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The Baddington Peérage.

Vol. II.

The Baddington Peerage:

Who won, and who wore it.

A Story of the Best and the Worst Society.

BY

George Augustus Sala,

Author of

"Twice Round the Clock," "Lady Chesterfield's Letters to her Daughter,"
"A Journey Due North," "Gaslight and Daylight,"
&c., &c., &c.


In Three Volumes.

Vol. II.

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CORRIGENDA IN VOLUME II.

Page 106 : last line, *after* orbs of, *insert* vision.

„ 258 : line 19, *for* “skinny” *read*
“skinning.”

THE BADDINGTON PEERAGE.

CHAP. XIX.

CONTINUATION OF THE ADVENTURES OF
'PHILIP LESLIE.

IT may be permitted to that novelist, whose chief aim is less the elaboration of intrigue, and the niceties of equivoque, than the study and elimination of the human character in its varied phases of passion — in its changing moods, its chequered stages of tranquillity and agitation, mansuetude and resentment, charity and envy, pride and humility, hatred and love: it may be permitted, I hope, for such a writer to depart for an instant from the thread of his narrative — to step aside from the track he has

marked out for himself — a well-beaten track, and one which thousands have travelled — and to devote a short space to an analysis of the character of the last personage introduced in his drama.

Philip Leslie indeed (under which name the “poor devil of a painter” whom I have heretofore occasionally designated under the embarrassing cognomen of the “Unknown” will be henceforward recognised in this story), possessed a character and disposition, and was gifted with qualities and attributes, deserving minuter, more extended, and more careful notice, than is usually allotted to the hero of a romance. Of his outward guise I have not felt bound to say much, but as regards those inner traits which my power of divination as a story-teller privileges me to foresee and to foreknow, it behoves me to be less concise and more explicit. Bear with me, then, while I endeavour to place before you the man — not in his habit as he lived, for outward garments are but sorry guides, and afford but an insufficient key to character

— but in that inward semblance which defies all the masquerading trickeries of life, and which is not deceitful, because it is not seen. Would I could do as much for real flesh-and-blood men and women with whom I walk and talk all the days of my life, as I am enabled to do for the imaginary personages who strut and fret their hour on my mimic stage!

The French law, as expounded in the Code Napoleon, has fixed upon two points in life in which a man may attain his majority. The first majority is at twenty-one years, when the adult, just invested with the *toga virilis*, may assume, and is entitled to some, but not all, the rights, privileges, and immunities of citizenship and self-mastership. But the law forbids him to do *everything* he likes with his own, and postpones his enjoyment of certain rights — the most grave and important of all — till he has attained the riper and maturer age of twenty-five years. So nature acts with our mind. At twenty-one, most ordinarily-constituted men possess

certain faculties and perceptions that warrant them in forming a judgment, or even acting (in strict moderation, be it understood) on some of the minor things of life; but it is not, in my opinion, till the age of twenty-five that a man ought to be entirely and wholly free from pupilage, either physical or mental. At twenty-five he is entitled to say "now or never," and is qualified to form an opinion, and to exercise a judgment, upon all topics connected with his own peculiar humanity and the immediate sphere in which Providence has been pleased to cast him.

Philip Leslie had just attained his twenty-fifth year, and may be reasonably supposed to have succeeded to that full inheritance of manhood, *pleine et entière*, at which I have hinted, and which, in my opinion, twenty-five years alone can give. I speak, of course, of males, and of males alone; for in the female organisation, as most physiologists will observe, maturity, or majority, or ripeness — call it by whatever name you will — comes

at an earlier age, ending too, alas! oftentimes as early. The lamp burns brighter, but it does not burn so long. You shall see a girl of sixteen, only just emancipated from the thralldom of her schoolmistress, and quite young and inexperienced in the ways and wiles of this wicked world, a match, and more than a match, for a man of forty. Dalilah cajoles Sampson the strong every day. So it has always been, and so it always will be, I suppose.

Philip Leslie was, then, twenty-five, and in the full health and vigour of that age, in which, if a man is ever to be worth anything at all, he begins to be worth it. He was singularly constituted. Of a nature frank, impetuous, daring, and somewhat imperious at times (and who can avoid a certain arrogance, and an implacable desire of ruling the roast, even at the risk of hurting and wounding the feelings of those nearest and dearest to us, and whom we love best in this world of sorrows and joys, at some seasons?) — of a nature, I repeat, frank,

impetuous, daring, and imperious, there were still mingled with his sterner and harsher nature many qualities more pertaining to, and which would have seemed far more appropriate in, a woman. The existence of these qualities may be considered as analogous to a peculiarity I have noticed in his physical conformation, his stalwart frame, yet small womanly hands and feet, which, if we are to adhere to the opinion of Lord Byron (his Lordship having, by-the-way, excessively small hands and feet, though one of the latter was of the kind of malformation called "club") are to be taken as unmistakable signs of noble, or at least of gentle descent.

