you again, Miss Stedman.”

There was a pause of silence.

“I should like to see you again. I should like to see you often again.”

Another pause.

“Alice!” called the loud voice of Madge Anison. “Alice! where are you? we have been following you all over, and should never have found you without Gip” (a small dog that was for the moment fulfilling the office of a blood-hound).

“What do you think Miss Stedman tells me? She says she is going to leave the Lodge this evening—this very evening!”

“Lissy going to leave us to-night! Why, what nonsense! She *never* comes for less than a week, and it’s more than two months since she was here before.”

“Papa is coming to fetch me.”

It isn’t true—it cannot possibly be true. I’ll go and ask mamma about it this instant.”

Madge Anison went off at full speed towards the house, followed by Gip, and at a longer interval by Miss Sarah. Philip Stanburne and Alice Stedman were left alone together again.

For a full minute neither of them spoke a single word. At last Philip said,—

“Miss Stedman, as we may not easily see each other again without—other people being with us—I will venture to say to you now what I had intended to say much later. I have never seen any young lady who has made me feel what I feel when I am with you. I feel that I could trust everything to you—that I could trust all my life’s happiness to you. You have seen so little of me that I hardly dare make what is called an offer, but I consider myself as much bound by what I am saying now.”

Alice did not remove her hand from his arm, but it trembled, and he felt it tremble. She said nothing.

“Miss Stedman, dear Miss Stedman! after what I have said, may I come to see you at Sootythorn?”

For some seconds there was no answer. Then Alice said in a low tone, almost inaudible, “I should be very glad to see you again.”

A heavy and rapid step on the gravel behind them abruptly ended this interesting conversation.

It was not Madge Anison’s step. They stopped and looked round. The Reverend Abel Blunting confronted them.

If poor Alice had not had that miserable habit of blushing, the reverend gentleman would have perceived nothing beyond the simple fact that the young lady was walking in a garden with Mr Philip Stanburne. But Alice’s face was suffused with crimson, and the knowledge that it was so made her so uncomfortable that she blushed more than ever. In spite of his manhood, there was a slightly heightened colour on Philip’s cheek also, but a good deal of this may be attributed to vexation at what he was disposed to consider an ill-timed and unwarrantable intrusion.

“Good morning, Miss Alice! I hope you are

quite well: and you, sir, I wish you good morning; I hope I see you well."

Philip bowed, a little stiffly, and Alice proceeded to make hasty inquiries about her papa. Did Mr Blunting know if her papa had changed his intentions?

Mr Blunting was always very polite, the defect in his manners (betraying that he was not quite a gentleman) being that they were only too deferential. He had a fatherly affection for Alice Stedman, whose spiritual guide he had been from her infancy, and it was certainly the very first time in her life that she had seen him without feelings of unmingled satisfaction.

"I have come to fetch you myself, Miss Alice. I met your papa in Sootythorn this morning as I was leaving in my gig, and he asked if I were coming to Whittlecup. So he requested me to offer you the vacant seat, Miss Alice, which I now do with great pleasure." Here Mr Blunting made a sort of a bow. There was an unctuousness in his courtesy that irritated Philip, but perhaps Philip envied him his place in the gig.

"Are we going to leave immediately, then?" inquired Miss Stedman, in a tone which did not imply the most perfect satisfaction with these arrangements.

“Mrs Anison has been so kind as to invite me to dine, and I have accepted.” Mr Blunting was too honest to say that Miss Alice ought to dine before her drive. He accepted avowedly in his own interest. He had a large body to nourish, he had to supply energies for an enormous amount of work, and the dinners at the Sooty-thorn parsonage were not always very succulent. He therefore thought it not wrong to accept effective aid in his labours when it offered itself in the shape of hospitality.

During dinner nothing of any consequence occurred. Philip sat next to Mrs Anison, and the clergyman opposite to him, on her right. The hostess seemed even more gracious and radiant than usual; her manner to Philip was particularly kind. Mr Blunting was not prevented by his large consumption of victuals from taking his usual lively part in the conversation. Philip began to think he was not quite so ugly as he had looked before. Madge Anison, with the privilege of young women, scolded the parson vigorously for taking “Lissy” away. She “never heard of such a thing,” she would “never forgive him,” she would “never listen to one of his sermons again.” Here Mrs Anison interposed, and said that young ladies had not always

the choice of the sermons they would listen to; that they must go to their own church, and listen to the clergyman who happened to preach there. "Well, you may take me to church," said Madge, "but you can't make me listen. When Mr Blunting preaches, I'll think of something else."

Mr Blunting bore this good-humouredly, but he did not, in his own mind, quite approve of Madge Anison. She was not a safe young person in his opinion—she needed direction and counsel—and, like all who most need it, was always wilfully rejecting it. He had made some advances of a spiritual kind, and had always been repulsed with a degree of assurance that wounded his feelings as a clergyman. On the other hand, Alice accepted this kind of direction quite naturally; it was a real support to her, and she leaned upon it willingly.

At dessert the clergyman found an opportunity of conveying, not too directly, a little hint or lesson which he felt it his duty to convey, and which had been tormenting him since the meeting in the garden. The conversation, which at Whittlecup, as elsewhere, very generally ran upon people known to the speakers, had turned to a case of separation between a neighbouring

country gentleman and his wife, who were, or had been, of different religions.

“Marriages of that kind,” said Mr Blunting, “between people of different religions, seldom turn out happily, and it is a great imprudence to contract them.”

Mrs Anison expressed a hearty concurrence in this view, but certain young persons present believed that, however just Mr Blunting’s observation might be, considered generally, there must be exceptions to a rule so discouraging.

CHAPTER XV.

THE sudden departure of Miss Stedman was the result of a little conversation which had taken place on Sunday evening between the young lady's father and Mrs Anison. The mistress of Arkwright Lodge had not one of those sour dispositions which convince their unfortunate owners that it is a duty to put a stop to all the love-making in the world (something like trying to stop all the running water in the world), but in this instance she felt that it would be prudent to avoid certain responsibilities. Her first consideration was the happiness of Alice Stedman herself, and after that came certain other considerations about the old friendship between the Stedmans and the Anisons, which, as she foresaw, would run some risk of being shaken if she permitted an attachment to form itself under her eye so contrary to Mr Stedman's views.

“I don’t so strongly object to the Roman Catholics,” thought Mrs Anison. “If Alice were attached to a Roman Catholic, it would make Mr Stedman miserable, with his rather extreme views; but I don’t feel quite in the same way about it. If this young Stanburne were to propose for Margaret, for instance, I should advise her to accept him; he is a gentleman of very good position indeed, the head of a very old family, though his fortune is not large.”

The reader may infer from this little soliloquy of Mrs Anison’s, that she was rather glad to get Alice Stedman out of the way, in order to leave the field clear for her daughter Madge; and that her apparent consideration for “Mr Stedman’s views” was, in fact, anxiety for the furtherance of her own. To state the case thus crudely and absolutely against Mrs Anison would, however, be an injustice to a really good woman. If Mr Stedman had not been warmly antagonistic to the Church of Rome—if a marriage between Alice Stedman and Philip Stanburne had been likely to give him pleasure—Mrs Anison would have kept Alice as long as she possibly could, freely allowing the young people to float together down the famous *fleuve du Tendre*. On the other hand, perhaps, she may have been awakened

to a keener sense of Alice's danger by a regard for the interests of Madge.

Poor Alice felt, as she sat in the gig by the side of Mr Blunting, very much what a pick-pocket may be supposed to feel when he unwillingly accompanies a policeman. She was perfectly certain that her reverend companion was master of her secret, though he politely avoided alluding to it; and she felt equally persuaded that there would be communication between him and her father on the subject very soon after her arrival in Sootythorn. A position of culpability is especially painful when we are altogether unaccustomed to such a position; and for some time it was the painful side of her situation which absorbed the young lady's thoughts. But love gives courage, and develops powers of resistance in very gentle natures. "If papa asks me any questions," Alice said to herself, "I shall tell the whole truth; and if he orders me to give him up, I will obey him till I come of age." This resolution of obedience did not involve any superhuman exercise of endurance, seeing that Miss Alice would be of age in less than a year.

Has it ever happened to the reader to leave his home for a short absence, during which some

important event has occurred, changing the course and current of his life, and then to come back into the old rooms and look at them by the light of the change that has come over him? He finds his old self again, sitting like a ghost amongst the old surroundings; and he brings his new self into the ghost's presence. Did any man ever feel capable of unreserved self-congratulation on an occasion of this kind? All changes, even changes for the better, have an element of sadness; and one can hardly separate from an old coat or an old carpet without a secret pang—though the new one may be incomparably stronger, and handsomer, and better. When Alice found herself at home once more, and went into her own bedroom, and into her private sitting-room which adjoined it, the great event which had befallen her that day cast a new light of its own on all the familiar material things which were the mute companions of her life. She could never be exactly what she had been any more. Her own rooms seemed merely a temporary lodging, but a lodging bearing a strange pathetic likeness to what had once been dear to her, as it had seemed, for ever. We dread the hour of separation, but we seldom know when the severance really comes. The binding cords are silently

detached in some hour when we are absorbed in other thoughts; and though we live on for months or years as if they still held us, they do not really hold us any more. During that brief visit to the Lodge, Alice had passed from one state of being to another state of being. Before it she had been a *daughter*—her father's daughter in the order of natural parentage, and (though neither party would have used the word) Mr Blunting's daughter in the order of spiritual grace. After it, she had become capable of antagonism to both; and as she went down-stairs to await Mr Stedman in the dining-room (she knew he would be there to tea in fifteen minutes exactly), her feelings were no longer so purely and simply filial as they had been. It may even be doubted whether her Protestantism was so warm and earnest. Mr Blunting had always told her that she ought to hate Romanism and love the Romanist; but although she was obeying the latter half of this precept more thoroughly than had ever been contemplated by her reverend adviser, her progress in this part of her duty had not been accompanied by any corresponding increase of energy in the other.

Mr Blunting was so much in the habit of coming to tea at Mr Stedman's house that Alice

was by no means surprised when (as she looked out for her father from the window of the dining-room) she saw the two friends walk together up the curve of the carriage-drive; for they had a carriage-drive at Chesnut Hill, though they did not keep a carriage—a broad path, almost as white as snow and as compact as marble, composed of small fragments of spar fixed in asphalt. There was a look of great neatness and order about Alice's home; but the love of cleanliness had to struggle against great difficulties in Sooty-thorn. Vegetation, too, had its own difficulties to contend with. The leaves could not breathe, the plants were choked with soot; and though the place had been called Chesnut Hill in the days when a man might plant a tree there and hope to see it flourish greenly in the pure air, it would not have been prudent to endow any new place with a title dependent for its justification on the forward-looking hopes of the arboriculturist.

How does it happen that Alice Stedman, instead of going, as usual, to meet her father at the gate, and put her arm within his, and lead him into his beloved greenhouse before he comes in to tea—how does it happen that Alice is so busy about the tea-caddy that she does not even go so

far as the front door? Is it quite honest, I wonder, to seem as if she had not seen him from the window when she certainly *did* see him? He was too busy talking with Mr Blunting to notice Alice. His eyes were gravely fixed on the white carriage-drive, and she had withdrawn from the window unobserved. Perhaps the gravity of her father's face has alarmed her; but his face had been grave when he came home many and many a time before, in days of trade depression, in times of wearing labour and anxiety, and she had not shrunk from him then. If he is grave and sad, why does she not meet him to-day and cheer him? Could she not always cheer him? Who else could so lighten the burden of his cares? Had he not said to her in moments of sweetest frankness, that he believed the Holy Spirit had delegated to her something of the great office of the Comforter, and that he humbly accepted the divine consolations as they came to him through her!

A miserable sense, not of guilt but of separation, chilled Alice in her inmost heart. That they could never cordially agree about this match an infallible instinct assured her. The mere theory that an ardent Protestant would not like a Roman Catholic for his son-in-law might have gone for

nothing in the estimate of the buoyant energies of love, but a mere theory will yield when accurate personal knowledge of a living man will not yield.

When he came into the dining-room his manner was very calm and kind. "Well, my love," he said, "you wonder why I interrupted a pleasant visit. I find I can leave business pretty well for a week; and as to-morrow is market-day, I want you to go with me to Manchester, and then we will go together into Derbyshire. It would do us both good, I think. You'll have time, won't you, to pack up what you want? I mean to botanise a bit, and fish a bit, too, perhaps, if I can catch anything; and you may make some sketches for me, Lissy, if you'll be so good. There are some geological matters I want to have illustrated, and it would be charming to have the plants drawn just as they grow."

Alice began to feel more at ease. During tea Mr Stedman asked no troublesome questions, and did not once mention Philip Stanburne. Indeed, all that evening he was not alluded to. There are two ways of showing that a subject is uppermost in our thoughts—namely, by incessantly talking about it, and persistently avoiding it; and it was clear to Alice from the silence itself that

there had been communication between her father and Mr Blunting. The latter gentleman was, if possible, more polite than usual, and drank, if possible, more tea, which he said "Miss Alice sweetened to perfection."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE distance from Wenderholme to Sootythorn was rather inconveniently great, being about twenty miles; and as there was no railway in that direction, the Colonel determined to set up a four-in-hand, which he facetiously entitled "The Wenderholme Coach." The immediate purpose of the Wenderholme coach was to enable the officers to enjoy more frequently the hospitalities of the Hall; but it may be admitted that John Stanburne had a natural gift for driving, and also a cultivated taste for that amusement, which may have had their influence in deciding him to add this item to his establishment. He had driven his tandem so long now, that, though it was still very agreeable to him, it no longer offered any excitement; but his experience of a four-in-hand was much more limited, and it therefore presented many of the allurements of novelty. Nothing is

more agreeable than a perfect harmony between our duties towards others and our private tastes and predilections. It was clearly a duty to offer hospitality to the officers; and the hospitality would be so much more graceful if Wenderholme were brought nearer to Sootythorn by a capacious conveyance travelling at high speed, and with the style befitting a company of officers and gentlemen. At the same time, when John Stanburne imagined the charms of driving a four-in-hand, his fingers tingled with anticipations of their delight in holding "the ribbons." Like all men of a perfectly healthy nature, he still retained a great deal of the boy (alas for him whose boyhood is at an end for ever!), and he was still capable of joyously anticipating a new pleasure. The *idea* of the four-in-hand was not new to him. He had long secretly aspired to its realisation, but then Lady Helena (who had not the sacred fire) was not likely to see the thing quite in the same light. John Stanburne had never precisely consulted her upon the subject—he had never even gone so far as to say that he should like a four-in-hand if he could afford it; but he had expatiated on the delights of driving other people's teams, and his enthusiasm had met with no answering warmth in Helena's unresponsive breast. She had known

for years that her husband had a hankering after a four-in-hand, and had discouraged it in her own way—namely, by steadily avoiding the least expression (even of simple politeness) which might be construed into approbation. In this negative way, without once speaking openly about the matter, she had clearly conveyed to the Colonel's mind her opinion thereupon. The reader, no doubt, approves her ladyship's wisdom and economy. But Lady Helena was not on all points wise and economical. Her qualities of this order shone most conspicuously with reference to pleasures which she did not personally appreciate. It is with sins of extravagance as with most other sins—we compound for those which we're inclined to by condemning those that we've no mind to. On the other hand, it may most reasonably be argued, in favour of her ladyship and other good women who criticise their husbands' expenditure on this excellent old principle, that if they not only encouraged the outlay which procures them the things they like, but also outlay for things they are indifferent about, the general household expenditure would be ruinously augmented.

The Colonel's manner of proceeding about the four-in-hand was characteristic of a husband in

his peculiar position. He knew by experience the strength of the *fait accompli*. He wrote privily to a knowing friend of his who was spending the pleasant month of May amidst the joys of the London season, to purchase for him at once the commodious vehicle destined to become afterwards famous as the Wenderholme coach. He wrote for it on that Monday evening when Alice Stedman returned from her interrupted visit to Whittlecup; and as it was sent down on a truck attached to a passenger train, it arrived at the Sootythorn station within forty-eight hours of the writing of the letter, and was brought to the Thorn Inn by two of Mr Garley's hacks. The officers turned out to look at it after mess, and as it was known to have been selected by a man of high repute in the sporting world, its merits were unanimously allowed. There was a complete set of silver-mounted harness for four horses in the boot, carefully wrapped up in three sorts of paper; and London celerity had even found time to emblazon the Stanburne arms on the panels. It is true that they were exceedingly simple, like the arms of most old families, and the painter had omitted to impale them with the bearings of her ladyship—an accident which might almost be con-

sidered ominous under the circumstances, since it seemed to imply that in this extravagance of the Colonel's his wife had no part nor lot.

As the mess was just over when the coach entered Mr Garley's yard, the Colonel, with the boyish impulsiveness which he did not attempt to conceal, said, "Let's have a drive in the Wenderholme coach! Where shall we go to? Let's go and look up Lieutenant Ogden at Whittlecup, and see what he's doing!" So the two tandem horses and two of Mr Garley's hacks were clothed in the splendours of the new harness, and attached to the great vehicle, whilst a dozen officers mounted to the lofty outside places. They wore the mess costume (red shell-jacket, &c.), and looked something like a lot of scarlet geraniums on the top of a horticulturist's van.

Just as they were starting, and as the Colonel was beginning to feel his reins properly, a youthful lieutenant who possessed a cornet-à-piston, and had privily carried it with him as he climbed to his place behind, filled the streets of Sootythorn with triumphant trumpet-notes. The sound caused many of the inhabitants to come to their windows, and amongst others Miss Mellor and her friend, Mrs Ogden, who had been drinking tea with her that evening. "Why," said Miss Mellor, "it's a

new coach!" "And it's boun' to'rd Whittlecup, I declare," added Mrs Ogden. She had already put her things on, intending to walk back to Whittlecup with little Jacob in the cool of the evening, for it was quite contrary to Mrs Ogden's character (at once courageous and economical) to hire a fly for so short a distance as four miles. But when she saw the coach, it occurred to her that here was a golden mean betwixt the extravagance of fly-hiring and the fatigues of pedestrianism; so she clapped little Jacob's cap on his head (in a manner unsatisfactory to that young gentleman, for nobody can put a boy's cap on to suit him except himself), and dragged him out at the front door, hardly taking time to say good-night to the worthy lady by whom she had just been so hospitably entertained.

When the Colonel saw Mrs Ogden making signs with her parasol, he recognised her at once, and good-naturedly drew up his horses that she might get inside. Fyser got down to open the door, and the following conversation, which was clearly overheard by several of the officers, and partially by the Colonel himself, took place between Fyser and Mrs Ogden.

"Is this Whittlecup coach?"

"Yes, mum."

“Is there room inside for me and this ’ere little lad?”

“Plenty of room, mum. Step in, please; the horses is waitin’.”

“Stop a bit. What’s the fare as far as Whittlecup?”

“One shilling, mum,” said Fyser, who ventured thus far, from his knowledge of the Colonel’s indulgent disposition when a joke was in the wind.

“The childt ’ll be half-price?” said Mrs Ogden, mixing the affirmative with the interrogative.

“Very well, mum,” said Fyser, and shut the door on Mrs Ogden and little Jacob.

The Colonel, since the box-seat was on the other side of the vehicle, had not heard the whole of this colloquy; and when it was reported to him amidst roars of laughter, he looked rather graver than was expected. “It’s a good joke, gentlemen,” he said, “but there is one little matter I must explain to you. Our inside passenger is the mother of one of our brother officers, Lieutenant Ogden, who is commanding number six company at Whittlecup, and the little boy with her is his son; so please be very careful never to allude to this little incident in his presence, you understand.”

Meanwhile Mrs Ogden found the Whittlecup

coach comfortable in a supreme degree. "They've rare good coaches about Sootythorn," she said to little Jacob; "this is as soft as soft—it's same as sittin' on a feather-bedd." A few minutes later she continued: "Th' outside passengers is mostly soldiers* by what I can see. They're 'appen some o' your father's men as are boun' back to Whittlecup."

In less than half an hour the Colonel drew up in the market-place at Whittlecup, at the sign of the Blue Bell. He handed the reins to his neighbour on the box, and descended with great alacrity. Fyser had just opened the door when the Colonel arrived in time to help Mrs Ogden politely as she got out.

"It's eighteenpence," she said, and handed him the money. The Colonel had thrown his grey cloak over his shell-jacket, and, to a person with Mrs Ogden's habits of observation, or non-observation, looked sufficiently like a coachman. He thought it best to take the money, to prevent an explanation in the presence of so many witnesses. So he politely touched his cap, and thanked her. It being already dusk, she did not recognise him.

* The reader who cares to attain the perfection of Mrs Ogden's pronunciation will please to bear in mind that she pronounced the *d* well in "soldiers" (thus, sol-di-ers), and did not replace it with a *g*, according to the barbarous usage of the polite world.