Lucid in perception, bold and vigorous in forming plans and devising means, there was, for his misfortune, denied to him in his organisation that wondrous, indispensable, world-compelling muscle of mind which is called "will." He was as a gallant bark whose rudder is shattered — whose crew are too lazy, or too weak, or too despairing to

rig a new one, and which must needs float hither and thither on the ocean of life, the butt of every wave, till, for all its mighty bulk, its brave armament, its rich cargo, it goes down for ever and ever into the depths.

He could not hate at all; but he could not love for long. He heaped up so much fuel on the altar which he was continually erecting to some divinity or other, that he was soon bankrupt as a coal merchant, threw down the scuttle, kicked over the altar in a pet, and transferred his allegiance to some other divinity. When this pantheism, or rather polytheism, exists, we know very well that there is another theism imminent: the great A. But the conflicting series of checks in his mental *mécanique*, which made him very like an expensive chronometer — going beautifully when it did go, but often out of order, and frequently not going at all, guarded him from degenerating into scepticism in the adoration of the beautiful. He was so affectionate, so kindly, so clinging in his heart-

structure, that love some one he must, and love some one he always did. The profits of his love were very small, but the returns were marvellously quick. Men who love like this do not generally live long. The fire in the soul-range is lighted so frequently — is kept burning so incessantly, and the chimney is so seldom swept — that it, too, catches fire some day, and the house of life is burnt down into dust and ashes, and Eutyclus falls from the third loft, and is taken up dead. Men who have loved often (I do not mean such mere slaves of passion as Mirabeau or the bad Lord Lyttelton, or Byron,—redeemed, to some extent, as were their errors, by their noble qualities of mind), but have yet lived discreet and sober lives, died early, and carried no gray heirs to the grave; but long lovers are long livers: aye, both the passionate and the temperate. The loves of an Abelard and a Heloïse last half a century, the stately courtship of a Horace Walpole and a Madame du Deffand defies distance and age, and blindness and infirmity.

And believe me, there are no such monsters as young ladies are so fond of talking about — the tea-table phantasms, the sewing-circle chimeras, known as “general lovers.” They are as fabulous as the phœnix. When a man is reported to be desperately in love with two women, it is perfectly certain that with one (and very often with both of them) he is not in love at all. It is impossible (if you love at all) to be on with the new love before you are off with the old; but it is the electric rapidity with which a man of quick impulses leaps from old to new, that has originated the delusion that the books of love can ever be kept *en partie double* — by double entry.

Have you anything like a conception of this Philip Leslie of mine — this frank-hearted, strong-limbed, weak-willed fellow? Can you not reckon, among those of your own cognisance, men such as he: jocund, *insouciant*, generous, confiding, confidence-unworthy fellows? Brave young cornets and captains, who set out every day in the Grand Army to

invade a Russian-like frozen society, and fight a Borodino battle for bread; and to capture a Moscow that will be burnt about their ears, and turn them into an Army of Martyrs indeed, but who, having not the Will, will never rise to high command or great estate, but will be cornets and captains all their lives. Such free lances, such social moss-troopers as these, are said to be no man's enemies but their own. Here is another grievous fallacy: they are all men's enemies—for every member of the community is a shareholder in a commercial corporation, and his liability is not limited; so that if he squander, dissipate, or malverse, it is not on his own account alone that he does these things, but on account, and to the prejudice of the corporation, the bank, the community—Society, in a word; and Society will have him by the heels some day, so sure as his name is Adamson.

Let me now resume the colloquy between Philip Leslie and the worthy Professor Jachimo, which I interrupted in order to give the reader some insight into the inward being of the first-named personage.

The two friends continued until very late in the coffee-room of the Adelphi Hotel, and till the American gentleman who had gone to sleep before a pile of emptied julep-glasses, with his transatlantic feet on the mahogany table, and his transatlantic face turned heaven and ceilingwards, had summoned the "boots," donned his slippers, invested himself with the order of the chamber-candlestick, and gone to bed by way of a change, and till the waiter who had been wavering between waking and sleeping, and who had been making those desperate efforts to provoke self-strangulation, had gone to sleep in right earnest. Then Professor Jachimo and Philip Leslie having the coast clear, and the field of discussion entirely to themselves, began to converse with considerably more mutual confidence and absence from restraint than had hitherto marked their intercourse.

"You have saved my life," the Professor said, "and I naturally feel as grateful as a fellow can possibly do under such circumstances. I can't return the obligation, as your

life, happily, is not, and does not seem very probable to run a chance of being in danger; still, I can show a sense of the favour you have conferred on me, if you will let me know in what manner it will be most acceptable to you. What can I do for you?"

"I don't know that you can do anything for me."

"Nonsense," retorted the Professor, with that peculiar laugh of his.

"Everybody wants something done for them. I have wanted things done for me sometimes, and have had a deuced deal of trouble, nay, have frequently absolutely failed, in getting anybody to do the something I wanted for me."

"Well, I can scarcely tell you what *you* could do for me."

"You seem very hard up."

"I am, in verity, as poor as what is facetiously termed a church mouse—much poorer even than that impoverished animal, if it were possible to be so. I have drawn no salary for the last eight weeks, and have been working

very hard, and eating very little, as is frequently the lot of persons in my profession."

"Have you any money at all?"

"Not a halfpenny. I just gave away"—— he checked himself, and substituted, with a blush, "just *lost* my last half crown."

"Well, then, confound it," cried the Professor, with an outburst of generosity, not very common to him, "you must have some money, you know. A fellow can't get along without money. I know what it is to be without money. I've been as hard up as you often. People look pillories and treadmills at you. Tell me how much money you want, and you shall have it as welcome as the flowers in May. The purse of Professor Jachimo is entirely at your service, and that humble individual is delighted to say, that it is sufficiently well lined at present. Tell me then, generous youth, what thou requirest to set thee straight with the world, and give thee a fresh start in life, and it shall be thine instantaneously. Stick not at the sum; I can't be buyer and seller too, as the old clothesmen

say; the Professor is liberal, and will disburse freely."

"I'm very much obliged to you," the painter said, with some natural hesitation; "but I'd rather not."

"Rather not! You must be mad, Mr. Leslie. What the deuce are you to do in this flinty manimon-shop of a place without any money? Unless, indeed, you have abundant credit, which, pardon me if I am taking too great a liberty, I scarcely imagine can be enjoyed by the scene-painter at the Fontenoy-street Theatre, admirably conducted (except in the way of paying salaries) as is that Thespian establishment."

"You are quite right. My credit has been exhausted, and has died the death."

"Then excuse me," remarked the Professor, "if I tell you in all candour and all honesty, that if you do not take the assistance I proffer you, you are a very great fool."

"I may be so. I have been a fool—so people tell me—all my life; but I'd rather not take your money all the same."

“ Will you tell me why ? ”

“ You will be offended with me, perhaps, if I give you an honest and candid reason for my refusal.”

“ Not a bit, I like honesty and candour; they're a change after the rogueries one lives amongst daily, and is compelled sometimes to practise, in this beautiful half-gipsy, half-mountebank, whole-vagabond, semi-theatrical profession of ours.”

“ Well, then, Professor Jachimo,” resumed the Painter, “ if you like honesty and candour, I will tell you why I will not take your money. I think that I would sooner starve, sooner rot than take it, because I believe that of all the consummate scoundrels that ever existed, you, Professor Jachimo, are the greatest and most consummate.”

“ Ha ha! Ho ho! and ha ha! again,” cried the Professor, starting up, and speaking so loud that the sleepy waiter half woke, inclined his drowsy ear at an angle of forty-five degrees, to intimate that he, the waiter, was in the room, and that parties might give their orders;

but hearing none, muttered a sleepy "Coming, sir," and relapsed into sleep again. "At last I have found the pearl beyond price, the ingenuous youth, the man of integrity—*clarusque purus*, if I have not forgotten all the Latin they hammered into me at school. I *am* a scoundrel—great, consummate; by Tom of Lincoln and Peter the Great, by Jack a' Kent, I am; and you, being virtuous, are just the man for me. Ring the bell, and have some cakes and ale, and some ginger to be hot in the mouth withal. The Professor is a Shakesperian, you see. He has strutted his hour on the boards, and was deemed a not uneloquent patterer of the blank verse of the immortal Bill, by managers who paid as much as fifteen shillings a week salary. You won't ring the bell? I was but jesting. You *must* come with me. You *shall* let me be your friend. Tell me, you Paragon, where do you live?"

He put the question with such adroit suddenness—he had such a feline nimbleness of address, this Professor, in pouncing upon an

interlocutor, with those straw-coloured kid paws of his, that had *griffes* of iron beneath, that Leslie, taken off his guard, hesitating whether he should kick the Professor, laugh at the Professor, or evade the Professor's question, made a miserable compromise of the matter by answering him, and stammering out that he lived at No. 8, Mount Pleasant, close by.

“Haste then to the pleasant Mountain,” exclaimed the lively necromancer, clapping his hands on Leslie's shoulders. “The waiter wants to go to bed—the bar's closed. You want sleep—so do I. I'll call upon you in the morning—you'll let me in; I know you will. Good night, Heaven bless you. Flare up!”

And with this singular benediction, the dexterous Professor Jachimo so managed with his guest, that though Leslie felt that he was being treated like a child, and was burning to knock his persecutor down, he walked, half backwards, out of the coffee-room, past the night porter, and into the street, and was half

conscious, too, of having bid the Professor good night, and of having half returned the grasp of the hand he had conferred upon him at parting. What would have been the good of the Professor being such an unutterable wizard, if he hadn't been able to manage things more cleverly than other people?