Suddenly the love of a joke prevailed over other considerations, and the Colonel, imitating the cabman's gesture, contemplated the three sixpences in his open hand by the light of the lamp, and said, "Is there nothing for the coachman, mum?" The lamplight fell upon his features, and Mrs Ogden recognised him at once; so did little Jacob. Her way of taking the discovery marked her characteristic self-possession. She blundered into no apologies; but, fixing her stony grey eyes full on the Colonel's face, she said, "I think you want no sixpences; Stanburnes o' Wendrum Hall doesn't use wantin' sixpences. Give me my eighteenpence back." Then, suddenly changing her resolution, she said, "Nay, I willn't have them three sixpences back again; it's worth eighteenpence to be able to tell folk that Colonel Stanburne of Wenderholme Hall took money for lettin' an old lady ride in his carriage." She said this with real dignity, and taking little Jacob by the hand, moved off with a steady step towards her lodging over the shoemaker's shop.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day Lieutenant Ogden appeared not on the parade-ground at Sootythorn. Captain Stanburne commanded his own company for the first time since his accident (his cure having been wonderfully advanced by the departure of Miss Stedman from Arkwright Lodge); and during one of the short intervals of repose which break the tedium of drill, he went to pay his respects to the Colonel, who was engaged in conversation with the Adjutant on a bit of elevated ground, whilst Fyser promenaded his war-horse to and fro.

Colonel Stanburne, who was ignorant of the cause to which he owed the rapid recovery of his young friend, heartily congratulated him, and then said, "But where is Ogden? what's Ogden doing? Why didn't he come to the parade-ground to join the grenadier company again? Is he tak-

ing a day's holiday with those pretty girls at Arkwright Lodge?"

"Mr Ogden begs to be excused from attending drill to-day. I have a note from him." And Captain Stanburne handed a letter to the Colonel.

As soon as John Stanburne had read the letter he looked very grave, or rather very much put out, and made an ejaculation. The ejaculation was "Damn it!" Then he folded the letter again, and put it in his pocket-book.

"Have you had any conversation with Mr Ogden on the subject of this letter?" Captain Stanburne knew nothing about it.

The Colonel made a signal for Fyser, and mounted his horse. Fyser mounted another, and followed his master. The senior Major was telling humorous anecdotes to a group of captains, and the Colonel went straight to him at a canter. He told him to command the regiment in his absence, entering into some details about what was to be done—details which puzzled the Major exceedingly, for he knew nothing whatever about battalion drill, or any drill, though in some former state of existence he had been an ornamental officer in the Guards. This done, the Colonel galloped off the field.

The letter which had caused this sudden departure was as follows:—

“SIR,—As you have thought fit to play a practical joke upon my mother, I send in my resignation.—Your obedient servant,

“ISAAC OGDEN.”

There was no hesitation about the Colonel's movements; he rode straight to Whittlecup as fast as his horse could carry him. He went first to the Blue Bell, where he found a guide to Mrs Ogden's lodging over the shoemaker's shop. In answer to his inquiries, the shoemaker's wife admitted that all her lodgers were at home, but—but—in short, they were “getting their breakfast.” The Colonel said his business was urgent—that he must see the Lieutenant, and Mrs Ogden too—so Mrs Wood guided him up the narrow stairs.

We may confess for John Stanburne that he had not much of that courage which rejoices in verbal encounters, or if he had, it was of that kind which dares to do what the man is constitutionally most afraid to do. The reader may remember an anecdote of another English officer, who, as he went into battle, betrayed the external

signs of fear, and in reply to a young subaltern, who had the impudence to taunt him, said, "Yes, I *am* afraid, and if you were as much afraid as I am, you would run away." Yet, by the strength of his will, he conducted himself like a true soldier. And there is that other stirring anecdote about a French commander, who, when his body trembled at the opening of a battle, thus apostrophised it: "Tu trembles, vile carcasse! tu tremblerais bien plus si tu savais où je vais te mener!" If these men were cowards, John Stanburne was a coward too, for he mortally dreaded this encounter with the Ogdens; but if they were not cowards (having will enough to neutralise that defect of nature), neither was John Stanburne.

Lieutenant Ogden rose from his seat, and bowed rather stiffly as the Colonel entered. Mrs Ogden made a just perceptible inclination of the head, and conveyed to her mouth a spoonful of boiled egg, which she had just dipped in the salt.

"I beg pardon," said the Colonel, "for intruding upon you during breakfast-time, but—but I was anxious——" The moment of hesitation which followed was at once taken advantage of by Mrs Ogden.

"And is that all you've come to beg pardon for?"

This thrust put the Colonel more on his defence than a pleasanter reception would have done. He had intended to offer nothing but a very polite apology; but as there seemed to be a disposition on the part of the enemy to extort concessions so as to deprive them of the grace of being voluntary, he withdrew into his own retrenchments.

“I came to ask Mr Ogden for an explanation about his letter of this morning.”

“I should think you need no explanations, Colonel Stanburne. You know what passed yesterday evening.”

“He knows that well enough,” said Mrs Ogden.

“I should be glad if Lieutenant Ogden would tell me in detail what he thinks that he has to complain of.”

“Leaftenant! Leaftenant! nay, there’s no more leaftenantin’, I reckon. This is Isaac Ogden—plain Isaac Ogden—an’ nout elz. He’s given up playin’ at soldiers. He’s a cotton-spinner, or he were one, nobbut his brother an’ him quarrelled; and I wish they hadn’t done, many a time I do—for our Jacob’s as much as ever he can manage, now as he’s buildin’ a new mill; an’ if he gets wed—and there’s Hiram Ratcliff’s dorth—” Mrs Ogden might have gone very far into family

matters if her son had not perceived (or imagined that he perceived) something like a smile on Colonel Stanburne's face. In point of fact, the Colonel did not precisely smile; but there was a general relaxation of the muscles of his physiognomy from their first expression of severity, betraying an inward tendency to humour.

"Well, sir," broke in Ogden, "I'll tell you what you did, if you want me. It seems that you've set up a new carriage, a four-in-hand, which looks very like a mail-coach, and you drove this vehicle yesterday through the streets of Sootythorn, and you saw my mother on the footpath, and you made a signal to her with your whip, as coachmen do, and you allowed her to get inside under the impression that it was a public conveyance, so that you might make a laughing-stock of her with the officers. And——"

"Pardon me," said the Colonel, "it was not——"

"You've asked me to tell you why I sent in my resignation, and I'm telling you. If you stop me I shalln't begin it over again. Let me say my say, Colonel Stanburne; you may explain it away afterwards at your leisure, if you can. When you got into Whittlecup, and stopped at the Blue Bell, you took my mother's money—and not only that, but you asked for a gratuity for yourself, as driver,

to make her ridiculous in the eyes of your friends on the vehicle. I suppose, though your joke may have been a very good one, that you will be able to understand why it is not very pleasing to me, and why I don't choose to remain under you in the militia."

"If the thing had occurred as you have told it——" the Colonel began, but was instantly interrupted by Mrs Ogden.

"Do you mean to say I didn't tell him right what happened? If anybody knows what happened, I do."

"Let the Colonel say what he has to say, mother; don't you stop him. I've said my say, and it's his turn now."

The Colonel told the facts as the reader knows them. "He had made no sign to Mrs Ogden," he said, "in the street at Sootythorn, but she had made a sign with her parasol, which he had interpreted as a request for a place. He had been ignorant that Fyser had kept up her illusion about the vehicle being a public one until after the fact; and so far from encouraging the merriment of the officers, had put a stop to it by telling them who Mrs Ogden was, particularly requesting that the incident might not be made a subject of pleasantry, lest it should reach Mr Ogden's ears.

On arriving in Whittlecup he had taken her money, but with the express purpose of saving her the pain of an explanation. He had intended Mrs Ogden to remain ignorant—happily ignorant—of her little mistake.”

“Pardon me,” said Isaac Ogden; “this might have been equally well accomplished without asking my mother for a coachman’s gratuity. *That* was done to make a fool of her, evidently; and no doubt you laughed about it with your friends as you drove back to Sootythorn.”

“Here is the only point on which I feel that I owe an apology to Mrs Ogden, and I very willingly make it. In everything else I did what lay in my power to save her from ridicule, but on this point I confess that I did wrong. I couldn’t help it. I was carried away by a foolish fancy for acting the coachman out and out. The temptation was too strong for me, you know. I thought I had taken the money cleverly, in the proper professional manner, and I was tempted to ask for a gratuity. I acknowledge that I went too far. Mrs Ogden, I am very sorry for this.”

Mrs Ogden had been gradually softening during the Colonel’s explanation, and when it came to its close she turned to him and said, “We’ve been rather too hard upon you, I think.” Such an

expression as this from Mrs Ogden was equivalent to a profuse apology. The Lieutenant added a conciliatory little speech of his own : “ I think my mother may accept your explanation. I am willing to accept it myself.” This was not very cordial, but at any rate it was an expression of satisfaction.

Little Jacob had hitherto been a silent and unobserved auditor of this conversation, but it now occurred to the Colonel that he might be of considerable use. “ Mrs Ogden,” he said, “ will you allow me to transfer your eighteenpence to this young gentleman’s pocket ?” Mrs Ogden consented, and it will be believed that little Jacob on his part had no objection. Then the Colonel drew little Jacob towards him, and began to ask him questions—“ What would he like to be ?” Little Jacob said he would like to be a coachman, as the Colonel was, and drive four horses. The Colonel promised him a long ride on the coach.

“ And may I drive the horses ?”

“ Well, we shall see about that. Yes, you shall drive them a little some day.” Then turning towards Mrs Ogden, he continued,—

“ Lady Helena is not at Wenderholme just now, unfortunately; she is gone to town to her father’s for a few days, so that I am a bachelor

at present, and cannot invite ladies; but if it would please little Jacob to ride on the coach with me, I should be very glad if you would let him. I am going to drive to Wenderholme this evening as soon as our afternoon drill is finished, and shall return to-morrow morning. About half-a-dozen officers are going to dine with me. Ogden, you'll dine with me too, won't you? Do—there's a good fellow; and pray let us forget this unlucky bit of unpleasantness. Don't come full fig—come in a shell-jacket."

"Well, but you know, Colonel Stanburne, I've resigned my commission, and so how can I come in a red jacket?"

This was said with an agreeable expression of countenance, intended to imply that the resignation was no longer to be taken seriously. The Colonel laughed. "Nonsense," he said; "you don't talk about resigning? It isn't a time for resigning when there's such a capital chance of promotion. Most likely you'll be a captain next training, for there's a certain old major who finds battalion drill a mystery beyond the utmost range of his intellect, and I don't think he'll stop very long with us, and when he leaves us there'll be a general rise, and the senior lieutenant, you know, will be a captain."

“ Mrs Ogden’s countenance began to shine with pride at these hints of promotion. After all, he would be somebody at Shayton, would Captain Ogden, for she was fully determined that when once he should be in possession of the title, it should not perish for want of use.

When the Colonel rose to take his leave, Mrs Ogden said, “ Nay, nay, you shalln’t go away without drinking a glass of wine. There’s both port and sherry in the cupboard; and if you’d like something to eat—you must be quite hungry after your ride. Why, you’ve ’appen never got your breakfast?”

The Colonel confessed that he had not breakfasted. He had come away from early drill just before his usual breakfast-hour.

“ Eh, well, I wish I’d known sooner; indeed I do. The coffee’s quite cold, and there’s nothing worse than cold coffee; but Mr Wood ’ll very soon make some fresh.” Colonel Stanburne was really hungry, and ate his breakfast in a manner which gave the greatest satisfaction to Mrs Ogden. The more he ate the more he rose in her esteem, and at length she could no longer restrain her feelings of approval, and said, “ You *can* eat your breakfast; it does me good to watch ye. There’s many a young man as cannot eat half as much

as you do. There's our Isaac here that's only a very poor breakfast-eater. I tell him so many a time." Indeed she *did* tell him so many a time—namely, about fifteen times whenever they breakfasted together. When the Colonel had done eating, he looked at his watch and said it was time to go. "Well, I'm very sorry you're goin' so soon—indeed I am," said Mrs Ogden, who, when he ceased to eat, felt that her own pleasure was at an end. But you *must* drink a glass of wine. It isn't bought at the Blue Bell at Whittlecup—it comes from Shayton." She said this with a calm assurance that it settled the question of the wine's merits, just as if Shayton had been the centre of a famous wine-district. Returning to the subject of breakfast-eating, she repeated, "Eh, I do wish our Isaac could eat his breakfast same as you do, but he's spoiled his stomach wi' drinking." Then addressing her son: "Isaac, I put two glasses with the decanter—why don't you fill your glass?"

"I've given up drinking."

"Do you mean to say as you're teetotal?"

"Yes, I do, mother; I'm teetotal now."

Mrs Ogden's face assumed an expression of extreme astonishment and displeasure. "Well," she said, "Isaac Ogden, you're the first teetotal

as has been in our family!" and she looked at him in scorn. Then she resumed: "If I'd known what was to come of your meeting that teetotal clergyman—for it's him that's done it—I'd have prevented it if I could. Turned teetotal! turned teetotal! Well, Isaac, I never could have believed this of any son of mine!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Lady Helena came back from London, she found the Wenderholme coach already in full activity. It ran from Sootythorn to Wenderholme twice a-week regularly with many passengers, who, so far from contributing to its maintenance, did but yet further exhaust the pocket of its proprietor. It happened precisely that on the day of her ladyship's return the Colonel had one of his frequent dinner-parties at the Hall—parties composed almost exclusively of militia officers, and already known in the regiment as the “Wenderholme mess.” The Colonel had thought it prudent to prepare Lady Helena for his new acquisition by mentioning it in a letter, so that she experienced no shock of surprise when the four-in-hand came swinging heavily round the drive in front of the house, announcing itself with loud blasts from Ensign Featherby's cornet-à-

piston. They had such numbers of spare bedrooms at Wenderholme that these hospitalities caused no perceptible inconvenience, except that of getting up very early the next morning, which chiefly affected the guests themselves, who had to be in time for early drill. On this point the Colonel was inexorable, so that the Wenderholme mess was much more popular on Saturday than on Thursday evening, as the officers stayed at Wenderholme till after luncheon, going to the village church in the morning with the people at the Hall, and returning to Sootythorn in the course of the afternoon, so as to be in time for mess. It happened that the day of Lady Helena's return was a Saturday, and the Colonel thought, "She said nothing about the coach to-night, but I'm in for it to-morrow morning." However, when Sunday morning came, beautiful with full spring sunshine, her ladyship's countenance appeared equally cloudless. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, John Stanburne observed, a little before church-time,—

"I say, Helena, you haven't seen the Wenderholme coach. Come and look at it; *do* come, Helena—that's a good gell. It's in the coach-house."

But her ladyship replied that she had seen the

coach the evening before from the drawing-room window, when it arrived from Sootythorn.

“Well, but you can’t have seen it *pwopaly*, you know. You can’t have looked inside it. Come and look inside it, and see what comfortable accommodation we’ve got for inside passengers. Inside passengers don’t often present themselves, though, and yet there’s no difference in the fare. You’ll be an inside passenger yourself—won’t you, now, Helena?”

Her ladyship was clearly aware that this coaxing was intended to extract from her an official recognition of the new institution, and she was resolutely determined to withhold it. So she looked at her watch, and observed that it was nearly church-time, and that she must go at once and put her things on.

As they walked to church, she said to one of the officers, “We always walk to church from the Hall, even in rainy weather.”

“Helena’s a capital walker,” said the Colonel.

“It is fortunate for ladies to be good walkers,” replied her ladyship, “when they have no carriage-horses.”

Here was a stab; and the worst of it was, that it might clearly be proved to be deserved. The Colonel had suggested in his letter to Lady Helena

that she would do well to come by way of Manchester to Sootythorn, instead of going by Bradford to a little country station ten miles on the Yorkshire side of Wenderholme. Her ladyship had not replied to this communication, but had written the day before her return to the housekeeper at Wenderholme, ordering her carriage, as usual, to the Yorkshire station. The carriage had not come; the housekeeper had only been able to send the pony carriage, a tiny basket that Lady Helena drove herself, with seats for two persons, no place for luggage, and a black pony a little bigger than a Newfoundland dog. Lady Helena had driven herself from the station; there had been a smart shower, and, notwithstanding a thin grey cloak, which was supposed to be waterproof, she had been wet through. The Colonel had taken possession of all the carriage-horses for his four-in-hand, and they were at Sootythorn. Her ladyship would continue to be equally carriageless, since the Colonel would take his whole team back with him, unless he sent back the horses from Sootythorn on the day following. These things occupied John Stanburne's mind when he should have been attending to the service. They had always kept four carriage-horses since their marriage, but never more than four; and though one

of the two pairs had been often kept at Sooty-thorn, when circumstances required them to go there frequently, still her ladyship had never been left carriageless without being previously consulted upon the subject, and then only for twenty-four hours at the longest. The idea of setting up a four-in-hand with only two pairs of horses, one of which was in almost daily requisition for a lady's carriage, would indeed have been ridiculous if John Stanburne had quite seriously entertained it; but, though admitting vaguely the probable necessity of an increase, he had not yet recognised that necessity in a clear and definite way. It came to his mind, however, on that Sunday morning with much distinctness. "Well, hang it!" he thought, as he settled down in his corner at the beginning of the sermon, "I have as much right to spend my own money as Helena has. Every journey she makes to town costs more than a horse. I spend nothing on myself—really nothing whatever. Look at my tailor's bill! I positively *haven't* any tailor's bill. Helena spends more on dress in a month than I do in a year. And then her jeweller's bill! She spends hundreds of pounds on jewellery, and I never spend one penny. Every time she goes to a Drawing-room she has all her old jewels pulled

to pieces and set afresh, and it costs nobody knows what—it does. I'll have my four-in-hand properly horsed with horses of my own, by George! and none of those confounded Sootythorn hacks any more; and Helena shall keep her carriage-horses all to herself, and drive about all day long if she likes. Of course I can't take her carriage-horses—she's right there."

On her own part, her ladyship was steadily resolved not to be deprived of any of those belongings which naturally appertained to a person of her rank and consideration; and there had existed in her mind for several years a feeling of jealous watchfulness, which scrutinised at the same time John Stanburne's projects of economy and his projects of expense. It had happened several times within the experience of this couple that the husband had taken little fits of parsimony, during which he attacked the expenditure he least cared for, but which, by an unfortunate fatality, always seemed to his wife to be most reasonable and necessary. It might perhaps have been more favourable to his tranquillity to ally himself with some country girl acclimatised to the dulness of a thoroughly provincial existence, and satisfied with the position of mistress of Wenderholme Hall, who would have let him spend his money in his own

way, and would never have dragged him beyond the circle of his tastes and inclinations. He had asked Lady Helena to marry him, purely from admiration of a rather pretty and very intelligent young woman, and without the least ambition of a social kind ; so that certain consequences of his marriage, which to some men would have been its most prized results, were to him an interference with the even current of his life. He hated London, especially during the season ; and though he enjoyed the society of people whom he really knew something about, he disliked being in a crowd. Lady Helena, on the other hand, was fond of society, and even of the spectacle of the Court. She liked the country well enough in its way, but it would have cost her a great sacrifice to settle down as the wife of a simple country squire. She was especially alive to that terrible feeling of benumbing torpor which gradually overcomes an intelligent person in the country, who has not the stimulus of study. So an annual bath in the sea of London humanity was necessary to the tone of Lady Helena's mind ; and so far from doing her any harm, mentally or physically, she knew quite positively, by her own sensations for months afterwards, that it did her more good than anything else in the world. She enjoyed the country more,

she was livelier and more cheerful, she played the piano better, she sang better, and she talked better. John Stanburne had regularly accompanied his wife on these annual visits to the metropolis until this year, when the militia afforded an excellent pretext for staying in the country; but every year he had given evidence of an increasing disposition to evade the performance of his duties; and it had come to this at last, that Lady Helena was obliged to go about with the Adisham family, since John Stanburne could not be made to go to parties any more. He grumbled, too, a good deal about the costliness of these London expeditions, and sometimes talked of suppressing them altogether. There was another annual expedition that he disliked very much, namely, a winter expedition to Brighton; and it had come to pass that a coolness had sprung up between John Stanburne and the Adisham family (who went to Brighton every year) because his indisposition to meet them there had been somewhat too openly manifested. His old mother was the confidant of these rebellious sentiments. She lived, as the reader has been already informed in the earlier pages of this narrative, in a picturesque cottage situated in Wenderholme Park, which served as a residence for dowagers. She came very regularly to Wender-

holme church, and sat there in a small pew of her own, which bore the same relation to the big family pew that the cottage bore to the Hall. John Stanburne had objected very strongly to his mother's removal to the cottage, and he had also objected to the separate pew, but his mother maintained the utility of both institutions. She said it was good for an old woman, who found some difficulty in fixing her attention steadily, not to be disturbed in her devotions by the presence of too many strangers in the same pew; and as there would often be company at the Hall, she would stick to her own seat. So she sat there as usual on this particular Sunday, looking very nice in her light summer dress. The Colonel's little daughter, Edith, had slipped into her grand-mamma's pew, as she often did, when they were walking up the aisle. She had been staying at the cottage during her mother's absence, as was her custom when Lady Helena went to London; and it had cost her, as usual, a little pang to leave the old lady by herself again. Besides, she felt that it would be pleasanter to sit with her grandmother than with all those strange militia officers. She would have felt, in the family pew, as a very young sapling may be supposed to feel when it is surrounded by overpoweringly big trees —

sufficiently protected, no doubt, but more than sufficiently overshadowed.