It was curious to observe the change that came over the countenance of Professor Jachimo when his guest had left. His hilarity, his *bonhomie*, vanished as instantaneously as though he had worn one of those theatrical masks which can be drawn off the face by means of a string; and in lieu came an anxious, covetously-inquisitive, ravenously-pondering expression, that had much more of *malhomie* than *bonhomie* in it. As he pondered and pondered, and drew lines of uncertain mental circumvallation in some spilt liquor on the table, he looked less like a Professor of any kind of magic, natural or otherwise, than like a certain Captain, not to the purlieus of the Borough of Southwark unknown, nor wholly a stranger to the purl-perfumed parlour

of the "Blue Pump," of whom you have, I think, heard before in this chronicle. Indeed, the mahogany table might, with far more regard to the fitness of things, have been lowly Pembroke; the choice Havana a clay pipe; the stately coffee-room a low pot-house parlour.

"A strange young man, that," he mused to himself. "I don't believe in presentiments — they're all humbug; yet I can't help having something like a presentiment about him. A very strange young man! I'll sleep upon it! He won't give me the slip, if I can help it. I don't think he wants to, either, for all his telling me that I was a scoundrel. There: I'll sleep upon it."

So Professor Jachimo likewise invested himself with the order of the chamber-candlestick, and still muttering that Philip Leslie was a very strange young man, permitted the night porter to conduct him to his bed-chamber, and, according to his expressed intention, slept upon it. He slept as a child would sleep on a beating, and a lover on the receipt of his

letters and the lock of his hair from his mistress, and a general on his defeat, and an emperor on his abdication, and as you, my friend, would sleep somehow, if you were to be hanged to-morrow morning. For it is Mercy that ties our nightcap strings beneath our chins; and lays her soft fingers, poppy-steeped, on our weary eyelids.

Philip Leslie, too, went home to sleep upon it, in his poor garret, which attic cell was on the third storey of a house situated in the declivitous thoroughfare called Mount Pleasant. Unpleasant enough it had lately become to him, heaven knows; for he owed his landlady, who was one of the most acrid and ill-conditioned of the lodging-house-keeper species, much rent, for which she dunned him, matutinally, diurnally, and nocturnally — “from morn to dewy eve, a summer’s day” — most remorselessly. Nervous anxiety with respect to Mrs. Cheesewright’s unsettled account may have had something to do with his holding his breath when he turned the latch-key in the door; with a sudden flush and tremor coming

over him, when, owing to the presence, perhaps, of some minute particle of foreign matter in the barrel of the key, the tumblers of the lock refused to obey the potent spell of Chubb. He was locked out to a certainty. The key of the street was his, and none other; and Mrs. Cheesewright was determined that her lodger should sleep, if at all, *à la belle étoile*. Such were the quickly-succeeding thoughts that pricked him, halbert-like, as he drew the clavial recalcitrant from the key-hole, blew into it, whistled into it, tapped it smartly against the iron railings, and, as far as a neighbouring gaslight would permit him, scrutinised its interior as narrowly as you have seen a cunning magpie look into a marrowbone. Then, with a heart that might have beaten time to the skeleton chorus in *Der Freischütz*, so sepulchrally rapid were its pulsations, he applied the key once more, but, oh joy! this time with success, and in another instant stood trembling on the house-side of the threshold. He felt like one who has escaped a great peril, has by a sudden leap cleared a gulf of vasty

fissure, and stands on the safer side, triumphant but astonished. He closed the street-door gingerly; put up the chain, biting his lips and frowning to himself as a link or two inopportunately rattled, lighted his own chamber-candle from the funereal dip that flared fitfully on a side-slab, blew out the parent luminary — all these performances being strictly enjoined and enforced by the servile code enacted by the Draconian Cheesewright for the guidance of her lodgers — and crept upstairs to his own humble tenement, scattering mental malisons on the stairs of the first flight, which creaked abominably, and on those of the second, of which the carpet was of the raggedest, and, as it seemed maliciously unsecured by stair-rods; so being steps of fearsome peril and ankle-spraining eventually to him who mounted. Philip did not care to sit up when he had reached his lean chamber. He did not waste the midnight oil. He had no midnight oil to waste — only a tiny stump of farthing rush-light, from which a toothsome mouse had already that morning nibbled a *déjeuner à la*

dent. He did not seem to be imbued with a desire to read the only books he possessed — a torn copy of Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters, and an odd volume of Paradise Lost, with four white discs on the upper side of its cover, where the second-hand bookstall-keeper's placard, setting forth that the book was "only threepence," had been torn off—by the light of the half-dozen lucifer-matches that lay scattered in the rusty candlestick. He would have smoked a pipe before retiring to his couch; but, oh misery of poverty! though there were no less than four cutties, fumigated to a most artistic degree of brownness on the mantelshelf, and a fantastic German affair with a porcelain bowl, on whose smoky sides some vestiges of gilding, and a dimly-looming view of Cologne Cathedral yet remained, not one atom of tobacco, not even a particle of the half-smoked pipe-lees known as Mundungus,* could he find in ragged pouch, in cutty bowl, or in twisted scrap of paper in his thrice-searched pockets. Had he the blackened

* Ambrose Phillips: The "Splendid Shilling."

stump of a cigar even, he thought he could have chopped it up with that old razor, and inhaled a few semi-satisfactory whiffs.