Amongst the officers in the Wenderholme pew was Lieutenant Ogden, and by his side a young gentleman whose presence has not hitherto been mentioned, namely, little Jacob. Little Jacob's curious eyes wandered over the quaint old church during the sermon, and they fixed frequently upon the strange hatchments and marble monuments in the chapel of the Stanburnes. He had never seen such things before in his life (for there were no old families at Shayton), and he marvelled greatly thereat. Advancing, however, from the known to the unknown, he remembered the royal arms which decorated the front of the organ gallery in Shayton Church, and finding a similar ornament at Wenderholme, proceeded to the inference that the hatchments were something of the same kind, in which he was not far wrong. Gradually his eyes fell upon Mrs Stanburne's pew, and rested there. A vague new feeling crept into his being; Edith Stanburne seemed very nice, he thought. It was pleasant to look upon her face.

Here the more rigid of my readers may exclaim, "Surely he is not going to make little Jacob fall in love at *that* age!" Well, not as

you would fall in love, respected reader, if that good or evil fortune were to happen to you ; but a child like little Jacob is perfectly capable of falling in love in his own way. The loves of children bear about the same proportion to the great passion which rules the destiny of men, that their contests in fisticuffs do to the bloody work of the bayonet ; but as we may many of us remember having given Bob or Tom an ugly-looking black eye, or perchance remember having received one from Tom or Bob, so also there may linger amongst the recollections of our infancy some vision of a sweet little child-face that seemed to us brighter than any other face in the whole world. In this way did Edith Stanburne take possession of Master Jacob's honest little heart, and become the object of his silent, and tender, and timid, and exceedingly respectful adoration. He intensely felt the distance between himself and the heiress of Wenderholme Hall, and so he admired her as some young officer about a court may admire some beautiful princess whom it is his dangerous privilege to see. Children are affected by the externals of ancient wealth to a degree which the mature mind, dwelling amongst figures, is scarcely capable of realising ; and the difference between Wender-

holme and Twistle Farm, or Wenderholme and Milend, seemed to little Jacob's imagination an utterly impassable abyss. But there was steam in Ogden's mill, and there was a leak in John Stanburne's purse, and the slow months and years were gradually bringing about great changes.

Little Jacob's adventure on the moor, and his fortunate arrival at the Hall, had given him a peculiar footing there. Colonel Stanburne had taken a marked fancy to the lad; and Lady Helena—who, as the reader may perhaps remember, had lost two little boys in their infancy—was always associating him with her tenderest regrets and recollections, so that there was a sad kindness in her ways with him that drew him very strongly towards her. Isaac Ogden spoke the Lancashire dialect as thoroughly, when it suited him, as any cotton-spinner in the county; but he could also speak, when he chose, a sort of English which differed from aristocratic English by greater hardness and body, rather than by any want of correctness, and he had always strictly forbidden little Jacob to speak the Lancashire dialect in his presence. The lad spoke Lancashire all the more energetically for this prohibition when his father was not within; hearing but

the severity of the paternal law had at least given him an equal facility in English, and he kept the two languages safely in separate boxes in his cranium. It is unnecessary to say that at Wenderholme Hall the box which contained the Lancashire dialect was shut up with lock and key, and nothing but the purest English was produced, so that her ladyship thought that the little boy “spoke very nicely—with a northern accent, of course, but it was not disagreeable.”

When they came out of church Lady Helena said to Lieutenant Ogden, “Of course you will bring your little boy here on Thursday for the presentation of colours;” and then, whilst Mr Ogden was expressing his acknowledgments, she interrupted him: “Why not let him remain with us till then? We will try to amuse him, and make him learn his lessons.” Mr Ogden said he would have been very glad, but—in short, his mother was staying at Sootythorn, and might wish to keep her little grandson with her. Colonel Stanburne came up just then, and her ladyship’s answer was no doubt partially intended for his ear. “Let me keep little Jacob, and I will go and call upon Mrs Ogden to-morrow to excuse myself. I have several people to see in Sootythorn, and must go there to-morrow. I

scarcely know how I am to get there, though, for I have no carriage-horses."

Old Mrs Stanburne, who possessed a one-horse brougham, and had an amiable anxiety to keep Lady Helena as much as possible in a good temper, begged her to take it. "How very sorry I am," said the good lady, "that you should have come from the station yesterday in that little basket of yours, and got wet in the thunder-shower! Why didn't they come and ask for my brougham? The horse does very little work, and some exercise would do him good." The Colonel, on his part, expressed his great regret that the horses were all wanted to take the officers back to Sootythorn in time for mess, but promised not to keep them there. "I'll send 'em back to-morrow, you know, Helena, all four of 'em;" and he thought, internally, "She wants carriage-horses, and she grudges me the use of them for a week or two; she shall *have* 'em then, all four of 'em, and I'll never drive 'em again, by Jove, as long as I live!"

CHAPTER XIX.

JOHN STEDMAN and his daughter were favoured by very beautiful weather during their little excursion in Derbyshire. It was not the first time that they had travelled together in that region, and they had gone at once to the river Dove, where Mr Stedman fished and botanised all day long. Alice was always with him, and the days would have been exquisitely sweet to her if they had not been poisoned by a perpetual apprehension. She felt sure that her father would talk to her some day about Philip Stanburne—perhaps ask her some direct question, which it would be impossible to evade. Things had gone rather too far at Arkwright Lodge for her to take refuge in the ordinary sophistications of young lovers, and she knew that if Mr Stedman asked whether anything had passed between them, denial would not be pos-

sible for her ; and if he inquired, as he naturally would inquire, whether she had given Philip Stanburne any encouragement, what then ? She certainly *had* encouraged him, and would now have to acknowledge it. The oddest thing about Alice's position was, that Mr Stedman had never once expressed the least objection to Philip Stanburne. He had spoken of him once or twice in Alice's hearing as " young Stanburne of Stanithburn Peel," but without any shade of disapprobation. Still, when we have lived with people all our lives, we do not need to be explicitly warned by them that a meditated course of conduct will not find favour in their eyes ; and Alice knew that her father would oppose a marriage with Philip Stanburne, simply on the ground of his being a Catholic, just as decidedly as if he had been unsuitable in all other respects also. The fact that such a marriage would be a great social rise for Alice did not increase her hopes—she did not even fully realise it herself ; and though Mr Stedman would see it much more clearly than Alice did, there was no reason to expect that such a consideration would have any weight sufficient to counterbalance irreconcilable religious differences.

The very peculiar, but very exquisite, scenery

of Derbyshire excels that of almost every other English county in a quality which directly influences our feelings—it is so *intimate*. The deep little glens with their perpetual harmony of grey rock and green bush; the pure and playful streams; the willingness of the stone to let itself be hollowed into curious caverns and recesses, haunts of shade in summer heats; the miniature sublimities that interest but never agitate, that amuse but never appal,—make that scenery far more suitable to certain conditions of the human mind than many forms of landscape which nature has constructed on a more magnificent scale. In taking Alice there, John Stedman had chosen well. He wished to make her feel the full tenderness of his old unfailing affection; and he remembered a delicious week that they had passed there together two or three years before, when he had set her to draw the plants for him as they grew, and she had worked for him all day long with zealous and patient industry. Though he belonged to a class which is commonly believed to be absorbed in the pursuit of wealth, and had still a good deal of that external roughness which clings to self-made men, there were two or three soft places in his nature, like the plots of sweet short grass

on a Highland mountain, which the gentlest culture could not have improved. In these places grew delicate flowers of tenderness, little suspected in the hard business world in which he habitually lived.

He had always been kind to Alice, but, having so little suspected that a time would come when such violences would be retrospectively painful to her, had never in her presence restrained the full expression of his aggressive and irritable Protestantism. It was by this, and not by any want of gentleness in his manner towards herself, that he had made her aware of the tremendous powers of opposition which formed part of the natural energy of his character. She had also not failed to observe that when a subordinate thwarted his will, it roused in him forces of conquest which rose and rose, and accumulated and accumulated, like flowing water behind a barrier, till they either swept away the obstacle or surmounted it. So that, without having as yet experienced the effects of his hostility in her own person, she knew enough of the energy of it to dread its coming pressure.

They had been a week in Dovedale, and he had not made the least allusion to Philip Stanburne ; but one day, as he was fishing very quietly in a

clear pool of the beautiful river, in a place shut out, as it seemed, by great walls of rock from the whole human world, his eye quitted the water for an instant, and glanced up at the steep precipice before them. "Alice," he said, "this scenery reminds me a good deal of the rocks about Stanithburn Peel. There are gullies every bit as fine as this in that part of the country."

"Are there, papa?"

"Yes, every bit as fine. It's a pity I never took you there; but we'll go there together some day. It's a great deal nearer to Sootythorn than Dovedale is. It's really not more than thirty odd miles from our house; we might drive over any time in an afternoon. But we should not be so sure of accommodation as we are in this district. The inns here are particularly good; and I doubt whether there is an inn of any sort within five miles of Stanithburn Peel. I wish young Stanburne would rent me, or sell me, the Peel itself. I've long had a fancy for a country place in some very quiet neighbourhood, that one could reach easily in a day from Sootythorn. Stanithburn would just suit me. It's surrounded by very remarkable scenery, and there's a deal of botanising to be done there."

Here there was a pause, and Mr Stedman

glanced at his daughter's face. She was a little paler than usual, and there was a just perceptible compression of the lips. She knew that the crisis had come.

He continued: "By the by, you met young Stanburne at Arkwright Lodge. What do you think of him?"

Alice hesitated a moment, but knowing well that this was the mere beginning of an interrogatory from which there was no escape, she rapidly resolved to push it to its issue, and said, boldly, "I like him very much, papa."

Mr Stedman had not been quite prepared for so frank an answer; but he admired its stoutness, and thought to himself, "Anyhow, my little lass 'll tell me no lies." Then he continued:—

"You like him very much, Alice; may I ask how much?"

"I am afraid more than will quite please you, papa."

"Alice, darling," said John Stedman, gravely, yet caressingly—"Alice, darling, come and kiss your old father; give me a kiss, Alice."

She threw down her drawing, and her arms were round his neck in an instant. She took off his great broad-brimmed straw hat, and kissed his forehead again and again. It was an old

infantine way of hers ; she had done it first in that way when she was a little child in some far summer of the past.

“ I know I’m a bother to you to-day, my dear,” he went on ; “ but old fathers have their anxieties, as young daughters have theirs. I am aware that there has been something at the Lodge between you and young Stanburne, and I am anxious to know how far it has gone. Has there been any declaration ? Have you made him any promise ? Don’t be afraid of telling everything to your old dad.”

“ He told me that he hoped he might see me again, papa.”

“ And was that all ?”

“ He said he did not want me to promise anything then ; but that he considered himself as much engaged as if he had made a promise himself.”

“ And did you give him any encouragement ?”

“ I said I should be glad to see him again.”

“ Why, Alice, it’s equivalent to accepting him ! No doubt he looks upon himself as accepted already.”

There was a pause here, and Alice said, “ Well, papa, I couldn’t say anything else ; I couldn’t say less. If I had refused to see him again, he—he wouldn’t have come again.”

Mr Stedman laughed. "You're an impudent minx," he said, "that's what you are."

The laugh on his face was very transient. It died away almost instantaneously, and was succeeded by an expression of great gravity. "Daughter Alice," he said, earnestly, "your admirer seems to me to be a very nice young gentleman, and he has a very good position. There is only one objection to him that I know of—he's a Papist; and I am informed that he is a bigoted Papist. I cannot see how we are to get over that objection—I cannot, indeed."

The subject was not resumed for the rest of the morning. They dined together at the inn at two o'clock; and in the afternoon Mr Stedman proposed to drive out to see some old manor-house in the neighbourhood, which was one of the sights there. It was his custom to drink a little port wine after dinner (for all his admiration of the Rev. Mr Blunting had not converted him to the principles of teetotalism); and when the waiter brought the wine in he handed a card to Mr Stedman, who read the name upon it, and then, without showing it or speaking of it to his daughter, put it carefully in his pocket-book.

"Where is this gentleman? Is he in the house?"

“He’s in the coffee-room, sir. Shall I show him in here, sir?”

“Not just now. I’ll ring when I am ready to see him. Just go and beg him to wait where he is for a few minutes.”

When the waiter was gone, Mr Stedman addressed his daughter. “Alice,” he said, “a man has come after me here on business (both business! I hoped I’d escaped from it for a while), and we shall want half an hour’s talk. You’d better go up to your bedroom, I think. You can be putting your things on, you know.”

It was not until two or three minutes after Alice had left the room that Mr Stedman rang the bell. “You may show the gentleman in here now,” he said.

It was Philip Stanburne, who had got two days’ leave of absence for this little excursion into Derbyshire. He had ascertained Mr Stedman’s address without difficulty at the counting-house of his mill, and had come from Sootythorn early in the morning. He considered himself engaged, and was resolved to go through with the matter as soon as possible, and place himself on an intelligible footing with the father. Besides, he was not in a frame of mind to bear Alice’s absence much longer. The last conversation they had had

together was one of those which a lover is always anxious to renew.

In all embarrassing situations an old man has the advantage of a young one, even when the junior is of superior rank and education ; and as it is more trying to have to make a request than to listen to it, Philip Stanburne was less at his ease than Mr Stedman. There was a visible agitation in his manner when he presented himself. He said, "Good morning, Mr Stedman !" and then looked at the chair which Alice had just quitted, with an air of evident disappointment.

"Sit down, sit down, sir. I did not expect the pleasure of this visit. I believed you to be engaged in your military duties at Sootythorn."

"I have got leave of absence."

"Not unwell, I hope ? Perhaps you find yourself still unequal to drill ; not sufficiently recovered from your accident, perhaps. They tell me it's very hard work, that drill ; and that you officers have a great deal to attend to besides your work on the parade-ground."

"Yes, it's rather hard work for captains. Subalterns have an easier time of it."

"Have you had any lunch ? We dine early ; we have just finished our dinner."

Philip Stanburne had forced himself to eat a little luncheon in the coffee-room whilst Mr Stedman and his daughter had been at dinner. He had ascertained what they were doing immediately on his arrival, and waited till they had finished.

“ Well, as you’ve lunched, perhaps you would like to smoke. I remember we passed a pleasant evening together with Joe Anison in the Blue Bell at Whittlecup, before your accident, and you said you liked smoking, and gave evidence of it too.”

This reception, which was simply intended to put Philip Stanburne at his ease, and bring the conversation quietly to the point, kindled a glow of delusive hope in his young mind. Many a young lover has been led into error in the same way. The most obdurate parent, the parent most capable of rock-like unshakable negatives, has still some sympathy for the admirer of his child, and has often no objection to smooth the way for him as far as the rock’s foot. But such paths are like the path at Malham Cove, in Craven, that leads you pleasantly by a little stream till you come to the rock from under which it suddenly issues, and hear a murmur in dark impenetrable caverns, and look up and see before you,

and to the right hand and the left, a huge horse-shoe of inaccessible precipice, and a kestrel poisoning herself in mockery at a hart's leap from its rocky brow, three hundred feet above you !

“Will you drink anything, Captain Stanburne? I don't offer you any of this port. It's not very good, and if it were, the taste of tobacco would spoil it. Have some cold brandy-and-water.”

After a pause, intentional on Mr Stedman's part, Philip Stanburne came to the point.

“I came to ask your leave, sir, to pay my addresses to your daughter.”

There was not the slightest change of expression in Mr Stedman's face—not a muscle of his countenance moved. He quietly puffed five or six puffs without replying, then he took the pipe out of his mouth.

“It would be a very unsuitable match for a gentleman in your position, Captain Stanburne.”

“I don't think so, sir. There is not a more perfect lady in the county than Miss Stedman is.”

“Yes, but there is. Alice is a nice well-behaved girl, but she's not a real lady, you know. To be a real lady a woman must have ten times the knowledge of the world that my little Alice has. But that isn't the whole question. Think a little

of other differences between you and her. You know who your father was, and who his father was, and so on upwards for more than twenty generations. You are the representative of a very ancient family; and such a position as yours, if properly maintained, is one which in this country commands very great respect. Whereas my poor Alice—who is Alice? Why, sir, she's the daughter of an upstart cotton-spinner. A few years ago (it seems yesterday when I think of it) I was Ogden's foreman at Shayton, and before that I was an operative in the same mill."

"It's all the more creditable to you to be what you are now, sir."

"Don't try flattery with me; it will be useless."

Philip reddened, and interrupted Mr Stedman immediately. "I beg your pardon," he said, "but let us understand each other. I have no intention of flattering you. I never flattered anybody. But you have just been enumerating my advantages, so I have an equal right to mention yours. If I am to be respected because I have had ancestors, surely you may be respected because you have proved yourself to have energy and ability."

"The ability of a tradesman is not thought much of in your sphere of life, Mr Stanburne, as

you are perfectly well aware. Gentlemen are often of opinion that it is only dull and ignorant people who are fit for the routine of trade. I am not quite of that opinion myself. I have that amount of self-respect, or self-conceit if you will, which makes me consider success in business, whether it be my own or another man's, a fair practical proof of ability. But I believe I am right, nevertheless, in saying that Alice would have had a better position, in the kind of society you live in, if her father had had the luck to inherit a fortune instead of the industry to earn one. And just consider for one moment what sort of family connections she would bring to you. It appears that you are willing to put up with a man like me for a father-in-law, since you have seen enough of me to judge in a general way what sort of a chap I am, but I should think that's about the extent of your condescension. I'm a rough fellow, but then I've scraped together some odds and ends of information about various subjects which do duty with me for an education; but my relatives are rougher than I am—a good bit rougher; and *they* haven't taught themselves anything. It hasn't been in their line; they haven't seen the good of it. They are common work-people, every one of them. They smell of

oil ; they have always fluffs of cotton sticking to their jackets, except on Sundays ; and, with the exception, perhaps, of that day, they don't seem to think it very necessary to wash themselves. And Alice's relatives on her mother's side are in the same class, only their teeth look whiter because their faces are blacker. They are working colliers. My poor wife never was a lady at all—never even so much of a lady as Alice is. She was a good lass, daughter of a collier in Shayton ; and I married her when I was a mere lad, working in Ogden's mill. We lost our first children, and my wife died two years after Alice was born. She was a good woman, and a good wife to me ; but I doubt whether gentlemen like you would see her merits, for she spoke very incorrectly, and her manners, though hearty and kind, were never lady-like. But she's dead, and therefore wouldn't trouble you if you were to marry Alice. Gentlemen are not usually much ashamed of vulgar relatives in their graves, though they hate 'em when they're living. So it doesn't much matter to you whether my wife dropped her *h's* or didn't."

"It's a matter of indifference to me," said Philip Stanburne, "whether Miss Stedman's relations are poor people or not."

“No ; there you exaggerate, Captain Stanburne. It is *not* a matter of indifference to you. You would much rather they were gentlemen—people you could frankly talk about to your friends. But I take what you have just said to mean that your wish to marry Alice is strong enough to carry you even over these objections.”

“It would carry me over stronger objections than these.”

“Yes, there I believe you, for I see that it *does* carry you over objections which to my mind seem insurmountable. But then you see I am not in love, which you evidently are, and (excuse me for saying so) I don't think a man in love is precisely in the best state of mind for judging of the *future* gravity of objections which, if listened to, would thwart his present wishes. The difference of rank between you and Alice is one obstacle, but the difference of religion is another. We are Protestants, you are a Roman Catholic. And we are not Protestants in name only, as some are. We protest without ceasing against the errors and the tyranny of Rome. We will have no peace with Rome—no mealy-mouthed concessions of a cowardly Liberalism which, out of a sort of feeble politeness that I call pusillanimity, yields, one after another, the defences of English Pro-

testantism, and, by concession after concession, furthers the ambitious ends of the arch-impostor in the Vatican."

Philip Stanburne reddened at these words. "At any rate, sir, *you* cannot be accused of the sin of politeness towards Catholics."

"I speak plainly to you, Philip Stanburne, because it is a time for speaking so as to make you thoroughly understand me. I wish to convey clearly to your mind the impossibility of any peace between Popery and true Protestantism. This does not prevent me from being civil to a Romanist when I see him, but it's like the civility of the English officers to the French during the Peninsular war. I like you personally very well, young gentleman, but we belong to hostile camps."

"There are often marriages between people who are not only of different religions, but even of different nationality also. And, at any rate, I am an Englishman."

"No; you're not a real Englishman. A real Englishman owes no allegiance out of these realms, whereas you owe allegiance to the Pope of Rome. A real Englishman approves and supports the Constitution of the country, whereas you Romanists are always insidiously endeavouring to sub-

vert it. You don't mean to say that you approve of the Protestant succession?"

"Certainly not. But we are loyal to the existing temporal power; and it seems to me that your argument about who are Englishmen and who are not would deprive a good many of the title. According to you, there were no Englishmen before Henry VIII.'s time."

"Never mind them; they're not likely to ask me to marry my daughter."

"Do you mean to say that you consider my religion an insuperable obstacle? If I can overcome this difference of opinion, I don't see why you may not overcome it too. My Catholicism is as earnest as your Protestantism."

"*You*, my dear innocent young friend! Of course you can overcome it, or anything. Why, you're in love, and therefore temporarily deprived of the exercise of reason. But I'm not in love, and that makes all the difference. It's no proof of superior intelligence, mark you, not to see the force of great obstacles. Of course this obstacle might be overcome so far as to get you married, if I were fool enough to let Alice slip down the inclined plane on which you have already been enticing her; but, once married—what then? Constant dissension on the most important of all subjects."

“It seems to me that two people who love each other may agree to respect each other’s convictions.”

“Oh, I see! You propose to build your household on the quicksand of Liberalism—do you? There couldn’t be a greater mistake. Liberalism means either acting a part or having no real convictions. If you and your wife had to live face to face like two actors on a stage, your marriage would not be worth much; and if you came to consider religion as a matter on which it doesn’t much signify what opinions people hold, you would be in a worse position than either of you are in now. Popery is bad enough, but latitudinarianism is worse and worse.”

It began to be clear to Philip Stanburne that the man before him was not likely to alter his views in consequence of any eloquence of his; but he blindly tried an argument which did more injury to his cause than anything he had hitherto advanced. A moment’s reflection would have shown him that it was the very last thing he ought to say; but young men are often, unfortunately, impelled to utter things which (without being wrong in themselves) are totally unadapted to the persons to whom they are addressed.

“People who live together often in the long-

run come to agree sincerely upon most subjects, and there is no acting then, nor indifference either. One may adopt the opinions of the other, or some of them. Harmony is often brought about in that way."

"In other words, you hope to use your influence to Romanise my daughter, and you kindly hint in return that your own Romanism may become more relaxed. Certainly this is not impossible. There are many ladies in the Church of England who have gone so far towards Rome that no doubt they would live very happily with a Romanist. On my part, I shall do what I can to protect my daughter against Romanising influences.

"Then I am to understand that you will not permit her to marry me."

"I would rather see her dead."

"She is of age, I believe, and may have a will of her own upon the subject."

"She is not of age; and if she were, it is very improbable that she would marry against the wishes of her father. Another little point may concern you. I don't mean to say that you are a fortune-hunter, or that you have been much influenced by the hope of a fortune with Alice, but it would not be very prudent in your position to

marry a penniless girl; and if she marries you, I shall divide all my wealth amongst my poor relations. I will do all I can to prevent even the smallest portion of it from getting into the hands of Romish priests. Would you be quite justified in inflicting comparative poverty on Alice? I am a much richer man than you are, and my wealth increases daily. I could purchase all your estate without exhausting the mere balance that lies at my banker's."

Philip Stanburne made no answer, but rose to take his leave, and bowing silently, made his way to the door. Just before he opened it there was a gentle tap, and before Mr Stedman could intervene the door stood wide, and Philip and Alice were face to face. He stepped back into the room to let her pass. She started violently, and then boldly held out her hand, her face all crimson, and flashes of light in her eyes. She turned towards her father with a look of pain and resistance. "Papa," she said, "I think you might have told me who your man of business from Sootythorn was."

"I did not judge it to be necessary."

Then turning to Philip, she went on in a very soft caressing voice. "Your business with papa is over, and you are going back. I am sorry

you are leaving us so soon. It is a pretty place about here ; papa says the rocks are like your own rocks at Stanithburn."

"Alice," said Mr Stedman, with a sternness quite unusual from him to her, "you are giving a degree of encouragement to Mr Stanburne which is by no means becoming to the modesty of a young woman. You treat him like an accepted lover, and I forbid you to consider him in that light. After the conversation which has just taken place between us, it is clear that there can be no question of marriage between him and you. So far as I have any authority, I shall feel it my duty to use it so as to prevent any intercourse between you."

"Good-bye, Alice!" said Philip, and held out his hand ; "good-bye, but not for ever—not for long!"

"Good-bye!"

CHAPTER XX.

“I SAY, Doctor,” said Colonel Stanburne to Dr Bardly, the day before the presentation of colours, “I wish you’d look to Philip Stanburne a little. He doesn’t seem to me to be going on satisfactorily at all. I’m afraid that accident at Whittlecup has touched his brain—he’s so absent. He commanded his company very fairly a short time back, and he took an interest in drill, but now, upon my word, he gets worse and worse. To-day he made the most absurd mistakes; and one time he marched his company right off, and, by George! I thought he was going to take them straight at the hedge; and I believe he would have done so if the Adjutant hadn’t galloped after him. Eureton rowed him so, that it brought him to his senses. I never saw such a youth. He doesn’t seem to be properly awake. I’m sure he’s ill. He eats nothing.

I noticed him at mess last night. He didn't eat enough to keep a baby alive. I don't believe he sleeps properly at nights. His face is quite haggard. One might imagine he'd got something on his conscience. If you can't do him any good, I'll see the Catholic priest, and beg him to set his mind at ease. I'm quite anxious about him, really."

The Doctor smiled. "It's my opinion," he said, "that the young gentleman has a malady that neither you nor I can cure. Some young woman may cure it, but we can't. The lad's fallen in love."

"Why, Doctor, you don't believe that young fellows make themselves ill about such little matters as that, do you? Men are ill in that way in novels, but never in real life. I was desperately spoony myself before I mawid Helena, and it wasn't Helena I was spoony about either, and the girl jilted me to mawy a marquis; and I think she did quite right, for I'd rather she ran away with the marquis before she was my wife than after, you know. But it didn't spoil me a single meal—it didn't make me sleep a wink the less. In fact I felt immensely relieved after an hour or two; for there's nothing like being a bachelor, Doctor—it's so jolly being a

bachelor; no man in his senses can be sad and melancholy because he's got to remain a bachelor."

The Doctor heartily agreed with this opinion, but observed that men in love were *not* men in their senses. "Indeed they're not, Doctor—indeed they're not; but, I say, have you any idea about who the girl is in this business of Philip's? It isn't that pretty Miss Anison, is it?"

Now the Doctor had seen Captain Stanburne coming out of Mr Stedman's mill the day he went there to get the Derbyshire address, and coupling this incident with his leave of absence, had arrived at a conclusion of his own. But he was not quite sure where young Stanburne had been during his leave of absence.

"Why, he was down in Derbyshire," said the Colonel. "He told me he didn't feel quite well, and wanted a day or two for rest in the country. He said he was going to fish. I don't like giving leaves of absence—we're here only for twenty-eight days; but in his case, you know, after that accident——"

"Oh, he went down to Derbyshire, did he? Then I know for certain who the girl is. It's Alice Stedman."

"And who's she?"

“Why, you met her at Whittlecup, at Joseph Anison’s. She’s a quiet bit of a lass, and a nice-looking lass, too. He might do worse.”

“I say,” said the Colonel, “tell me now, Doctor, has she got any tin?”

“She’s safe to have thirty thousand if she’s a penny; but it’ll most likely be a good bit more.” Then the Doctor continued, “but there’s no blood in that family. Her father began as a working man in Shayton. It wouldn’t be much of a match for a Stanburne. It would not be doing like you, Colonel, when you married an earl’s daughter.”

“Hang earls’ daughters!” said the Colonel, energetically; and then, recollecting himself, he added, “Not all of ’em, you know, Doctor—I don’t want all of ’em to be hanged. But this young woman—I suppose she hasn’t been presented at Court, and doesn’t want to be—and doesn’t go to London every season, and has no swell relations.” The Doctor gave full assurances on all these points. “Then I’ll tell you what it is, Doctor; if this young fellow’s fretting about the girl, we’ll do all we can to help him. He’d be more prudent still if he remained a bachelor; but it seems a rational sort of a

mawidge to make. She aint got an uncle that's a bawonet—eh, Doctor ?”

“There's no danger of that.”

“That's right, that's right ; because, look you here, Doctor—it's a foolish thing to mawy an earl's daughter, or a marquis's, or a dook's ; but the foolishest thing of all is to mawy a bawonet's niece. A bawonet's niece is the proudest woman in the whole world, and she's always talking about her uncle. A young friend of mine mawid a bawonet's niece, and she gave him no rest till, by good luck, one day *his* uncle was created a bawonet, and then he met her on equal terms. It's the only way out of it : you *must* under those circumstances get your uncle made a bawonet. And if you don't happen to have such a thing as an uncle, what then ? What can cheer the hopelessness of your misewable position ?”

After this conversation with the Doctor, the Colonel had another with Philip Stanburne himself. “Captain Stanburne,” he said, gravely, in an interval of afternoon drill, “I consider you wanting in the duties of hospitality. I ask you to the Sootythorn mess, and you never ask me to the Whittlecup mess. I am reduced to ask myself. I beg to inform you that I shall dine at the Whittlecup mess this evening.”

“I should be very happy, but—but I’m afraid you’ll have a bad dinner. There’s nothing but a beefsteak.”

“Permit me to observe,” continued the Colonel, in the same grave tone, “that there’s a most important distinction to be drawn between bad dinners and simple dinners. Some of the very worst dinners I ever sat down to have been elaborate, expensive affairs, where the ambition of the cook exceeded his artistic skill; and some of the best and pleasantest have been simple and plain, and all the better because they were within the cook’s capacity. That’s my theory about dining, and every day’s experience confirms it. For instance, between you and me, it seems to me highly probable that your Whittlecup mess is better than ours at headquarters, for Mr Garley *rather* goes beyond what nature and education have qualified him for. His joints are good, but his side dishes are detestable, and his sweets dangerous. So let us have the beefsteak to-night; there’ll be enough for both of us, I suppose. And, I say,” added the Colonel, “don’t ask anybody to meet me. I want to have a quiet hour or two with you.”

When drill was over, Fyser appeared on the field with a led horse for the Captain, and the

two Stanburnes rode off together in advance of the company, which for once was left to the old sergeant's care. The dinner turned out to be a beefsteak, as had been promised, and there was a pudding and some cheese. The Colonel seemed to enjoy it very much, and ate very heartily, and declared that everything was excellent, and talked at random about all sorts of subjects. They had the inn parlour all to themselves; and when dinner was over, and coffee had been served, and Mr Simpson the innkeeper (who had waited) had retired into other regions, the Colonel lighted a cigar, and plunged *in medias res*.

“I know what you went down into Derbyshire for. You didn't go to fish; you went to ask Mr Stedman to let you marry his daughter, Miss Alice Stedman.”

For the first time since he had known him, Philip Stanburne was angry with the Colonel. His face flushed at once, and he asked, in a tone which was anything but conciliatory,—

“Do you keep spies in your regiment, Colonel Stanburne?”

“Bardly saw you accidentally just as you were coming out of Mr Stedman's counting-

house, and between us we have made a guess at the object of your visit to Derbyshire."

"You are very kind to interest yourself so much in my affairs."

"Try not to be angry with me. What if I *do* take an interest in your affairs? It isn't wrong, is it? I take an interest in all that concerns you, because I wish to do what I can to be of use to you."

"You are very kind."

"You are angry with me yet; but if I had plagued you with questions about your little excursion, would it not have been more impertinent and more irritating? I thought it best to let you see that I know all about it."

"It was unnecessary to speak upon that subject until I had informed you about it."

"My dear fellow, look here. It is not in the nature of things that you *would* tell me. You have been rejected either by the father or the daughter, and you are going to make yourself ill about it; you are ill already—you are pale, and you never eat anything, and your face is as melancholy as a face well can be. Be a good fellow, and take me into your confidence, and we will see if we cannot put you out of your misery."

“That is a phrase commonly used by people who kill diseased or wounded animals. You are becoming alarming. You will let me live, I hope, such as I am.”

The Colonel perceived that Philip was coming round a little. He waited a minute, and then went on.

“She’s a very nice girl. I met her at Mr Anison’s here. I would rather you married her than one of those pretty Miss Anisons. She seems a quiet sensible young lady, who will stay at home with her husband, and not always be wanting to go off to London, and Brighton, and the Lord knows where.”

Philip had had a suspicion that the Colonel was going to remonstrate with him for making a plebeian alliance, but that began to be dispelled. To induce him to express an opinion on that point, Philip said,—

“Her father is not a gentleman, you know.”

“I know who he is—a very well-to-do cotton-manufacturer; and a very intelligent, well-informed man, I’m told. A gentleman! pray what is a gentleman?”

“A difficult question to answer in words; but we all know what we mean by the word when we use it.”

“ Well, yes ; but is it quite necessary to a man to be a gentleman at all ? Upon my word, I very often think that in our line of life we are foolishly rigid on that point. I have met very clever and distinguished men—men of science, and artists, and even authors—who didn’t seem quite to answer to our notions of what a gentleman is ; and I know scores of fellows who are useless and idle, and vicious too, and given up to nothing but amusement—and not always the most innocent amusement either—and yet all who know society would recognise them as gentlemen at once. Now, between ourselves, you and I answer to what is called a gentleman, and your proposed father-in-law, Mr Stedman, you say doesn’t ; but it’s highly probable that he is superior to either of us, and a deal more useful to mankind. He spins cotton, and he studies botany and geology. I wish I could spin cotton, or increase my income in any honest way, and I wish I had some pursuit. I tried once or twice : I tried botany myself, but I had no perseverance ; and I tried to write a book, but I found my abilities weren’t good enough for that ; so I turned my talents to tandem-driving, and now I’ve set up a four-in-hand. By the by, my new team’s coming to-morrow from London—a friend of mine there has purchased it for me.”

There was a shade of dissatisfaction on John Stanburne's face as he concluded this little speech about himself. He did not seem to anticipate the arrival of the new team with pleasure unalloyed. The price, perhaps, may have been somewhat heavy—somewhat beyond his means. That London friend of his was a sporting character, with an ardent appreciation of horse-flesh in the abstract, and an elevated ideal. When he purchased for friends, which he was sometimes commissioned to do, he became truly a servant of the Ideal, and sought out only such realities as a servant of the Ideal might contemplate with feelings of satisfaction. These realities were always very costly—they always considerably exceeded the pecuniary limits which had been assigned to him. This was his only fault; he purchased well, and none of the purchase-money, either directly or indirectly, found its way into his own pocket.

The Colonel did not dwell, as he might have been expected to do, upon the subject of the horses—he returned almost immediately to that of matrimonial alliances.

“It's not very difficult to make a guess at the cause of Mr Stedman's opposition. Bardly tells me he's a most tremendous Protestant, earnest to a degree, and you, my dear fellow, happen to be

a Catholic. You'll have to let yourself be converted, I'm afraid, if you really want the girl."

"A man cannot change his faith, when he has one, because it is his interest to do so. I would rather you did not talk about that subject—at least, in that strain. You know my views; you know that nothing would induce me to profess any other views."

"Bardly tells me he doesn't think Stedman will give in, so long as you remain a Catholic."

"Very well."

"Yes, it may be very well—it may be better than marrying. It's a very good thing, no doubt, to marry a good wife, but I'm not sure that the condition of a bachelor isn't really better than that of the most fortunate husband in the world. You see, Philip (excuse me calling you by your Christian name; I wish you'd call me John), you see a married man either cares about his wife or he doesn't. If he doesn't care about her, what's the use of being married to her? If, on the other hand, he *does* care about her, then his happiness becomes entirely dependent upon her humours. Some women—who are very good women in other respects—are liable to long fits of the sulks. You omit some little attention which they think is their due; you omit it in pure innocence, because your

mind is very much occupied with other matters, and then the lady attributes it to all sorts of imaginary motives—it is a plan of yours to insult her, and so on. Or, if she attributes it to carelessness, then your carelessness is itself such a tremendous crime that she aint quite certain whether you ought ever to be forgiven for it or not; and she hesitates about forgiving you for a fortnight or three weeks, and then she decides that you shall be forgiven, and taken into her grace and favour once more. But by the time this has been repeated twenty or thirty times, a fellow gets rather weary of it, you know. It's my belief that women are divided into two classes—the sulky ones and the scolds. Some of 'em do their sulking in a way that clearly shows it's done consciously, and intentionally, and artistically, as a Frenchwoman arranges her ribbons. The great object is to show you that the lady holds herself in perfect command—that she is mistress of her own manner in everything; and this makes her manner all the more aggravating; because, if she is so perfectly mistress of it, why doesn't she make it rather pleasanter?"

"It's rather a gloomy picture that you have been painting, Colonel, but every lover will believe that there is *one* exception to it."

“Of course he will. You believe Miss Alice Stedman is the exception; only, if you can't get her, don't fret about her. She seems a very admirable young lady, and I should be glad if you married her; because, if you don't, the chances are that you will marry somebody else not quite so suitable. But if I could be quite sure that you would remain a bachelor, and take a rational view of the immense advantages of bachelorhood, I shouldn't much regret Mr Stedman's obduracy on your account.”

These views of the Colonel's were due, no doubt, to his present position with Lady Helena. The causes which were gradually dividing them had been slowly operating for several years, but the effects which resulted from them were now much more visible than they had ever previously been. First they had walked together on one path, then the path had been divided into two by an all but invisible separation—still they had walked together. But now the two paths were diverging so widely that the eye began to measure the space between them, and as it measured the space widened. It is as when two trains leave some great railway station side by side. For a time they are on the same railroad, but after a while you begin to perceive that the distance from your

own train to the other is gradually widening ; and on looking down to the ground, which seems to flow like a swift stream, you see a streak of green between the two diverging ways, and it deepens to a chasm between two embankments ; and after that they are separated by spaces ever widening—spaces of field and river and wood—till the steam of the other engine has vanished on the far horizon.

John Stanburne's offers of assistance were very sincere, but what, in a practical way, could he do? He could not make Mr Stedman come round by asking him to Wenderholme. There were plenty of people at Sootythorn who would have done anything to be asked to Wenderholme, but Mr Stedman was not one of them. Him the blandishments of aristocracy seduced not ; and there was something in his looks, even when you met him merely by accident for an hour, as the Colonel had met him at Arkwright Lodge, which told you very plainly how obdurate he would be where his convictions were concerned, and how perfectly inaccessible to the most artful and delicate coaxing. So the Colonel's good offices were for the present very likely to be confined to a general willingness to do something when the opportunity should present itself.

The day fixed for the ceremony of presentation of colours was now rapidly approaching, and the invitations had all been sent out. It was the Colonel's especial desire that this should take place at Wenderholme, and the whole regiment was to arrive there the evening before, after a regular military march from Sootythorn. The Colonel had invited as many guests of his own as the house could hold; and, in addition to these, many of the Sootythorn people, and one family from Whittlecup, were asked to spend the day at Wenderholme Hall, and be witnesses of the ceremony. The Whittlecup family, as the reader has guessed already, was that from Arkwright Lodge; and it happened that whilst the Colonel was talking with Philip Stanburne about his matrimonial prospects, Mr Joseph Anison came to the Blue Bell to call upon his young friend.

Philip and the Colonel were both looking out of the window when he came, and before he entered the room, the Colonel found time to say, "Take Anison into your confidence—*he'll* be your best man, he knows Stedman so well. Let me tell him all about it, will you? Do, now, let me." Philip consented, somewhat reluctantly, and Mr Anison had not been in the room a quarter of an hour before the Colonel had put him in possession

of the whole matter. Mr Anison's face did not convey very much encouragement. "John Stedman is very inflexible," he said, "where his religious convictions are in any way concerned, and he is very strongly Protestant. I will do what I can with him. I don't see why he should make such a very determined opposition to the match—it would be a very good match for his daughter—but he is a sort of man that positively enjoys sacrificing his interests and desires to his views of duty. If I've any advice to offer, it will be to leave him to himself for a while, and especially not to do anything to conciliate him. His daughter *may* bring him round in her own way; she's a clever girl, though she's a quiet one—and she can manage him better than anybody else."