These are the things that make poverty terrible.

To the habitual smoker, and—a million times worse to him who has an imaginative temperament—to be without tobacco, is as bad as the want of a thimble to an inexperienced needlewoman. You bleed at every thought of the unattainable sedative. Yet there may be one agony more exquisite—one “sorrow’s crown of sorrow” with thornier prickles: to see the much-coveted weed within your reach, and yet not be able to use it. I remember, years since, going over Kirkdale Gaol, near this same Liverpool, and seeing, lying in the midst of one of the exercising yards, a little paper packet which, a warder informed me, contained birdseye tobacco, which had been flung over the wall by some sympathising prisoners’ friend outside. But not one of the hundreds of captives in that gaol, in their daily exercise, and under the Argus eyes of their janitors had dared to touch the tobacco luxury. It made

me sick, to think with what a desperate greed of concupiscence the eyes of these doomed men must have surveyed that parcel of dried leaves; how thoughts of strangling a warder suddenly, seizing the tobacco, swallowing it, and then giving themselves up to justice and the gallows, must have flashed meteor-like before their hungry eyes. A little tobacco-trifle such as this makes us ask ourselves strange questions.

Yes. Society must be protected. Yes: rogues must tread the wheel and cut-purses turn the crank. The Game Laws must be enforced; the vagrant must have his fourteen days' hard labour: the Law permits, the Court awards it; but where this thy Abstract Right, O Man, to play these fantastic tricks with thy fellow: to coop him up in prison-vans, to cabin him in warm air-heated cells, to deprive him of "his bed and gas," throttle him in a "punishment jacket," stuff his mouth with salt if he halloo out, dress him up in grey and yellow, like a penal harlequin, call him number eighty-four instead of John or Thomas, hide his face, made in God's image even as is thine own,

behind a leathern mask, gruel him, fetter him, scourge him, chaplain him? He is punished according to the Act of Parliament in his case made and provided — but — now let us go and sit on the petty' jury, and send John Smith (the scoundrel!) to Woolwich for stealing a silver tea-pot.

As Philip Leslie cast his clothes on the chair beside his bed, pondering, for his part, on what a strange fellow that conjuror was, there slipped from the pocket of his well (or rather ill) worn shooting-jacket something yellow and something shining, which, when he eagerly stooped to pick it up, proved to his amazement to be a golden sovereign.

“How on earth did this money come here?” he asked himself. “Pshaw!” he continued. “I’m a dolt to ask the question. Who could have put it there but that rascal of a wizard, with some of his merry-Andrew tricks. Confound his impudence! Heigho!” and so lay down on his pillow. He was so miserably poor that he could not help saying “Heigho!” though he had really a mind — a very great

mind, though not quite an entire mind — to give the Professor back his alms in the morning.

He tossed and tumbled all night, and dreamed far more than he slept. He dreamed that he had taken the Devil's arles, and was bound to one Polliachimo, a demon, by contracts engrossed with human blood on parchment made from human skins. He dreamed that he had taken a red-hot sovereign from a recruiting sergeant with epaulettes of fire, and parti-coloured serpents for streamers, that twisted about his shako with eyes in all their scales; and that he was enlisted, for ever and ever, in the Fiends' Light Infantry. Then he began to have wandering, incoherent dream-memories of his past career. He trod the shores of another land, and then another, and yet another. He prattled another language, and still another, and another. There was a nurse who was called *Bonne*, and who wore a high white cap and great golden earrings. *Bonne* meant good, he was told; yet she could not be very good, this *Bonne*, for she was

always talking to a man in a helmet, a big beard, and red trousers, and left him, little Philip, to sprawl on the ground, and be hustled by fowls, and turned over on his little back by inquisitive dogs. He was little Philip then, little Philip with a strange cap of silk, wadding, and basket-work, like a Turk's turban, and a great white frill. Who was it used to call him not little Philip, but little brute, little pig, little devil? Ah! that other gentleman with the other big beard — the red one — who gave mamma a kiss in the blue dining-room, where there was a figure of a man in a great coat, a cocked hat, and high boots, and with his arms behind him, standing on the mantelpiece. This was the gentleman who used to promise to take him out to ride on his great white horse. He never did, though; but he wore spurs, and cut little Philip across the face with his horse-whip, because he would not call him papa.