When Mr Anison got back to Arkwright Lodge, he had a talk with Mrs Anison about Philip's prospects. "*I* shouldn't have objected to him as a son-in-law," said the husband; "he'll be reasonable enough, and let his wife go to her own church."

"I wish he'd taken a fancy to Madge," said Mrs Anison.

"Have you any particular reason for wishing so? Do you suspect anything in Madge herself? Do you think she cares for him?"

Mrs Anison looked grave, and, after a moment's hesitation, said, "I'm afraid there *is* something. I'm afraid she *does* think about him more than she ought to do. She is more irritable and excitable than she used to be, and there is a look of care and anxiety on her face which is quite painful sometimes. And yet I fancy that when Alice was here she rather encouraged young Stanburne to propose to Alice. She did it, no doubt, from anxiety to know how far he would go in that direction, and now he's gone farther than she wished."

CHAPTER XXI.

AT length the eve of the great day arrived on which the Twentieth Royal Lancashire was to possess its colours—those colours which (according to the phrase so long established by the usage of speech-making subalterns) it was prepared to dye with all its blood—yes, to the very last drop thereof.

Lady Helena had had a terribly busy time during the whole week. Arrangements for this ceremony had been the subject of anxious planning for weeks and months before; and during her last stay in London, her ladyship had been very active in seeing tradesmen accustomed to create those temporary splendours and accommodations which are necessary when great numbers of people are to be entertained. Mr Benjamin Edgington had sent down so many tents and marquees that the park of Wenderholme presented

the appearance of a rather extensive camp. The house itself contained even more than the amount of accommodation commonly found in houses of its class, but every chamber had its destined occupant. A great luncheon was to be given in the largest of the marquees, and the whole regiment was to be entertained for a night and a day.

The weather, fortunately, was most propitious, the only objection to it being the heat, and the consequent dust on the roads. To mitigate the latter, the Colonel had the regiment preceded during its march by two water-carts—an attention which the men all heartily appreciated. Sometimes, however, the carts ran short of water, but not for any long distance, as there were several villages along their line of march, and pleasant little streams at intervals. Once fairly out of Sootythorn, the Colonel gave permission to march at ease, and the men opened their jackets and took their stiff collars off, and began to sing and talk very merrily. They halted, too, occasionally by the banks of clear streams, and scattered themselves on the grass, drinking a great deal of water, there being fortunately nothing stronger within reach. At the half-way house, however, the Colonel gave every man a pint of ale, and drank one himself, as he sat on horseback.

It was after sunset when they reached Wenderholme, and the men marched into the park—not at ease, as they had marched along the road, but in fairly good military order. Lady Helena and a group of visitors stood by the side of the avenue, at the point where they turned off towards the camp. A quarter of an hour afterwards the whole regiment was at supper in the tents, except the officers, who dined at the Hall, with the Colonel's other guests, in full uniform. The dining-room presented a more splendid and animated appearance than it had ever presented since the days of John Stanburne's grandfather, who kept a pack of hounds, and received his scarlet-coated companions at his table. And even the merry fox-hunters of yore glittered not as glittered all these majors and captains and lieutenants. Their full uniforms were still as fresh as when they came from the tailor's. They had not been soiled in the dust of reviews, for the regiment had never been reviewed. The silver of the epaulettes was as brilliant as the brilliant old plate that covered the Colonel's hospitable board, and the scarlet was as intense as that of the freshest flower with which the table was decorated. It was more than a dinner—it was a stately and magnificent banquet. The Stanburnes, like many old families

in England, had for generations been buyers of silver plate, and there was enough of the solid metal in the house to set up a hundred showy houses with electro. Rarely did it come forth from the strong safes where it reposed, eating up in its unprofitable idleness the interest of a fortune. But now it glittered once again under the innumerable lights, a heterogeneous, a somewhat barbarous, medley of magnificence.

Lady Helena, without being personally self-indulgent — without caring particularly about eating delicately or being softly clad — had a natural taste for splendour, which may often be independent both of vanity and the love of ease. It seems to be even independent of the artistic instincts. Louis Napoleon has it very strongly, and so have the Sultan and his vassal of Egypt — in these instances there being little artistic culture; Lorenzo de'i Medici had it in combination with very high artistic culture. It appears that the love of splendour is quite a distinct passion of the mind, though it is commonly associated with vanity and an indulgence in sensuous gratification. I insist upon this distinction the more strongly that I am anxious not to convey, in speaking of Lady Helena's love of splendour, the idea that she was either prouder than ladies

usually are, or more addicted to habits of personal luxury. On the contrary, she was *less* self-indulgent than many women who are contented with simpler surroundings, but she enjoyed the spectacle of state. There is a theory that real enjoyment is not compatible with much display; and there are people who will tell you, and who no doubt speak sincerely from their own experience, that, if you want to be merry and gay, your preparations must not be too elaborate; that the richest feasts are the dullest, and that magnificence acts like an incubus on the mind. So it does with many people, but not with those who are constituted like Lady Helena. She felt a spring and elasticity within her which made her spirits rise with the stateliness of the occasion. Human pomp suited her as the pomp of nature suits the mind of the artist and the poet; instead of paralysing or oppressing her, it only made her feel the more perfectly at home. John Stanburne had known beforehand that his clever wife would order the festivities well, and he had felt no anxiety about her management in any way, but he had not quite counted upon this charming gaiety and ease. There are ladies who, upon occasions of this kind, show that they feel the weight of their responsibility, and bring a trouble-

clouded visage to the feast. They cannot really converse, because they cannot really listen. They hear your words, perhaps, but do not receive their meaning, being distracted by importunate cares. Nothing kills conversation like an absent and preoccupied hostess; nothing animates it like her genial and intelligent participation. Surely, John Stanburne, you may be proud of Helena tonight! What would your festival have been without her?

He recognises her superiorities, and admires them; but he would like to be delivered from the little inconveniences which attend them. That clear-headed little woman has rather too much of the habit and the faculty of criticism, and John Stanburne would rather be believed in than criticised. Like many other husbands, he would piously uphold that antique religion of the household which sets up the husband as the deity thereof—a king who can do no wrong. If these had been his views from the beginning—if he had wanted simple unreasoning submission to his judgment, and unquestioning acceptance of his actions—what a mistake he made in choosing a woman like Lady Helena! He who marries a woman of keen sight cannot himself expect to be screened from its keenness. And this woman

was so fearless—shall we say so proud?—that she disdained the artifices of what might have been a pardonable hypocrisy. She made John Stanburne feel that he was living in a glass case,—nay, more, that she saw through his clothes—through his skin—into his viscera—into his brain. You must love a woman very much indeed to bear this perpetual scrutiny, or she must love you very much to make it not altogether intolerable. The Colonel had a reasonable grievance in this, that in the presence of his wife he found no moral rest. But her criticisms were invariably just. For example, in that last cause of irritation between them—that about the horses—Lady Helena had been clearly in the right. It was, to say the least, a want of good management on the Colonel's part to have all the carriage-horses at Sootythorn on the day of her arrival. And so it always was. She never made any observation on his conduct except when such an observation was perfectly justified—perfectly called for, if you will; but then, on the other hand, she never omitted to make an observation when it *was* called for. It would have been more graceful—it would certainly have been more prudent—to let things pass sometimes without taking them up in that way. She might have let John Stan-

burne rest more quietly in his own house, I think ; she might have forgiven his little faults more readily, more freely, more generously than she did. The reader perhaps wonders whether she loved him. Yes, she was greatly attached to him. She loved him a great deal better than some women love their husbands who give them perfect peace, and yet she contrived to make him feel an irksomeness in the tie that bound him. Perhaps, with all her perspicacity, she did not quite thoroughly comprehend — did not quite adequately appreciate — his simple, and frank, and honourable nature, his manly kindness of heart, his willingness to do all that could fairly be required of him, and the sincerity with which he would have regretted all his little failures in conjugal etiquette, if only he might have been left to find them out for himself, and repent of them alone.

The digression has been long, but the banquet we were describing was long enough to permit us to absent ourselves from the spectacle for a while, and still find, on returning to it, all the guests seated in their places, and all the lights burning, though the candles may be half an inch shorter. Amongst the guests are several personages to whom we have not yet had the honour

of being introduced, and some good people, not personages, whom we know already, but have lost sight of for a long time. There are two belted earls—namely, the Earl of Adisham, Lady Helena's august papa; and the Earl Brabazon, who is papa to Captain Brabazon of the Sooty-thorn mess. There are two neighbouring baronets, and five or six country squires from distant manor-houses, some of which are not less considerable than Wenderholme itself, whilst the rent-rolls which maintain them are longer. Then there is a military commander, with grey whiskers and one eye, and an ugly old sword-cut across the cheek. He is in full uniform, with three medals and perfect ladders of clasps—the ladders by which he has climbed to his present distinguished position. He wears also the insignia of the Bath, of which he is Grand Cross.

But of all these personages, the most distinguished in point of rank must certainly be the little thin gentleman who is sitting by Lady Helena. It is easy to see that he is perfectly delighted with her ladyship, for he is constantly talking to her with evident interest and pleasure, or listening to her with pleasure still more evident. He has a broad ribbon across his white waistcoat, and another round his neck, and a glit-

tering star on his black coat. It is his Grace of Ingleborough, Lord Henry Ughtred's noble father. He is a simple, modest little man—both agreeable and, in his way, intelligent; an excellent man of business, as his stewards and agents know too well—and one of the best Greek scholars in England. Habits of real work, in any direction, have a tendency to diminish pride in those gifts of fortune with which work has nothing to do; and if the Duke found a better Greek scholar than himself, or a better man of business, he had that kind of hearty and intelligent respect for him which is yielded only by real workmen to their superiors. Indeed he had true respect for excellence of all kinds, and was incomparably more human, more capable of taking an interest in men and of understanding them, than the supercilious young gentleman his son.

Amongst our acquaintances at this great and brilliant feast are the worthy incumbent of Shayton and his wife, Mr and Mrs Prigley. Whilst we were occupied with the graver matters which affected so seriously the history of Philip Stanburne, Lady Helena had been to Shayton and called upon Mrs Prigley, and after that they had been invited to the great festivities at Wenderholme. It was kind of Lady Helena, when the

house was so full that she hardly knew where to lodge more distinguished guests, to give the Prigleys one of her best bedrooms; but she did so, and treated them with perfect tact and delicacy, trying to make them feel like near relations with whom intercourse had never been suspended. Mrs Prigley was the exact opposite of a woman of the world, having about as much experience of society as a girl of nine years old who is receiving a private education; yet her manners were very good, except so far as she was too deferential, and it was easy to see that she was a lady, though a lady who had led a very retired life. We are so much accustomed to associate the two ideas of age and experience, that we always imagine a man or woman of mature years to be rich in the wisdom that comes of continual and long-accumulated observation; yet it is possible to be childishly inexperienced at fifty, for to learn we must have opportunities, which the years do not always bring. Mrs Prigley had never travelled more than twenty miles from her two homes, Byfield and Shayton, since she was born; she had read nothing—she had no time for reading—and I say that the wonder is how, under these circumstances, she could be so nice and lady-like as she

was, so perfectly free from all taint of vulgarity. The greatest evil which attends ladies like Mrs Prigley, when they *do* go into society, is, that they sometimes feel obliged to tell white lies, and that these white lies occasionally lead them into embarrassment. Mrs Prigley never frankly and simply avowed her ignorance when she thought it would not be *comme il faut* to be ignorant. For instance, if you asked her whether she had read some book, or heard some piece of music, she *always* answered with incredible temerity in the affirmative. If your subsequent remarks called for no further display of knowledge it was well—she felt that she had bravely acted her part, and not been behind the age; but if in your innocence or in your malice (for now and then a malicious person found her out and tormented her) you went into detail, asking what she thought, for instance, of Becky Sharp in ‘Vanity Fair,’ she might be ultimately compelled to avow that though she had read ‘Vanity Fair’ she didn’t remember Becky. Thus she placed herself in most uncomfortable situations, having the courage to run perpetual risks of detection, but not the courage to admit her ignorance of anything which she imagined that a lady ought to know. When she had once affirmed

her former knowledge of anything, she stuck to it with astonishing hardihood, and accused the imperfection of her memory—one of her worst fibs, for her memory was excellent.

The conversation at a great banquet is never so pleasant as that at a table small enough for everybody to hear everybody else, and the only approach to a general exchange of opinion on any single topic which occurred on the present occasion was about the house in which the entertainment was given. The Duke had never been to Wenderholme before, and during a lull in the conversation his eye wandered over the wainscot opposite to him. It had been painted white, but the carved panels still left their designs clearly visible under the paint.

“What a noble room this is, Lady Helena!” he said; “but it is rather a pity—don’t you think so?—that those beautiful panels should have been painted. It was done, no doubt, in the last century.”

“Yes, we regret very much that the house should have been modernised. We have some intention of restoring it.”

“Glad to hear that—very glad to hear that. I envy you the pleasure of seeing all these beautiful things come to light again. I wish I had a

place to restore, Lady Helena ; but those delights are over for me, and I can only hope to experience them afresh by taking an interest in the doings of my friends. I had a capital place for restoration formerly—an old Gothic house not much spoiled by the Renaissance, but overlaid by much incongruous modern work. So I determined to restore it, and for nearly four years it was the pleasantest hobby that a man could have. It turned out rather an expensive hobby, though, but I economised in some other directions, and did what seemed to be necessary.”

“Does your Grace allude to Varolby Priory?” asked Mr Prigley, timidly.

“Yes, certainly ; yes. Do you know Varolby?”

“I have never been there, but I have seen the beautiful album of illustrations of the architectural details which was engraved by your Grace’s directions.”

Mrs Prigley was within hearing, and thinking that it would be well not to be behind her husband, said, “Oh yes ; what a beautiful book it was !” The Duke turned towards Mrs Prigley, and made her a slight bow ; then he asked in his innocence, and merely to say something, “whether the copy which Mrs Prigley had seen was a coloured one or a plain one ?”

“Oh, it was coloured,” she answered, without hesitation—“beautifully coloured!”

This was Mrs Prigley’s way—she waited for the suggestions of her interlocutor, and on hearing a thing which was as new to her as the kernel of a nut just cracked, assented to it with the tone of a person to whom it was already familiar. So clever had she become by practice in this artifice, that she conveyed the impression that nothing *could* be new to her; and the people who talked with her had no idea that it was themselves who supplied, *à mesure*, all the information wherewith she met them, and kept up the conversation. She had never heard of Varolby Priory before—she had never heard of the album of engravings before—and therefore it is superfluous to add that, as to coloured copies or plain ones, she was equally unacquainted with either. Mrs Prigley had however gone a step too far in this instance, for the Duke immediately replied,—

“Ah, then, I know that you are a friend of my old friend, Sir Archibald. You wonder how I guessed it, perhaps? It’s because there are only two coloured copies of the album in existence—my own copy and his.”

Mrs Prigley tried to put on an agreeable

expression of assent, intended to imply that she knew Sir Archibald (though as yet ignorant of Sir Archibald's surname), when her husband interposed. She made him feel anxious and fidgety. He always knew when she was telling her little fibs—he knew it by a certain facile suavity in her tone, which would not have been detected by a stranger.

“The old mural paintings must be very interesting,” said the incumbent of Shayton, and by this skilful diversion saved his wife from imminent exposure.

“Most interesting—most interesting: they were found in a wonderful state of preservation under many layers of whitewash in the chapel. And do you know, *apropos* of your carved panels, Lady Helena, we found such glorious old wainscot round a room that had been lined with lath and plaster afterwards, and decorated with an abominably ugly paper. Not one panel was injured—really not one panel! and the designs carved upon them are so very elegant! That was one of the best finds we made.”

“I should think it very probable,” said Mr. Prigley, “that discoveries would be made at Wenderholme if a thorough restoration were undertaken.”

“No doubt, no doubt,” said the Duke, “and there is nothing so interesting. Even the workmen come to take an interest in all they bring to light. Our workmen were quite proud when they found anything, and so careful not to injure what they found. Do induce your husband to restore Wenderholme, Lady Helena; it would make such a magnificent place!”

This talk about Wenderholme and restoration had gradually reached the other end of the table, and John Stanburne, feeling no doubt rather a richer and greater personage that evening than usual, being surrounded by more than common splendour, announced his positive resolution to restore the Hall thoroughly. “It was lamentable,” he said, “perfectly lamentable, that the building should have been so metamorphosed by his grandfather. But it was not altogether past mending; and architects, you know, understand old Elizabethan buildings so much better than they used to do.”

It was a delicious evening, soft and calm, without either the chills of earlier spring or the sultriness of the really hot weather. When the ladies had left the room, and the gentlemen had sat long enough to drink the moderate quantity of wine which men consume in these days of

sobriety, the Colonel proposed that they should all go and smoke in the garden. There was a very large lawn, and there were a great many garden-chairs about, so the smokers soon formed themselves into a cluster of little groups. The whole lawn was as light as day, for the front of the Hall was illuminated, and hundreds of little glow-worm lamps lay scattered amongst the flowers. The Colonel had managed to organise a regimental band, which, being composed of tolerably good musicians from Shayton and Sootythorn (both musical places, but especially Shayton), had been rapidly brought into working order by an intelligent bandmaster. This band had been stationed somewhere in the garden, and began to fill the woods of Wenderholme with its martial strains.

“Upon my word, Colonel,” said the Duke, stirring his cup of coffee, “you do things very admirably; I have seen many houses illuminated, but I think I never saw one illuminated so well as Wenderholme is to-night. Every feature of the building is brought into its due degree of prominence. All that rich central projection over the porch is splendid! A less intelligent illuminator would have sacrificed all those fine deep

shadows in the recesses of the sculpture, which add so much to the effect."

"My wife has arranged all about these matters," said John Stanburne; "she has better taste than I have, and more knowledge. I always leave these things to her."

"Devilish clever woman that Lady Helena!" thought his Grace; but he did not say it exactly in that way.

"All these sash-windows must be very recent. Last century, probably—eighteenth century; very sad that eighteenth century—wish it had never existed, only don't see how we should have got into the nineteenth!"

The Colonel laughed. "Very difficult," he said, "to get into a nineteenth century without passing through an eighteenth century of some sort."

"Yes, of course, of course; but I don't mean merely in the sense of numbers, you know—in the arithmetical sense of eighteen and nineteen. I mean, that seeing how very curiously people's minds seem to be generally constituted, it does not seem probable that they could ever have reached the ideas of the nineteenth century without passing through the ideas of the eighteenth. But what a pity it is they were such destructive ideas! The people of the eighteenth century

seem to have destroyed for the mere pleasure of destroying. Only fancy the barbarism of my forefathers at Varolby, who actually covered the most admirable old wainscot in the world, full of the most delicate, graceful, and exquisite work, with lath and plaster, and a hideous paper! They preferred the paper, you see, to the wainscot."

"Perhaps paper happened to be more in the fashion, and they did not care about either. My grandfather did not leave the wainscot, however, under the paper. At least, he must have removed a great deal of it. There is an immense lot of old carved work that he removed from the walls and rooms in a lumber-garret at the top of the house."

"Is there though, really?" said the Duke, with much eagerness; "then you *must* let me see it to-morrow—you must indeed; nothing would interest me more."

Just then a white stream of ladies issued from the illuminated porch, and flowed down the broad stairs. Their diamonds glittered in the light, flashing visibly to a considerable distance. They came slowly forward to the lawn.

"I think it is time to have the fireworks now," said Lady Helena to the Colonel.

The Colonel called the officers about him, whilst the other gentlemen began to talk to the ladies. "It would prevent confusion," he said, "if we were to muster the men properly to see the fireworks. I should like them to have good places; but there is some chance, you know, that they might damage things in the garden unless they come in military order. There are already great numbers of people in the park, and I think it would be better to keep our men separate from the crowd as much as possible." Horses were brought for the Colonel and other field-officers, and they rode to the camp, the others following on foot. Transparencies had been set up at different parts of the garden, with the numbers of the companies; and the arrangements had been so perfectly made, that in less than twenty minutes every company was at its appointed place.

No private individual in John Stanburne's position could afford a display of pyrotechnics sufficient to astonish such experienced people as his noble guests; but Lady Helena and the pyrotechnician, or "firework-man," as her ladyship more simply called him, had planned something quite sufficiently effective. He and his assistants were on the roof of the Hall, where temporary

platforms and railings had been set up in different places for their accommodation; and the floods of fire that soon issued therefrom astonished many of the spectators, especially Mrs Prigley. And yet when a perfectly novel device was displayed, which the "firework-man" had invented for the occasion, and Lady Helena asked Mrs Prigley what she thought of it, that lady averred that she had seen it before, in some former state of existence, and had "always thought it very beautiful."

Suddenly these words, "The Fiery Niagara," shone in great burning letters along the front of the house, and then an immense cascade of fire poured over the roof in all directions, and hid Wenderholme Hall as completely as the rock is hidden where the real Niagara thunders into its abyss. At the same time trees of green fire burned on the sides of the flowing river, and their boughs seemed to dip in its rushing gold, as the boughs of the sycamores bend over the swift-flowing water. And behind the edge of the great cascade rose slowly a great round moon.

CHAPTER XXII.

AFTER the fiery cascade came the bouquet ; and the fireworks ended with a prodigious sheaf of rockets, which made the country people think that the stars were falling.

Though the Hall was still illuminated, it looked poorer after the brilliant pyrotechnics ; and as this diminution of its effect had been foreseen, arrangements had been made beforehand to cheer the minds of the guests at the critical moment by a compensation. The Venetian lanterns had been reserved till now, and the band had been silent during the fireworks. A large flat space on the lawn had been surrounded by masts with banners, and from mast to mast hung large festoons of greenery, and from the festoons hung the many-coloured lanterns. A platform had been erected at one end for the band ; and before the last rocket-constellation had burst into momentary

splendour, and been extinguished as it fell towards the earth, the lanterns were all burning, and the band playing merrily. Before and during the fireworks the company had been considerably increased by arrivals from neighbouring villages and the houses of the smaller gentry, so Lady Helena passed the word that there would be a dance in the space that was enclosed by the lanterns.

It had been part of our friend Philip Stanburne's duty to march to Wenderholme with his company, and to dine with the Colonel in the Hall; but in his present moody and melancholy temper he found it impossible to carry complaisance so far as to whirl about in a waltz with some young lady whom he had never before seen. There was nobody there that he knew; and when Lady Helena kindly offered to introduce him to a partner, his refusal was so very decided that it seemed almost wanting in politeness. The Colonel had not mentioned Philip's love-affair to her ladyship, for reasons which the reader will scarcely need to have explained to him. People who have lived together for some years generally know pretty well what each will think and say about a subject before it has been the subject of open conversation between them;

and since Philip Stanburne was now treated as a near relation at Wenderholme, it was clear that her ladyship would be a good deal put out if she heard of his intended misalliance. The Colonel himself was by no means democratic in his aboriginal instincts; but after his experience of married life, the one quality in Lady Helena which he would most willingly have done without was her rank, with its concomitant inconveniences. He did not now feel merely indifferent to rank, he positively disliked it; and with his present views, Alice Stedman's humble origin seemed a guarantee of immunity from many of the perils which were most dangerous to his own domestic peace. But Lady Helena (as he felt instinctively, without needing to give to his thought the consistency of words and phrases) was still in that state of mind which is natural to every one who is born with the advantages of rank—the state of mind which values rank too highly to sacrifice it willingly, or to see any relation sacrifice it without protesting against his folly. Hers would be the natural and rational view of the matter; the common-sense view; the view which in all classes who have rank of any sort to maintain (and what class has not?) has ever been recognised, has ever persisted and prevailed. The Colonel did not go so

far as to wish that he had married some other person of humble provincial rank ; but he often wished that Lady Helena herself had been the daughter of some small squire, or country clergyman, or cotton-spinner, if he had brought her up as nicely as Alice Stedman had been brought up. It was not to be expected that she could ever share this opinion about herself, or the opinion about Alice Stedman, which was merely a reflection of it.

Like most recluses, Philip Stanburne had rather an awkward and ungracious way of declining social pleasures which were disagreeable to him. A clever man of the world knows how to get excused from dancing, or drinking, or going to a wedding, without sacrificing any of the esteem in which he is held, but a recluse never gets out of anything very well ; he cannot put on the *air enjoué*, nor the piteous look which implores mercy and forgiveness—he cannot invent the little fibs which deceive not, yet conciliate. Since Philip Stanburne did not want to dance, he might have got out of it by saying that his feet were sore after his long march, or that he felt too tired ; but then his feet were not sore, and though he *was* rather tired, his pride refused to avow it. So he simply said that he disliked

dancing, and begged to be excused ; on which Lady Helena left him somewhat abruptly to his own reflections, and made a small ejaculation in the French tongue, "*Quel ours!*"

Owing to Philip Stanburne's exile at Whittlecup, which had continued during the whole of the training, and to his natural shyness and timidity, which the extreme reclusion of his existence had allowed to become the permanent habit of his nature, he had made few acquaintances amongst the officers, and not one friend. He was in that stage of mental or sentimental development when our philosophy does not yet recognise the value of mere acquaintances, and we have no belief in the richness of the human nature which is unknown to us. There were several men in the regiment to know whom would have done Philip Stanburne a great deal of good, but he missed the opportunities which presented themselves. For instance, on the present occasion, though several of his brother officers, who, like himself, were not dancing, had gathered into a little group, Philip Stanburne avoided the group, and walked away by himself in the direction of the great dark wood. He felt the necessity for a little solitude ; he had not been by himself during the whole day, and it

was now nearly midnight. A man who is accustomed to be alone will steal out in that way from society to refresh himself in the loneliness which is his natural element—*pour se remettre*, as a Frenchman would express it. So he followed a narrow walk that led into the wood, and soon lost sight of the illuminations, whilst the music became gradually fainter, and at last was confined to such hints of the nature of the melody as could be gathered from the occasional fortissimo of a trumpet or the irregular booming of a drum.

There was, as the reader already knows, a ravine behind Wenderholme Hall, which was a gash in the great hill that divided Wenderholme from Shayton. All this ravine was filled with a thick wood, and a stream came down the middle of it from the moorland above—a little noisy stream that tumbled over a good many small rocks, and made some cascades which the inhabitants of Wenderholme showed to all their visitors, and which lady visitors often more or less successfully sketched. By an outlay of about a hundred pounds, John Stanburne's grandfather had dammed this stream up in one conveniently narrow place, and made a small pond there, and the walk which Philip Stanburne was now following skirted the stream till it came to

the pond's edge. It turned round the upper end of the tiny lake, and crossed the stream where it entered by means of a picturesque wooden bridge. From this bridge the Hall might be distinctly seen in the daytime; and Philip, remembering this, or perhaps merely from the habit of looking down towards the Hall when he crossed the bridge, stopped and looked, as if in the darkness of the night he could hope to distinguish anything at the back of the house, which, of course, was not illuminated.

Not illuminated! Why, the firework-men have applied a more effective device to the back of the house than the elaborate illumination of the front! They have invented a curling luminous cloud, these accomplished pyrotechnicians!

Philip Stanburne began to wonder how it was managed, and to speculate on the probable artifice. Was the smoke produced separately, and then lighted from below, or was it really luminous smoke? However produced, the effect was an admirable one, and Philip admired it accordingly. "But it is odd," he thought, "that I should be left to enjoy it (probably) by myself. It's not likely that they have left their dancing—I'm sure they haven't; I can hear the drum yet, and it's marking the time of a waltz." A gentle breeze

'came towards him, and rippled the surface of the dark water. It brought the sound of the trumpets and he recognised the air. "They are waltzing still, no doubt."

The luminous smoke still rose and curled. Then a red flash glared in it for an instant. "Those are not fireworks," said Philip Stanburne, aloud; "*Wenderholme Hall is on fire!*"

CHAPTER XXIII.

“WHY, Philip,” said the Colonel, “I didn’t know that you’d been dancing. You’ve been over-exerting yourself. You look tremendously hot, and very much out of breath.”

“Young fellahs will dance, you know, Colonel,” said the General with the ladders of clasps—
“young fellahs will; I envy them!”

“Where is Edith — your daughter — little Edith?” Philip asked, with a scared and anxious face.

“In bed, of course, at this time of night. You don’t want to dance with *her*, a small child like her?” Then fixing his eyes on Philip Stanburne’s face, the Colonel exclaimed, grasping his arm so strongly as to cause pain. “Something is wrong, by Jove! out with it, out with it!”

“Where’s Edith’s room? the house is on fire!”

John Stanburne said nothing, but turned at

once with swift steps towards the house. Philip followed him closely: they entered by the great doorway under the porch, and passed rapidly across the hall. It was quiet and empty, lighted by a few lamps suspended from the ceiling by long crimson cords—the portraits of the old fox-hunting Stanburnes looking down with their usual healthy self-possession. The door from the hall to the staircase was closed: when the Colonel opened it, a smell of burning became for the first time perceptible. He took four steps at a time. Edith's rooms were nearly at the top of the house. The nurseries had been up there traditionally, because that situation kept noisy children well out of the way of guests.

Wenderholme was a lofty house, with a long lateral corridor on each story. As they ascended, the smell of burning strongly increased. The lower corridors were lighted—all the guests' rooms were there. But the uppermost corridor, where the servants' rooms and the nurseries were, was not permanently lighted, as the servants took their own bed-candlesticks from below. When the Colonel got there he could not see, and he could not breathe. Volumes of dense smoke rolled along the dark passages. He ran blindly in the direction of Edith's room. Philip tried to

follow, but the suffocating atmosphere affected his more delicate organisation with tenfold force, and he was compelled to draw back. He stood on the top of the great staircase, agitated by mortal anxiety.

But the Colonel himself, strong as he was, could not breathe that atmosphere for long. He came back out of the darkness, his hands over his face. Even on the staircase the air was stifling, but to him, who had breathed thick fire, it was comparative refreshment. He staggered forward to the banister, and grasped it. This for three or four seconds, then he ran down the stairs without uttering one word.

The two passed swiftly through a complicated set of passages on the ground-floor and reached one of the minor staircases, of which there were five or six at Wenderholme. This one led directly to the nurseries above, and was their most commonly used access. When they came to this, John Stanburne turned round, paused for an instant, and said, "Come with me, Philip; it's our last chance. Poor little Edith! O God, O God!"

In this narrow stair there was no light whatever. The Colonel ran up it, or leaped up it, in a series of wild bounds, like a hunted animal. Philip kept up with him as he could. As they

rose higher and higher the temperature quickly increased : the walls were hot—it was the temperature of a heated oven. The Colonel tried to open a door, but the brass handle burnt his hand. Then he burst it open by pushing against it with his shoulder. A gust of air rushed up the staircase, and in an instant the room they were trying to enter was illuminated by a burst of flame. For a second the paper was visible—a pretty, gay paper, with tiny flowers, suitable for a young girl's room—and a few engravings on the walls, and the pink curtains of a little French bed.

Either by one of those unaccountable presentiments which sometimes hold us back at the moment of imminent danger, or else from horror at the probable fate of little Edith, the Colonel paused on the threshold of the burning room. Then the ceiling cracked from end to end, and fiery rafters, with heaps of other burning wood, came crashing down together. The heat was now absolutely intolerable—to remain on the threshold was death, and the two went down the stairs. There was a strong draught in the staircase, which revived them physically, and notwithstanding the extremity of his mental anguish, the Colonel descended with a steady step. When they came

into the lighted hall he stood still, and then broke into stifled, passionate sobs. "Edith! little Edith!" he cried, "burnt to death! horrible! horrible!" Then he turned to his companion with such an expression on his white face as the other had never before seen there. "And, Philip, the people were dancing on the lawn!"

Then John Stanburne sat down in one of the chairs against the wall, and set his elbows on his knees, and covered his face with both his hands. So he sat, immovable. The house was burning above him—it might burn. What were all the treasures of Wenderholme to its master, who had lost the one treasure of his heart? What were the parchments and the seals in the charter-room—what were the records of the Stanburnes—what was that waggon-load of massive silver which had shone at the festival that night?

His anguish was not wild—he did not become frantic—and the shock had not produced any benumbing insensibility; for his health was absolutely sound and strong, and his nervous system perfectly whole and unimpaired. But the sound mind in the sound body is still capable of an exquisite intensity of suffering, though it will live through it without either madness or insensibility.

Philip Stanburne felt compelled to respect this

bitter agony of his friend ; but he was anxious to lose no more time in trying to save the house. So at last he said, "Colonel, the house is burning !"

John Stanburne looked up, and said, "It may burn now—it may burn now." Then suddenly seeming to recollect himself, he added, "God forgive me, Philip, I have not bestowed one thought on the poor girl that was burnt with Edith—Edith's maid ! She brought my child to me to say good-night, just when the fireworks were over, and kiss me"—here his voice faltered—"and kiss me for the last time." This extension of his sympathy to another did John Stanburne good. "I wonder where her parents are ; they must be told—God help them !"

"And the house, Colonel !—the house ! can you give some orders ?"

"No, Philip ; not fit for that—not fit for that yet, you know, dear Philip. Ask Eureton, the Adjutant—ask Eureton."

Then he rose suddenly, and went towards the drawing-room. Some of the older ladies had come in, and were sitting here and there about the room, which was brilliantly lighted. On one of the walls hung a portrait of Edith Stanburne, by Millais—one of his most successful pictures of

that class. The Colonel went straight to this picture, but could not politely get at it without begging two old ladies, who were sitting on a *causeuse* under it, to get out of his way.

When a man who has just been brought face to face with one of the tragical realities of life comes into what is called "society" again, he is always out of tune with it, and it is difficult for him to accept the *légèreté* of its manner without some degree of irritation. He appears brutal to the people in society, and the people in society seem exasperatingly frivolous to him. Thus, when the Colonel came amongst these be-diamonded old ladies in the drawing-room, a conversation took place which he was not quite sufficiently master of himself to maintain in its original key.

"Ah, here is Colonel Stanburne! We were just saying how delightful your fireworks were; only they've left quite a strong smell of fire, even in the house itself. Don't you perceive it, Colonel Stanburne?"

"I want to get this picture—excuse me," and he began to put his foot on the white silk damask of the *causeuse*, between the two great ladies. They rose immediately, much astonished, even visibly offended.

“Colonel Stanburne might have waited until we had left the room,” said Lady Brabazon, aloud, “if he wished to change the hanging of his pictures.”

“The house is on fire! My daughter is burnt to death! I want to save this. You ladies are still in time to save the originals of *your* portraits.”

In an instant they were out upon the lawn, running about and calling out “Fire!” They had not time to take care of their dignity now.

Luckily Philip Stanburne was already with the Adjutant, who was giving his orders with perfect calm, and an authority that made itself obeyed. Lady Helena was not to be found.

Fyser had been summoned into the Adjutant’s presence. “Fyser,” he said, “what are the water supplies here?”

“Pump-water, sir, for drinking, and the stream behind the house for washing.”

“No pipes of any sort in the upper rooms?”

“No, sir.”

“Sergeant Maxwell, collect all the men who have served in the army. I don’t want any others at present.” Then, turning to Fyser, “Harness four horses to a carriage, and drive to the nearest station. Telegraph for fire-engines

and a special locomotive. Whilst they are coming, collect more horses near the station. When they arrive, leave your carriage there, and harness your team to a fire-engine, and come here as fast as you can. Do you hear? Repeat what I have said to you. Very well."

Then he walked quickly towards the band, and made signs to the bandmaster to stop. The music ceased abruptly, and Captain Eureton ascended the platform. "I wish to be heard!" he said, in a loud voice. The dancers gave up their dancing, and came towards the orchestra, followed by the other guests.

"Excuse this interruption to your pleasures. You had better not go into the hall."

At this instant the old ladies (as has just been narrated) came out of the hall-door shrieking "Fire!" Their cry was taken up immediately, and wildly repeated amongst the crowd.

"Silence!" shouted Eureton, with authority. "Silence! I have something to say to you."

The people crowded round him. "The Colonel wishes me to act for him. Our only chance of saving the house is to set to work systematically. I forbid any one to enter it for the present."

"But my trunks," cried Lady Brabazon; "I will order my people to save my trunks!"

This raised a laugh; but Eureton's answer to it came in the shape of an order. "Sergeant Maxwell," he said, "if any one attempts to enter the house without leave, you will have him arrested."

"Yes, sir."

The sergeant was there with a body of about forty old soldiers.

"Captains of numbers one, two, three, four, and five companies!" shouted the Adjutant. They came forward. "You will form a cordon with your men round the front of the house, and prevent any unauthorised person from breaking it. All who enter the cordon will be considered as volunteers, and set to carry water. They will not be allowed to get out of it again, on any pretext."

"Now send me Colonel Stanburne's men-servants."

Several men presented themselves. "Fetch everything you can lay your hands on in the out-houses that will hold water."

"Pray accept me as a volunteer, Captain Eureton," said the Duke.

"And I'm an old soldier," said the medalled General; "you'll have me, too, I suppose."

The cordon was by this time formed, and a

quantity of buckets fetched from the outhouses. All the servant-women had been out watching the dancers. One of them came to Captain Euron and told him that she could find a quantity of slop-pails in the house, so she was sent in with some old soldiers to carry them for her.

A chain was very soon formed from the brink of the rivulet to the inside of the house, and the Adjutant went in with Philip Stanburne to reconnoitre. When he came out he walked to the middle of the space enclosed by the cordon of militiamen, and cried with a loud voice, "Volunteers for saving the furniture, come forward!"

Such numbers of men presented themselves (including the Colonel's guests), that it was necessary to close the cordon against many of them. Those who were admitted were told off by the Adjutant in parties of a dozen each, and each party placed under the command of a gentleman, with an old soldier for a help. It was Philip Stanburne's duty to guide and distribute the parties in the house—the Adjutant commanding outside. The Colonel, in his kind way, had shown Philip Stanburne over the house on his first visit to Wenderholme, so that he knew and remembered the arrangement of the rooms.

Though the house did not front precisely to the

west, it will best serve our present purposes to speak as if it had done so. Supposing, then, the principal front to be the west front, the back of the edifice, where Philip Stanburne first discovered the fire, was to the east, whilst the south and north fronts looked to the wood on each side the ravine, at the opening of which Wenderholme Hall was situated. The fire had been discovered towards the south-east corner of the edifice, where little Edith's apartments were. The great staircase was in the centre, immediately behind the entrance-hall ; but there were five other staircases of much narrower dimensions, two of them winding stairs of stone, the other three modern stairs of deal wood, such as are commonly made for servants.

Acting under Captain Eureton's directions, Philip Stanburne distributed his parties according to the staircases, and other parties were stationed at the doors to receive the things they brought down, and carry them to places already decided upon by the Adjutant. The business of extinguishing or circumscribing the fire was altogether distinct from that of salvage. Two lines of men were stationed from the side of the rivulet to the top of the great staircase. One line passed full buckets from hand to hand, the other passed them down again as soon as they were empty. A

special party, consisting of the gardeners belonging to Colonel Stanburne's establishment, a joiner, and one or two other men who were employed at Wenderholme, had been formed by the Adjutant for the purpose of collecting what might serve as buckets, the supply being limited. Various substitutes were found ; amongst others, a number of old oyster-barrels, which were rapidly fitted with rope-handles.

Notwithstanding the number of men under his command, and the excellent order which was maintained, it became evident to Captain Eureton that it was beyond his power to save the south wing of the building. Even the northern end of the upper corridor was filled with dense smoke, and towards Edith Stanburne's apartments there was a perfect furnace. By frequently changing places, the men were able to dispute the ground against the fire inch by inch ; and the clouds of steam which rose as they deluged the hot walls had the effect of making the atmosphere more supportable. If the fire did not gain on them too rapidly, there seemed to be a fair chance of saving some considerable proportion of the mansion by means of the fire-engines, when they arrived.

Meanwhile the salvage of goods went forward with perfect regularity. The influence of Captain Eureton's coolness and method extended itself to every one, and the things were handed down as quietly as in an ordinary removal. Hardly anything was broken or even injured; the rooms were emptied one by one, and the contents of each room placed together. Everything was saved from the charter-room—Philip Stanburne took care to see to that.

What the Duke was most anxious to save was the contents of the lumber-garrets, where lay the dishonoured remnants of the old wainscot and carved furniture of Elizabethan Wenderholme. But when he got up there with his party he found that it was not quite possible to breathe. A more serious discovery than the inevitable loss of the old oak was, that the fire was rapidly spreading northwards in the garrets.

There was a little ledge round the roof outside, protected by a stone parapet, and broad enough for a man to walk along; so the chain of water-carriers was continued up to this ledge, and a hole was made in the slating through which a tolerably continuous stream was poured amongst the burning lumber inside. The uselessness of

this, however, shortly became apparent; the water had little or no effect—it flowed along the floor, and the rafters had already caught fire. The slates were so hot that it was impossible to touch them. It was evident that the lead under the men's feet would soon begin to melt, and the men were withdrawn into the interior.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN Colonel Stanburne had removed Edith's picture, he carried it away into the darkness. He could not endure the idea of having to explain his action, and instinctively kept out of people's way. Still, he could not leave it out of doors; he dreaded some injury that might happen to it. Where could he put it? In one of the outhouses? A careless groom might injure it in the hurry and excitement of the night. No; it would be safe nowhere but at his mother's, and thither he would carry it.