These memories merged into more recent ones — memories of journeyings to and fro, people with rouge and spangles, twanging fiddlers, poverty, hardship, contumely. Now he was a very very little boy again. How

blue the sky was; how white the houses; how hot in the sun! What a smell of melons and oranges; what a plashing of falling water; what curiously striped blinds to all the windows; and how the people held up their hands and moved their bodies when they talked. A long, long way his mind had travelled back; and he began to dream of a tall handsome lady with dark hair and eyes — so dark! so handsome! who used to fondle him on her knee, almost smother him with kisses, and weep passionately on his neck, calling him her dear, dear, wronged, abandoned child; and yet sometimes, with a strange and terrible caprice, would fall upon him with blows and revilings, and tell him that he was a viper and an outcast. It was the tall, handsome, dark lady he used to call "Mamma." And that lady, too, tall and handsome as she was, used to be very fond of drinking something from a decanter. Then the dream-memories came upon him so rapidly and so distinctly, that he perceived that he was wide-awake, and thinking very deeply of real things past. Yes: they were all true. And, lo, it was morning!

CHAP. XX.

THE PROFESSOR IS WANTED.

THE occurrences of the past day had been of such an unusually exciting nature that the Professor, not habitually an early riser, felt more disposed than ever to prolong his morning slumbers. The first summons of the "boots," bearing his patent leathers and his shaving water at about nine A.M., he utterly disregarded. "Boots," however, nothing daunted, came again, at ten o'clock, and beat a tattoo on the door panel; whereupon the drowsy Professor began to condescend to entertain something like the skeleton of an idea, that it was very nearly time for him to get up, especially as he had necromantic business of importance to transact, and that strange young

man, Philip Leslie, to look up; but he still seemed perfectly assured that the Painter neither could nor would give him the slip; so with another yawn, he announced his definite intention of rising at eleven, but he bade the "boots" bring him, *ad interim*, a dish of strong tea.

There were "dishes" of strong tea in those days; even until very lately, and until stern Improvement Commissioners of Boards and Works pulled the venerable, dry-rotten edifice down, there were "dishes" of tea to be obtained at the old Chapter Coffee-house in St. Paul's Churchyard, London. When poor Charlotte Brontë, suddenly become famous through the publication of "Jane Eyre," came to London to see Messrs. Smith and Elder, she alighted—in her entire ignorance of town life—at the Chapter Coffee-house, and, I daresay, had many dishes of tea when she returned from the grand *soirées* where "Curren Bell" was lionised. The "dish" of tea resembled, perhaps, a slop-basin of tea more closely in appearance, or, with even greater accuracy of

outline, a small punch-bowl, as though the tea-drinker, while confining himself to that cheerful but uninebriating beverage, still wished to have before him the outward form and image of the beloved vessel that was wont to hold punch, the equally cheerful, but not innocuous. Grand old Chapter Coffee-house, what has become of thy frequenters—as old, as musty, as time-worn, as ricketty, as thou wert? Have ruthless Improvement Commissioners pulled down the Chapterites as well as the Chapter? *Dove sono?*—those antediluvian old boys; Saurian relics of a small-clothed, gaitered, shirt-frilled, powder-headed, pig-tailed generation; cock-hatted fragments of a pre-Adamite humanity! What has become of the Plesiosaurian waiter, with the head white and bare, and polished as a billiard-ball, with the rusty black suit a world too wide for his shrunk shanks, with the pendant watch-key and seals in gold of the dullest hue but the purest assay—the waiter who was dry, and crusty, and hung round with cobwebs, almost, as his own old

port was in reality? What has become of the shabby Sunday morning parsons, who used to wait, not to say tout, at the Chapter just before service, with a cassock, surplice, and bands in a carpet-bag, and a stock sermon (warranted orthodox), and generally borrowed bodily from some compendious Body of Theology, in their coat pockets, ready to fill the pulpit of any reverend gentleman who might be prevented by indisposition, or Sunday business, or Sunday headache, or Sunday pleasure, from performing his own service to his own congregation—and all for the small charge of half-a-guinea? They must have retreated somewhere; they cannot have been utterly annihilated. Rats fly from a falling house and a leaky ship, but they migrate to fresh glory-holes and sewers new; and I suppose the fossil waiters, and the stalactite old gentlemen from the country, and the mummified half-guinea parsons, who used to give a dim and musty vitality to the Chapter, have not yet quite faded away into nothingness, but have sought out some abode as dim and

musty as themselves, an abode which Improvement Commissioners have not yet approached with profaning pickaxe, and over whose downfall Boards of Works yet slumber.

Little recked Professor Jachimo, in the summer of eighteen hundred and thirty-five, of the connection between a dish of tea and the Chapter Coffee-house, in St. Paul's Church-yard, London, and little would he have cared if such a connection had been suggested to him. He was a man of his times, and the good and evil of the time—more of the evil than of the good—were sufficient for him. He ordered a dish of tea, because by that name a large ration of the infusion of the Chinese leaf was generally designated in provincial hotels, and because a cup—two cups—three cups, of the ordinary tea-cup size, were insufficient for his large desire. And while he waited for the tea, he indulged in pleasant visions of a tremendous breakfast he intended to consume in the hotel coffee-room. For there was one person in the world of whom the Professor Jachimo was excessively fond, to

whom he was prodigiously kind, and to whom he denied nothing if he could by any possibility avoid it. That person was Professor Jachimo himself; and in his boundless indulgence to his caprices and appetite, he spared neither fish, nor flesh, nor fowl—nay, nor man, nor woman, nor child besides. It was a doctrinal point in the Jachimonian creed, that the Jachimonian body must be allowed to lack for nothing—neither for food, for drink, nor for raiment; and that if these things could not always be provided at the Jachimonian expense, they must necessarily be furnished at somebody else's.

In this comfortable state of mind, the Professor awaited tranquilly the coming of his refreshing draught, indulging in sundry retrospective contemplations and in day-dreams not wholly unpalatable.

“I haven't done so badly with my five hundred pounds,” he mused, “though of that handsome (but inadequate) sum I managed to throw four hundred cleanly and tidily into the gutter, in that infernal Irish campaign of

mine, three years since. Going abroad saved me from more dangers than losing my remaining hundred pounds, though; and let us hope the whole of that unlucky affair is blown over by this time. It was a narrow escape for you, my friend Jachimo—a very narrow escape, indeed. It was even a folly of thine, an exceedingly close shave, the narrowest squeak thou hast known, O Jacky the impudent. Bah,” he continued, “what’s a narrow squeak, a close shave, to such as I am? Hasn’t my life always been, isn’t it now, made up of shaves and squeaks, more or less close and narrow? I am the weasel. When I am found asleep, then may the barber begin to lather my eyebrows and brandish his shining razor. A miss is as good as a mile any day, and the misses have hitherto been all in my favour. I’ve not made what I term a regular mess of it for years. That old Lord’s money seems to have been lucky cash, as gamblers believe pawnbrokers’ money to be, and has prospered in these humble hands marvellously.”

He gave an ugly grin as he spread his large,

coarse, creased hands out of the coverlid, and then glanced at the sparkling, showy rings on the toilet-table.

“Who’d believe now,” he went on “that by just wandering about the Continent for three years with these hankey-pankey tricks of mine, that I should have managed to set by very nearly a thousand pounds in good hard cash, besides a ‘plant,’ if I may call my magic paraphernalia by so tradesmanlike a name, and jewellery—a safe investment when you know where to buy, how to buy, what to buy, and when (and to *whom*) to sell—worth at least five hundred pounds more. And all from that one remaining nest-egg of one hundred pounds. I wonder whether there is anything more to be screwed out of that old Lord. I shouldn’t wonder. I’ll work him, and all the rest of the family, as safe as houses, when I get to London. It’s true we promised not to molest him any more; but business is business, and must be attended to before all things. I wish I could find that straw-coloured medical friend of mine. I wish I could find——.”

He fell into a deeper, darker fit of musing, and events long since dead and buried came trooping up before him like phantoms, himself among the throng. He chased the ugly ones away fiercely and remorselessly. Himself more vehemently he bade begone; for of all persons he did not like to look in the face, in his *real habit as he lived*, that person was Jachimo, professor of legerdemain. Some of the phantoms were pleasant; and he permitted them to stay to keep company with him till the dish of tea came, and fondled and caressed them.

And then his thoughts reverted to the strange young man with whom he had become acquainted the night before, and he began to cogitate on him with a serious earnestness that even he himself could not account for.

“Confound the young fellow,” he said, half aloud; I can’t get him out of my head. I should like to know what he has been, and what he has been doing with himself. He is an impudent dog, and as reckless as a gipsy; but he’s some good stuff about him. He’s an honest man, that’s positive. I like honest men

just as I like good pictures. But then my name isn't Michael Angelo, and I can't paint. There's honesty in his voice, his manner, his smile, his clear blue eye. He's very picturesque, very rare, just like an old master. And then honest men are such uncommonly good eating, when you have them all ready trussed, and stuffed, and roasted."

He turned in his bed, and, gazing at the wall opposite, saw an engraving, vilely executed in the old pig-tail manner, of the good Samaritan picking up the wounded man who went down to Jericho and fell among thieves. He nodded amicably at the generous Samaritan, who was stooping down till his nose nearly touched the breast of his prostrate brother, notwithstanding an enormous turban as big as a pumpkin, sufficient to give its wearer, Saxon or Samaritan, determination of blood to the head at once.

"Now there was an honest man," he said. "I like such honest fellows as that—fellows who will drop you at a first-rate hotel, and pay everything you choose to score up,

They're getting somewhat difficult to find, such honest fellows as this; but they are found from time to time, nevertheless. I should like to give that young fellow a turn, and do a little Samaritan business on my own hook. I can afford it; and it's as refreshing as a shower-bath. I will, too, with his will or without his will," he resumed. "I've a strong idea that he'll be useful to me. He'll kick at first; has'nt run in harness; is given to shying and bolting, and is quiet neither to ride nor drive; would not suit a lady, nor a nervous gentleman. I daresay I shall be able to bring him to terms at last, and I'll engagé him, and take him to town at a weekly salary. He can paint my paraphernalia, to begin with—it wants a new coat of vermilion, emerald green, and Dutch metal sadly; and I can educate him at last, perhaps, to becoming a confederate in the hankey-pankey. He's not too honest a man for *that*, I suppose. Hang it! what a long time they are bringing up the tea!"