There were two communications from the Hall to the cottage—a carriage-drive and a little footpath. The drive curved about a little under the old trees in the park, but the footpath was more direct, and went through a dense shrubbery. On his way to the cottage the Colonel met no one, but on his arrival there he met Lady Helena in

the entrance. His mother was there too. Late as it was, she had not yet gone to bed.

The sight of the Colonel, bareheaded, and carrying a great oil-picture in his hands, greatly astonished both these ladies.

“What *are* you doing with that picture, John?” said Lady Helena.

“I want it to be safe—it will be safe here;” and he reared it against the wall. Then he said, “No, not here; it will be safer in the drawing-room; open the door. Thank you.”

When they got into the drawing-room, the Colonel deliberately took down a portrait of himself and hung Edith’s portrait in its place. His manner was very strange, both the ladies thought; his action most strange and eccentric. Lady Helena thought he had drunk too much wine; Mrs Stanburne dreaded insanity.

With that humouring tone which is often adopted towards persons not in possession of their mental faculties, Mrs Stanburne said, “Well, John, I shall be glad to take care of Edith’s picture for you, if you think that it can be safer here than at the Hall.”

“Yes, it will be safer—it will be safer.”

This answer, and his strange wild look, con-

firmed poor old Mrs Stanburne's fears. She began to tremble visibly. "Helena, Helena," she whispered, "poor John is—has——"

"No, mother, I'm not mad, and I'm not drunk either, Helena, but I've brought this picture here because it's more valuable to me now than it used to be, and—I don't want it to be burnt, you understand."

"No, I don't understand you at all," said her ladyship; "you are unintelligible to-night. Better come home, I think, and not drink any more wine. I never saw you like this before. It is disgraceful."

"Helena!" said the Colonel, in a very deep, hoarse voice, "Wenderholme Hall is on fire, and my daughter Edith is burnt to death."

Just as he finished speaking, a lurid light filled the sky, and shone through the windows of the cottage. Lady Helena went suddenly to the window, then she left the room, left the house, and went swiftly along by the little path. John Stanburne was left alone with his mother.

She took him by the hand, and looked in his face anxiously. "My dear boy," she said, "it's a pity about the house, you know; but our little Edith——"

“What?”

“Is perfectly safe here, and fast asleep up-stairs in her own little bed!”

John Stanburne did not quite realise this at first. When it became clear to him, he walked about the room in great agitation, not uttering a word. Then he stopped suddenly, and folded his mother in his arms, and kissed her. He kept her hand and knelt down before the sofa; she understood the action, and knelt with him. Edith's picture was hanging just above them, and as his lips moved in inaudible thanksgiving, his eyes rose towards it and contemplated its sweet and innocent beauty. He had had the courage to save it from the burning house, but not the courage to let his eyes dwell upon it thus. Fair hair that hast not been consumed in cruel flame! fair eyes that shall shine in the sunlight of to-morrow! sweet lips whose dear language shall yet be heard in your father's house!—your living beauty shall give him cheerfulness under this calamity!

When they rose, his mother said “Come and see;” and she took him up to a little dainty room which Edith loved, and there, in a narrow bed curtained with pale blue silk, she lay in perfect peace. The night was warm, and there was a

glow on the healthy cheek, and one little hand, frilled with delicate lace, lay trying to cool itself upon the counterpane.

“I’m afraid she’s rather too warm,” said her grandmother. But John Stanburne thought of the fiery chamber at Wenderholme.

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS STANBURNE'S tender sympathy for her son's grief at the supposed loss of Edith, and participation in his gladness at the recovery of his treasure, had for a time restrained the expression of her anxiety about the fire at the Hall; but now that her son had seen little Edith, Mrs Stanburne went to the window of the bedroom and looked out. The Hall was not visible from the lower rooms of the cottage, being hidden by the thick shrubbery which bounded the little lawn; but it was clearly visible from the upper windows, which looked in that direction.

No sooner had Mrs Stanburne opened the curtains and drawn up the blind, than she uttered a cry of alarm. The fire having originated in the garret, the carpentry of the roof had been attacked early, and now a portion of it had given way. A column of sparks, loftier

than the Victoria Tower at Westminster, shot up in the dark sky.

Mrs Stanburne turned round in great agitation. "Let us go, John—let us go to the Hall; it will be burnt down. You will be wanted to give orders."

This recalled the Colonel to himself, and for the present he gave up thinking about his little Edith. "Eureton is in command, and he's a better officer than I am. He will do all that can be done. But come along, mother—come along; let us go there."

As they approached the Hall, it was evident to John Stanburne that the fire had made terrible progress. The whole of the uppermost storey was illuminated by the dread light of conflagration. At the south end, which had been burning longest, and where the roof had fallen in, sparks still rose in immense quantities, and terrible tongues of flame showed their points, darting angrily, above the lofty walls.

Eureton was in the centre of the open space still steadily guarded by the cordon of militiamen. He was looking at his watch, but on lifting his eyes from the dial, saw the Colonel and Mrs Stanburne, and went to them at once. "I have been anxious to see you for some time,

Colonel. Do you wish to take the men under your own orders?"

"My dear fellow, do oblige me by directing everything just as you have done. You do it ten times better than I should—I know you do."

"I am sorry we have been unable to save the roof. I withdrew the men from it rather early, perhaps, but wished to avoid any sacrifice of life."

"Better let the whole place burn down than risk any of these good fellows' lives. Is there anybody in the house now?"

"Captain Stanburne has eight parties on the first floor removing furniture. He has removed everything from the upper floors."

"But are they safe?" said Mrs Stanburne.

"No floors have fallen in yet except part of the garret floor, and one or two in the south wing. We have drenched every room with water, after it was emptied; we have left the carpets on the floors purposely, because being thoroughly wetted, they will help to delay the progress of the fire. We have used all the blankets from the beds in the same way. Everything else has been removed."

"I hope all the visitors' things will be safe. Some of those old ladies, you know, have won-

derful lots of things in their portmanteaus. I believe that in point of mere money's worth, old Lady Brabazon's boxes are more valuable than all Wenderholme and its furniture too, by Jove!"

"I must ask the ladies to sleep at the cottage," said Mrs Stanburne.

"They are at the summer-house, watching the fire," said the Adjutant. "I believe it amuses them."

"You are uncharitable," said Mrs Stanburne; "nobody can help watching a fire, you know. A fire always fascinates people."

"I wouldn't let old Lady Brabazon have her boxes, and she's furiously angry with me."

"Well, but why wouldn't you?"

"If I let one I must let another, and there would be no end to the confusion and breakage that would ensue. I have refused Lady Helena herself, but she took it very nicely and kindly. It's different with Lady Brabazon; she's in a rage."

"I'll go with my mother to the summer-house, and come back to you, Eureton, in ten minutes."

The summer-house in question presented rather a curious picture. It was not strictly a "house" at all, but simply a picturesque shed with a long

bench under it, which people could sit down upon at noon, with their backs to the south, well sheltered from the summer sun by a roof and wall of excellent thatch, whilst the stream purred pleasantly at the foot of a steep slope, and seemed to cool the air by its mere sound. The back of the seat was towards the steep wooded hill, and the front of it looked towards the south wing of the house, including a very good view of the front. It was decidedly the best view of Wenderholme which could be had ; and when the artists drew Wenderholme for those well-known works, 'Homes of the Landed Gentry,' and 'Dwellings of the English Aristocracy,' and 'Ancient Seats of Yorkshire,' here they always rubbed their cakes of sepia and began.

The ladies were not playing the harp or the fiddle, as Nero is said to have done during the burning of Rome ; but they were enjoying the spectacle as most people enjoy that which greatly interests and excites. Lady Adisham, John Stanburne's august mother-in-law, was not there ; she was in close conference with her daughter, in a part of the grounds yet more private and remote. But Lady Brabazon was there, and some other splendidly-adorned dames, who were passing an opera-glass from hand to hand.

As the Colonel and his mother approached, they had the pleasure of overhearing the following fragment of conversation.

“Quite a great fire; really magnificent! don’t you think so? We’re safe here, I believe.”

“Yes; Captain Eureton said we should be safe here.”

“I wonder if Mr Stanburne has insured his house. They say he’s not at all rich. Pity his little daughter was burnt—really great pity; nice little girl!”

“Where are we to sleep to-night, do you think?”

“Really don’t know. *A la belle étoile*, I suppose. That horrid man that’s ordering the men about won’t let us have our boxes. We shall take cold. I have nothing but this shawl.”

Just then the Colonel presented himself.

“I am very sorry,” he said, with some bitterness, “that my house should be burnt down, if the accident has caused you any inconvenience. Mrs Stanburne is come to offer you some accommodation at Wenderholme Cottage.”

Lady Brabazon was going to make a speech of condolence, but the Colonel prevented it by adding, “Pray excuse me—I ought to be amongst the men;” and bowing very deferentially, he disappeared.

John Stanburne left Eureton in command, and worked himself as a volunteer amongst the water-carriers within the building. The reaction from his despair about Edith made his other misfortunes light, and he worked with a cheerfulness and courage that did good to the men about him.

“This is hot work,” he said to one of the volunteers; “have none of the men had anything to drink?”

“Thank you, sir, we are doing pretty well for that. We take a little water from the buckets now and then.”

“And the other fellows who are removing the furniture?”

“It must be dry work for them, sir.”

On this the Colonel said he could be more useful elsewhere, and went to find out his old butler. This was very easy, since the Adjutant knew where every one was posted.

The Colonel, with a small party of trustworthy sober fellows, went down into the cellar, and returned with some dozens of bottled ale and other liquids. He made it his business to distribute refreshment amongst the men, giving the glass always with his own hand, and never without some kind expression of his personal

gratitude for the exertions they had made. He took this office upon himself simply because he "thought the men must be thirsty," as he expressed it; but the deepest policy could not have suggested a better thing to do. It brought him into personal contact with every volunteer about the place, and in the most graceful way.

Captain Eureton was beginning to be anxious about the fire-engines, and had the road cleared, and kept clear, by a patrol. Fyser had been absent nearly three hours. The distance from Wenderholme to the little station (the same that Lady Helena had arrived at on her return from London) was ten miles. Supposing that Fyser drove at the rate of thirteen miles an hour, or thereabouts (which he would do on such an emergency), he would be at the station in forty-five minutes. He would have to seek the telegraphist in the village, and wake him up, and get him to the station—all that would consume twenty minutes. Then to get the engines from Bradford, over thirty miles of rail, a special locomotive running fifty miles an hour, thirty-six minutes. Time to get the engines in Bradford to the station and to start the train, say thirty minutes—total, a hundred and thirty-one minutes, or two hours and eleven minutes. Then the

return to Wenderholme, forty-five minutes—say three hours. “Yes, three hours,” said Captain Eureton to himself; “I believe I should have done better to send for the Sootythorn engines. Fyser would have been there in an hour and a half, and there would have been no delays about the railway.”

Just then a sound of furious galloping was heard in the distance, and the welcome exclamation, “The engines, the engines!” passed amongst the crowd. The gates being all open, and the road clear, the engines were soon in the avenue. The drivers galloped into the middle of the space enclosed by the cordon of militiamen, then they trotted a few yards and stopped. The horses were covered with foam and perspiration; the men leaped down from their seats and at once began to arrange the hose.

Captain Eureton went to the captain of the fire-brigade. “You have lost no time; I feared some delay on the railway.”

“Railway, sir? there is no railway from Sootythorn to this place.”

“But you come from Bradford.”

“Beg pardon, sir, we are the Sootythorn brigade—we come from Sootythorn. You telegraphed for us—anyhow, a Mr Fyser did.”

“ He did right. What do you think of the fire ? ”

The fireman looked up. “ It’s a bad one. Been burning three hours ? We may save the first floor, and the ground-floor. Not very likely, though. Where’s water ? ”

“ Small stream here ; ” the Adjutant led the fireman to the rivulet.

“ Very good, very good. House burns most at this end, I see. ”

The hose was soon laid. There were two engines, and the firemen, aided by volunteers, began to pump vigorously. Two powerful jets began to play upon the south wing, and it was a satisfaction to Captain Eureton to see them well at work, though with little immediate effect. There being no sign of Fyser, the Adjutant concluded that he was waiting for the Bradford engines.

The whole remaining mass of roof now fell in with a tremendous crash, and the flames enveloped the gables, issuing from the windows of the uppermost storey. The multitude was hushed by the grandeur of the spectacle. All the woods of Wenderholme, all its deep ravine, were lighted by the glare, and even at Shayton the glow of an unnatural dawn might be seen in the sky over the lofty moorland.

And the real dawn was approaching also, the true Aurora, ever fresh and pure, bathed in her silver dews. There are engines hurrying towards Wenderholme, through the beautiful quiet lanes and between the peaceful fields; and the grey early light shows the road to the eager drivers and their galloping steeds, and the breath of the pure morning fans the brows of the men who sit in dark uniforms, helmeted, perilously on those rocking chariots.

But the old house is past any help of theirs! The floors have fallen one after another. All the accumulated wood is burning together on the ground-floor now: in the hall, where Reginald Stanburne's portrait hung; in the dining-room, where, a few hours before, the brilliant guests had been sumptuously entertained; in the drawing-room, where the ladies sat after dinner in splendour of diamonds and fine lace. Every one of these rooms is a focus of ardent heat—a red furnace, terrible, unapproachable. The red embers will blacken in the daylight, under the unceasing streams from the fire-engines, and heaps of hissing charcoal will fill the halls of Wenderholme!

But the walls are standing yet—the brave old walls! Even the carving of the front is not

injured. The house exists still, or the shell of it—the ghost of old Wenderholme, its appearance, its eidolon!

I know who laments this grievous misfortune most. It is not John Stanburne: ever since that child of his was known to be in safety, he has been as gay as if this too costly spectacle had been merely a continuation of the fireworks. It is not Lady Helena: she is very busy, has been very busy all night, going this way and that, and plaguing the people with contradictory orders. She is much excited—even irritated—but she is not sad. Wenderholme was not much to her; she never really loved it. If a country house had not been a necessity of station, she would have exchanged Wenderholme for a small house in Belgravia, or a tiny hotel in Paris.

But old Mrs Stanburne grieved for the dear old house that had been made sacred to her by a thousand interests and associations. There was more to her in the rooms as they had been, than there was either to Lady Helena or to the proprietor himself. She had dreaded in silence the proposed changes and restorations, and this terrible destruction came upon her like the blow of an eternal exclusion and separation. The rooms

where her husband had lived with her, the room he died in, she could enter never more! So she sat alone in her sadness, looking on the ruin as it blackened gradually in the morning, and her spirits sank low within her, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE dreariest time of all was about nine o'clock in the morning.

The fire had been extinguished at last, when there was nothing to save; or if not quite extinguished (for it smouldered yet obscurely under heaps of ruin), it was killed in the same sense that a serpent is killed which coils itself slowly an hour after you have crushed it, and dies gradually alone. The men were utterly weary. The whole regiment had passed a night without rest after the long march from Sootythorn, and the Colonel's own servants were doubly wearied—with the preparatory toils of the previous day, and the excitement and exertions of the night.

Captain Eureton took John Stanburne aside, and asked him what were his intentions about the regiment.

“Let the men have a good breakfast, and a

long rest in the tents. Then some dinner, and the presentation of colours. After that another rest, and a quiet march back to Sootythorn in the evening."

"The presentation of colours!"

"Well, what makes you look so astonished, may I ask? Didn't they come here to have their colours presented to them?"

"Certainly; but after what has happened——"

"What then?"

"After what has happened I thought you would probably postpone it."

"My dear fellow, there's no reason for postponing it. The men have behaved admirably—admirably, by Jove! every one of 'em—and we'll give 'em their colours to-day, and I'll tell 'em how much I'm obliged to 'em; don't you see?"

The Colonel then sought out his male guests, who were still near the ruins, and suggested that they would do well to accept beds in the farm-houses on the estate and at the parsonage until one o'clock, when there would be a luncheon in the great marquee. "It's uncommonly lucky," he said, "that I ordered the whole of that luncheon from a man in Bradford, for it would have been rather difficult, I fear, to get up anything fit to invite you to under present circumstances.

I've a great many things to thank you for, but I won't do it now. We shall have a better opportunity in the big tent this afternoon. I'm afraid you must be very tired and sleepy after all your kind exertions. I've been making arrangements about beds for you, and here are your guides."

The parson came forward on this, and with much respect announced to the Duke that "he had the honour to offer to his Grace such poor hospitality as the parsonage might afford." The Wenderholme clergyman was rather an old-fashioned Churchman, and he modelled his manners towards great people upon what he had read in the plays of Shakespeare and the novels of Sir Walter Scott. The farmers who offered their best rooms to the other great gentlemen admired and envied the parson's finished manner and knowledge of the world, but felt that it was beyond their humble powers of imitation.

A messenger on horseback came from the station with a telegram for the Colonel. It was from the Mayor of Sootythorn:—

"Anxious to know if fire has been serious. Will presentation of colours take place?"

To which the Colonel answered: "Fire very serious. Presentation of colours to take place notwithstanding."

Copies of the Mayor's telegram and the answer to it were posted in the principal places of resort in Sootythorn—in the Exchange (for Sootythorn had an Exchange), in the Mechanics' Institute, in the window of the bookseller's shop, at Garley's Hotel, and elsewhere—so that it was shortly known all over the town that the presentation of colours would take place. All who had received invitations were therefore impelled towards Wenderholme by a double stimulus—the desire to see the presentation of colours, and the desire to see the effects of the fire. For, next to the pleasure of seeing your neighbour's house whilst it is actually burning, may be reckoned that of examining it when the flames have done their work upon it.

From nine o'clock till twelve, hardly a sound was audible about the place. The morning was deliciously calm and warm, and many men not belonging to the militia lay scattered about the grass asleep. The regiment had been withdrawn to the camp in the park, with the exception of a few men who were set to watch the things which had been saved from the house, aided in this duty by a single policeman, whose function in life was to guard the peace of the village. Fyser, however, did not believe in the honesty of the guardians themselves, and set himself to watch

them. He had a closer sense of ownership in everything belonging to Colonel Stanburne than the Colonel himself enjoyed.

At eleven the Bradford purveyors arrived with their luncheon in two vans, which had travelled the greater part of the night. They had not heard of the fire till they arrived within six miles of the place, and then only as a vague rumour. When they saw the house, or what remained of it, they asked Fyser whether they oughtn't to go back again; but Fyser directed them to the great marquee, where they busied themselves in arranging the attractive contents of their innumerable hampers.

Before one the Sootythorn people began to arrive, and amongst others some friends of ours—Mrs Ogden and little Jacob, who came with the Anisons' party from Whittlecup. And there was big Jacob also—uncle Jacob of Milend—who had been specially invited by his military brother to share this entertainment. Every officer had the Colonel's permission to give a certain number of invitations.

It had been part of the original programme that all the guests were to be received in the Hall at first, and afterwards conducted, in a sort of easy procession, to the camp where the luncheon

was to be given. In consequence of the fire, it had of course become necessary to make other arrangements. There were several avenues at Wenderholme, from the front of the mansion down the park. The drive to the house had formerly passed through the central one of these, but the modern taste for curved lines and furtive approaches had caused this to be abandoned, and a new curving drive to be made on the north side from the house to the highroad. This, having been made by John Stanburne's grandfather, was already old enough to be shaded by respectable-looking trees of its own—an array of healthy and well-grown chestnuts ; but the pride of Wenderholme was the old central avenue of gigantic oaks, and I think it looked all the better for the abolition of the old road through it. The trees were now free to cast their long evening shadows athwart an uninterrupted space of perfect green-sward pastured by the fallow-deer.

It was here that the Colonel received his guests. More than two hundred chairs were scattered about under the trees, and he walked amongst them saying kind words of welcome, and smiling *tristement*. The house was clearly visible behind them, rearing dark roofless gables and glassless windows in the gay sunshine of the latest days of

May. Before them stood the white encampment in the park, looking so fresh, and cheerful, and pretty, that it made the grim ruin behind all the more sombre and melancholy.

Eureton, the Adjutant, with his strict ideas of discipline and order, had insisted that no one should be admitted within the garden. A party had been formed of tenants and labourers on the estate, whose business it was to remove the things saved into the outhouses. This would occupy them the whole of the day, and the Adjutant would not have any interruption from visitors. So all the entrances to the garden were firmly locked or fastened, and people who were curious to see the ruin had to content themselves with such a view of it as might be obtained from the other side of the sunk fence, which divided the garden from the park.

Amongst these stood Jacob Ogden, senior. He had never been to Wenderholme before, but had heard of it from his infancy as one of the great places in those parts. He had all the reverence of the English *nouveau riche* for a house in which men have lived, as rich men, for many generations. It was not the poetry of antiquity that he felt so strongly, but the continuity, the perpetuity of wealth. He put his trust in riches, and he liked

to see how wealth endureth for ever. A strange time, perhaps, to find comfort in this doctrine, when the flames had gutted the house he was looking at, and the wetted charcoal was still steaming on the floors of its lowest rooms ! But he looked above and beyond an accident which might have been, which probably had been, compensated by the simple precaution of an insurance. "It's a pity over this job," he said to himself ; "but th' house may be set right again for five or six thousand pound, and it'll be Wenderholme Hall still. There's no need to pull them walls down, I reckon. *I* wouldn't pull 'em down if they 'ere mine." And as he gazed fixedly on the old place, a strange new feeling gradually came over him—a longing to possess some old place of this kind for himself. Some old place ! Why not this very old place—Wenderholme itself ? The house could not sell for much now ; but the land ? there was a fair estate. Then he turned round and gazed down the broad green central avenue, with its hundred oaks ; and the beautiful park beyond the white encampment, with the faint blue distant hills.

Just then a party of ladies came towards Jacob Ogden, attracted by the same interest and curiosity. He did not perceive at first that his mother

was with them, and little Jacob. He himself had come from Shayton in Dr Bardly's gig, for the Doctor had found means of excusing himself from the festivity of the preceding evening (a doctor can always excuse himself on the plea of a patient who needs his attendance), and he had not yet met his mother and little nephew. On perceiving them, he perceived at the same time that they seemed to belong to the advancing group, which was in fact composed of the Anisons from Whittlecup, with Miss Alice Stedman and her father. It had not been easy to get Mr Stedman to take his daughter to Wenderholme that day, but Mr Anison had managed it, instigated thereto by a kind friend and namesake of Philip Stanburne.

Jacob Ogden had never met the Anisons, who were quite recent acquaintances of his brother Isaac. It may be admitted that although he would pat a pretty factory girl on the back very affectionately, he regarded young ladies with feelings of almost juvenile timidity. Whether it was because he recognised in them the powers of superior refinement, or that he dreaded that some such being might one day cast a spell upon him, and compel him to marry her, and sacrifice his independence to her, and let her have her fingers

constantly in his purse, and give him eight children to keep and set up in the world, and reduce him to genteel destitution, he never beheld feminine beauty in combination with refinement without a strong sense of the necessity for getting speedily out of the orbit of its influence. Thus, on the present occasion, his instinct suggested an immediate retreat; but his mother, who recognised him, made retreat impossible.

“Eh, why, that’s our Jacob! And what didn’t you come for us to Sootythorn for? What! you came in th’ Doctor’s gig, did ye? Well, and where’s th’ Doctor? This is Mrs Anison of Whittlecup, as I told you all about, and Mr Anison; and these is their dorthers.” Mrs Ogden thought in her own mind, “There’ll ’appen one on ’em do for our Jacob,” but she did not give utterance to this sentiment.

Some similar idea may possibly have passed through Mrs Anison’s mind, though no doubt, if it framed itself in words, they were much more elegant words. She was gracious unto Jacob Ogden, as to a bachelor still young, of whose abundant riches she possessed the most reliable information. The last person of the party whom Jacob Ogden saw face to face was Madge. She had been looking towards the camp,

in consequence of a movement of officers in uniform which became visible in that direction. When she turned round, the sudden revelation of her majestic beauty made the cotton-manufacturer experience a sensation which the prettiest of factory lasses had never succeeded in awakening.

Jacob Ogden in love! Yes, to be sure—or something very like it, or on the road to it. He had taken the firmest resolutions of celibacy, being convinced that the largest fortune he could expect with a wife would be less of a help on the road to wealth than the burdens she would bring would be of a hindrance. And there I think he was quite right; for most young ladies in these times would speedily put an end to that strictly economical way of living which was the first secret of Ogden's annual accumulations. I am sure that if he marries Madge Anison, *she* will increase his expenditure pretty considerably. She has been accustomed to very liberal housekeeping at Arkwright Lodge, and she will expect to increase rather than diminish her way of living after she gets married. If he lets himself be fairly caught, and takes that young woman for his wife, he may be a well-to-do man, a tolerably rich man, such as Joseph Anison for instance, but he will never be, what he aspires to be, one of the

colossi of the Manchester Exchange—a Prince without the burden of his state—a Peabody without the drain of his benevolence.

They who live out their lives in celibacy are rarely those who have accepted it by predetermined resolution. It seems to need the binding power of a religious vow; and the priest or the nun may alone rely with any certainty on a resolve which nature herself is perpetually tempting men to break. A man like Jacob Ogden has as much difficulty in passing through life without getting a prick from one of Cupid's arrows, as an ox has in getting safely through a tsetse-infested forest of Africa. The ox may switch his tail about as much as he likes, and even his anxious driver may continually fan the insects from his face—it is all of no use; one tsetse-fly will stab the poor beast somewhere with its poisonous proboscis, and after that no human aid can save it.

They are all looking at the Hall together, across the deep sunk fence (which little Jacob declares would be no obstacle to him if he chose to climb the wall), and the ladies and gentlemen are making those observations on the lamentable scene of destruction before them which such a scene naturally suggests. Two officers in uniform are walking rapidly towards them from the tents. It

is Philip Stanburne and Isaac Ogden, for the Colonel has told the officers to seek their special guests, and bring them to the great marquee.

When Philip Stanburne saw Miss Stedman and her father, he felt such a shock of surprise as to arrest for an instant the action of his heart, and then set it throbbing with redoubled force. *He* had not ventured to ask them—of course not; how could he, after what had passed during that interview in Derbyshire? He spoke to the Anisons first, both because they happened to be nearest to him, and to gain time; then he turned to Miss Stedman hesitatingly, and bowed. She held out her hand with much ease of manner, though her cheeks were crimson. Her father bowed politely, but there was that in the expression of his face which said very plainly that their visit to Wenderholme was not to be taken as an encouragement. Madge Anison watched this little scene with much interest; and Mrs Anison, in her quiet way, observed both Alice and Madge.

Lieutenant Ogden offered his arm to Mrs Anison, and Philip offered his to Madge, though he would much rather have given it to another young lady, if he had only dared. The other gentlemen did not offer their arms to anybody, for there was a little hesitation between John Sted-

man and Mr Anison about our friend Mrs Ogden. However, Mr Stedman did not venture, and they walked on in a mixed and changing group.

“It is strange,” Mr Stedman said, “that the Colonel should have us all here to-day after what passed last night. When a man’s house has been burnt down, he might be excused for sending his guests back word.”

“He never seems to think about himself,” Joseph Anison answered. “You may be sure it’s not to disappoint the men.”

The great tent was already almost full when they entered it, but the places of the guests were all marked with written cards, and the group of the Anisons and Stedmans was kept together. Philip Stanburne found himself between Madge and Alice. Mr Stedman was posted next to Mrs Anison, with Mrs Ogden on his right hand. There were others of our friends in their neighbourhood — namely, Dr Bardly, the brothers Ogden, and little Jacob. The Prigleys were at the chief table, and so was the incumbent of Wenderholme.

There was a very general buzz of conversation in the great tent; and though the guests were at first under an impression of something approaching to awe and gravity, in consequence of the

evil fortune which had befallen their host, this gave way gradually, as everybody found himself free to say what he liked under cover of the general noise around him. The champagne cheered the ladies and gentlemen so much that they bore the Colonel's losses with tolerable equanimity; and, indeed, if they were merry on an occasion which had begun so inauspiciously, they might plead the example of the Colonel himself, who sat in the middle of the great table at the upper end of the marquee, with a countenance on which nothing was now discernible except a manly resolution to forget his recent sorrows in the duties and pleasures of hospitality. When at length the time for speech-making arrived, and the "Queen and Royal Family," and other standard toasts, had been duly honoured, the Duke rose to propose Colonel Stanburne's health in a speech which—but we may as well report it *verbatim*.

"I rise to propose," the Duke said, "the health of our kind host; and as all who are here present know but too well, I do so under very peculiar and very lamentable circumstances. With that kindness of heart which belongs to his character, our friend Colonel Stanburne has been unwilling to disappoint those who have been invited to

witness the presentation of colours; and, notwithstanding a calamity of whose magnitude all present have had ocular demonstration, he has not turned back a single guest from the hospitable gates of Wenderholme." (Loud and repeated cheering).

"The calamity has indeed been great. A noble mansion, which I do not exaggerate in calling one of the noblest mansions in this large and wealthy county, has been destroyed by fire so thoroughly that there does not remain in it a single habitable chamber. Only last evening we banqueted in its ancient dining-room, surrounded by the accumulated wealth of generations; and to-night, at the same hour, the wind may whistle and the rain may fall where we were sitting in luxury and ease. Could any better text be found for a sermon on the transitoriness of earthly things? But, ladies and gentlemen, I will not venture farther in this direction. I will say, merely, that Wenderholme, whilst it was burning, threw such a light on the character of our friend Colonel Stanburne, that we know him even better than we did. Not one hasty word escaped his lips; and, under circumstances which would have made many men irritable and impatient, he spoke nothing but words of kindness

and encouragement, and more than due gratitude for the little efforts we were able to make ; and he spoke, I believe, to every man about the place.” (Cheers.)

“The calamity has been a great one ; but it is not an irreparable calamity. The old walls are still remaining, and what has been destroyed was of comparatively very recent date. It was already Colonel Stanburne’s intention to restore the mansion of his forefathers to its ancient splendour, and the chief result of this fire will be, no doubt, to make the restoration only the more thorough and complete. When Wenderholme shall be renovated, it will be more beautiful than we have ever known it. Let us, then, in drinking Colonel Stanburne’s health, wish him yet many years of happiness within its walls !”

There was respect enough for the Colonel, and there was sympathy enough for his present misfortune, to insure a very demonstrative way of drinking his health. When the uproar of cheering had finally subsided, he made a speech in answer, which, like that of the Duke, we will give in the speaker’s own words. The Colonel spoke a great deal better in public than he did in ordinary conversation. In conversation he hesitated a good deal—most English gentlemen

do—and he had such a horror of talking like a book, that he was very often puzzled to find words simple enough to suit him. Hence (although it seems a paradox to say so), he was constantly *seeking* the opposite of the *recherché*; and as the higher thoughts and more delicate sentiments cannot be expressed in phrases altogether commonplace, he either expressed them very inadequately, or he ended by avoiding them altogether. But in public speaking he threw these affectations in a great measure aside, and though his defective pronunciation of the letter *r* remained, and some other mutilations of English sounds which are fashionable, he spoke on the whole with great clearness and energy, being helped by all the physical essentials. He had a facetious way, which rapidly won the sympathy of his audience, though his pleasantries (which often depended for their effect upon indescribable little peculiarities of manner) do not, when reported in print, convey the idea of anything like brilliant or accomplished wit. For example, a small jest about a wet blanket, near the beginning of his speech on the present occasion, looks poor enough as one reads it; but as he pronounced it, with a slightly nasal tone and oddly vacant expression, it hit the mark precisely.

“I am afraid,” he said, “that this unfortunate fire has thrown a wet blanket over our enjoyment here to-day. I can’t say much for the accuracy of my metaphor, for fires don’t throw wet blankets, they rather want wet blankets to be thrown over them—and so far as our last night’s experience goes, it takes an uncommon quantity of wet to put a fire out! We’d really no idea how much wet it took until we tried it! and, as you have seen, we didn’t succeed in saving the house after all. But I have so much to feel happy about in this misfortune, that I believe at this present moment I am one of the most cheerful fellows at these tables. One of my main reasons for wishing you to come to-day, in spite of what has happened, was, that I desired to thank my friends publicly for the good and devoted service they have rendered me last night. And when I say my friends, I mean all who have acted by me in a friendly and neighbourly way, from his Grace who is sitting near me, to the humblest private who is taking his meal outside. They all worked together: for instance, the Duke was at one time carrying water-buckets, and at another removing pieces of furniture; and every one of my guests, no matter of what rank and station, did his best in the same way. Volunteers were at first asked

for from the regiment, but the whole regiment volunteered, and every man served either in doing active work or in maintaining a cordon round the house, which was considered necessary for the preservation of order. If there is one man more than another whom I ought to specify, it is the Adjutant, Captain Eureton, because he commanded us all, and kept up from the first such order and discipline, that far more was done than ever could have been done without him, or another officer equal to him, whom it would perhaps not have been easy to find. The consequence of the measures taken by Captain Eureton, and of the wonderful zeal and energy with which he was obeyed, was, that whilst not one single life has been lost, or injury incurred, everything was safely removed from the house except some old lumber in the garrets, and one or two very awkward pieces of furniture in the inhabited rooms. Without Captain Eureton's energy in command, the house would have been such a scene of confusion that not half these things could have been saved ; and without the strength and energy and unflinching courage of those who did what he thought best to be done, he would have been reduced to the impotence of a general without an army. All who saw Captain Eureton

last night will agree with me that he showed the skill in organisation, and the decision in giving exactly the right order at exactly the right time, which prove the genius of a real officer. I will not now specify my other friends by name—the list would include the whole of them—but I will ask you to rejoice with me for a still better reason than the saving of the furniture. Many of you know that I have one child living—a little girl. Well, I thank God that she was preserved safe from danger last night, by the mere accident of a little wilfulness of hers. I am afraid our little Edith is rather a spoiled child, and, like most children, she is especially spoiled by her grandmother. So last night it seems that she positively refused to be put to bed at the Hall, and would sleep nowhere but at my mother's cottage in the Park, and she went there with her maid after the fireworks. Now the fire broke out just over her bedroom, and if she had slept there she would have been——”

Here the Colonel's voice faltered, and he found it impossible to go on. The audience was listening with breathless interest, and when he paused, there was a great deal of cheering to encourage him. A good many of the ladies began to cry. When silence was restored he continued :—

“Our little daughter would have been burnt to death! This is quite certain. As soon as I knew the house was on fire I went with Captain Stanburne to save her, and it was quite impossible to get into her room. For a time I believed I had lost her. Since I have known that she was safe, you will easily understand that these material losses seem comparatively light, and that I bear them with a cheerful heart. Therefore, my friends, in thanking you for drinking my health as you have done, let me assure you that the happier and merrier you can be to-day, the more your feelings will be in tune with mine. If, on looking at my ruined house, I am disposed to anything like melancholy, I have only to think of what my loss might have been, and I am thankful.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

THERE was so much noise of applause after the Colonel's speech, that Philip Stanburne took the opportunity of asking Alice whether there was any hope that her father would change his mind.

“No, I'm sure he wont.”

“I am anxious that you and I should be really engaged, Alice. We are not really engaged yet, you know. May we be? It would give me strength to bear these vexations and delays.”

“If you think so, Philip.”

“Then it is understood, Alice. We are really engaged to each other now, by a binding promise.”

“Yes, by a binding promise.”

And so, within two or three yards of John Stedman's person, his daughter plighted her troth against his will. She did yet more. Philip Stanburne continued:—

“Thank you, dearest Alice—thank you. Now, tell me something more. Engaged people have a right to correspond, have they not, when they cannot see each other? If I wish to get a note to you, how am I to manage it?”

Alice hesitated an instant. Then she said, “I cannot tell you now. I will think about it, and I will write and tell you.”

“But you consent to correspond, do you not? I hope you have no hesitation about that. An accepted lover has a right to ask for some means of communication. You see it is quite necessary. So many circumstances may occur.”

“Yes, I think so too; but it is not very easy. However, I will write and tell you if it can be done.”

“Please address your letter to Stanithburn Peel. I shall be there after the regiment is disbanded. I intend to remain there all the summer.”

By this time the applause, and the loud hum of conversation which immediately succeeded to it, had subsided, and it became somewhat more dangerous to talk in this confidential way. So Philip turned to Madge Anison, and excused himself for not having called for some time at Arkwright Lodge.

“If you had been sure to find yourself as pleasantly situated at our table as you are at this, you would have come to us oftener, no doubt.”

“I am certainly very pleasantly situated here, Miss Anison;” and Captain Stanburne made a slight bow in her direction.

“You are bowing on the wrong side. You should bow to Miss Stedman, and not to me. It is she who makes you happy where you are.”

He thought it best to put an end to an equivocal situation, and asked Alice if he might tell Miss Anison of their engagement. After a little hesitation, Alice said that Madge ought to be told, but that she ought to be told at the same time that it was a secret engagement for the present. So Philip Stanburne informed her of the fact at once.

The effect on her mind was not visible to her neighbour. She held herself under perfect control; and Philip Stanburne had not the most distant suspicion that the news in any way personally concerned her. Margaret Anison was not affectionate by nature, but she was passionate; and it had so happened that, from Philip Stanburne's arrival at Arkwright Lodge, she had conceived a strong passion for him. This had been accompanied, from the first, by a feeling of

uneasiness about Alice Stedman; and her apparently friendly conduct towards the lovers had been dictated simply by the urgent impulse to know how far Philip Stanburne was disposed to go in that direction. Now that he had gone so much farther than she either expected or desired, she probably repented her policy, or want of policy; but she gave no outward sign. She turned towards Alice, and, begging Philip's pardon, spoke a few words of congratulation across him, promising secrecy. But there was a rage of jealousy in her heart, and a passionate readiness to throw herself into some violent reaction. If Jacob Ogden is fool enough to ask for her, she will accept him; she would accept anybody—anybody, that is, who was rich enough to give her luxury, for in her wildest passion she will not forget that. She would have sacrificed it for Philip, but sacrificed it knowingly—not left it out of her calculation; she would make no sacrifice for Jacob Ogden, or any other mere representative of the masculine world in general.

Mrs Anison happened to be seated next to Jacob Ogden (with Mr Stedman on the other side of her), and she tried to draw him out. He had not very much to say for himself, but what he had to say recommended him very strongly.

He informed Mrs Anison that he was "laying down a new mill," which, when finished, would be by far the largest in Shayton; that he already possessed one of the best mills "of the old sort" in that locality; and, further, that he had some intention of investing in land, but not just now, as it did not give interest enough. Then he inquired whether Mrs Anison believed that Colonel Stanburne would ever be likely to sell Wenderholme; and he told her that Shayton was so near it that his own property and his brother's land on the Shayton moor came up to the Colonel's. If ever Wenderholme should come into the market, Jacob Ogden avowed a positive intention of being a bidder.

All this "rich talk," as the talk of capitalists about investments has been not inaptly called, was, as I have said, agreeable to Mrs Anison's ears. She was far too practical a woman not to appreciate the utility of money in the kind of housekeeping which she practised, and which her daughters would wish to practise in a yet more complete and perfect manner. Jacob Ogden had at first seemed rather uncouth to Mrs Anison. His clothes did not fit him; and though he had been clean shaven for the occasion, and wore a clean shirt, and had a beautiful sky-blue silk neck-

tie which he sported for the first time, it must be confessed that it was not possible for any one to mistake him for a gentleman. But as he talked about his investments, his accents (Shayton accents) grew sweet in Mrs Anison's ears, and his bad tailoring became one of those little negligences which great capitalists can so easily afford to commit. So charmed was she that she ended by inviting him to Arkwright Lodge—and he accepted the invitation!

The solemn presentation of the fresh and brilliant colours need not detain us. Every reader knows how colours are presented to a regiment, and how the ensign makes a speech in which he promises to dye them with his blood, and how proud the regiment is supposed to be when it sees their silken folds waving for the first time in its midst.

The Colonel made a speech to the men (very like the one that he delivered in the great marquee), and the men marched past the General, and were complimented by him in the usual terms for the uncommon efficiency of which they had given proof that day. However, the General added some observations of a more novel kind, concerning the men's behaviour at the fire, "which proved," he said, "that, short as their training

had been, they had already acquired much of the true military order and discipline." "You see what a fine thing discipline is," added the General: "for if you'd been a mere irregular rabble, you would have saved very little, and some of you would very likely have been injured or burnt to death; whereas, owing to your good discipline, you saved everything in the house, and not one of you is hurt. And I have the pleasure to inform you that Colonel Stanburne, in gratitude for the services you have rendered him, has determined to add one pound out of his own pocket to every man's bounty-money. This makes a very heavy sum in the aggregate, especially in addition to the expense your Colonel has put himself to in so hospitably entertaining the whole regiment; and I hope that you will show your sense of his kindness by being an orderly and smart body of men, which is the best way of pleasing him. I think you could not do better, after the announcement which I have just made, than give three hearty cheers for your Colonel. They tell me that you Lancashire and Yorkshire men can cheer uncommonly well."

All the little birds in the woods of Wenderholme were astonished at the noise that followed, but an hour later the place was quieter than it had

been for a long time. The regiment had marched away with its music, the tents had vanished, the guests had departed, the great folks did not trouble the parson and the farmers, but took the six o'clock train for Bradford, and nothing was left in the walls of Wenderholme Hall except an old cat, which, half blind, explored the chaos of blackened rafters, and mewed piteously because she had burnt her paws in a place where the half-dead fire lay hid in its last recess.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.





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