The delay of which the Professor here

complained, was to be thus accounted for—“Boots,” on going down stairs, delivered his message, according to the routine of the Adelphi Hotel, at the bar, to the effect that Number Twenty-seven stood in need of a dish of strong tea. The order being received by a clerk of the gentler sex, who presided in a handsome glass case over an enormous ledger, white vellum ornamented with arabesques of cut morocco, and who was ringleted and ribboned in a delightful manner, was by her in due course conveyed to the imposing head-waiter, by him again transmitted to one or two of his immediate subordinates, and the dish of tea was finally (that is to say, about half an hour after it had been ordered) confided to a smart chambermaid, with instructions to carry it up to number Twenty-seven herself. For the Adelphi Hotel was a national establishment, and, as in many other national establishments, every item in its internal organisation was carried out by system and routine, and by the rule of thumb and hotel red-tape in all cases made and provided.

Just as the chambermaid had received her precious trust of dished bohea at the bar, and had raised her drapery the infinitesimal part of an inch, in order that her upward progress towards the regions of number Twenty-seven might not be impeded, there appeared in the hotel vestibule—which was strictly the manner of his becoming visible, for he neither walked in, nor lounged in, nor ran in, nor rushed in, but simply appeared—an individual who, without seeming to take particular notice of anybody or anything, still, paradoxical as it may appear, created an immediate and rather uneasy sensation among all present, embracing everything within an easy circle of observation, from the head-waiter to a newly-arrived port-manteau, and from the ribboned and ringleted clerk to the placard on the wall, telling of the effervescing waters of the Brunnen of Nassau, bottled on the spot, and hermetically capsuled for English invalid consumption, announcing the approaching departure of steamers from George's Dock to the Isle of Man.

He was not so remarkable an individual to

look at, having somewhat the appearance of a farmer, if a white hat and top-boots are to be taken as ordinary criteria of agricultural costume. But that he was no farmer, was evident from his blue coat, red waistcoat, and blue Belcher neckerchief with white spots—that article of attire which has since become so popular among the pugilistic section of the sporting community called “the Fancy,” and is expressively, though irreverently, known as “a bird’s-eye fogle.”

He had buff leather driving-gloves on his large hands, which he seemed to have a peculiar idiosyncrasy for carrying behind him. That he should wear driving-gloves was not very unnatural, seeing that there had all at once appeared, as suddenly and as mysteriously as he, at the door of the Adelphi, a solid-looking gig drawn by a solid-looking brown horse, whose reins were held by another individual, the very fetch and counterpart of him in the vestibule, with these exceptions—that his hands (the reins being taken into consideration) were necessarily before him—

and that he had red hair and red whiskers, whereas his *confrère* within had both those hirsute ornaments of a jet-black hue, set off, moreover, on a bullet head very closely cropped, and the whiskers confined to the mutton cutlet form and size. Two twinkling little black eyes were set on either side of a broad somewhat upward-turned nose: sharp black eyes, observant black eyes, sly black eyes, and knowing—oh! such knowing!—black eyes. He might have been about forty years of age, and was stout and burly in form.

Such was the individual who, having taken a comprehensive survey of the hotel vestibule, its furniture and its occupants, sauntered leisurely up to the bar, and addressed the ringleted clerk:

“Party by the name of Jachimo stopping here, my dear?”

The fascinating clerk in the ribbons and the ringlets, accustomed to a long course of reverential homage from all the merchant princes of Liverpool, the most dashing Irish

country gentlemen, and the sallovest and wealthiest dons from the Spanish main and the United States of America, felt naturally aggrieved at being addressed in so unceremonious a manner.

“Dear, indeed!” cried the young lady, tossing her head; “I am sure I never cost *you* anything.”

“Darling, then,” pursued the hardened man in the top-boots, quite unabashed, “or Empress of Rooshia. It’s all the same to me. Party by the name of Jachimo here, Miss?”

The beauteous book-keeper vouchsafed no reply by word of mouth; but she rang a bell for the head-waiter. When that functionary, who was about half a dozen paces from her when she rang, was near enough to the glass-case, she leaned towards him, and said, tersely:

“Number Twenty-seven wanted.”

The head-waiter looked first at the stout man in the top-boots, and then at the chambermaid.

“ He isn’t up yet.”

That young lady, feeling that she was called upon to respond, made answer :

“ I’m just carrying his tea up to him. He only came last night.”

“ No luggage,” murmured the head-waiter; not with any intentional disparagement of the Professor, but probably only to establish a fact that was almost without precedent. For in the head-waiter’s mind all people who were not landlords, chambermaids, or waiters — “boots” didn’t count for anything — were travellers; and these last were divisible into two great classes — travellers with luggage and travellers without luggage. The first were to be trusted and conciliated in proportion to the magnitude of their *impedimenta*; the second were to be scorned and shunned.

“ That’ll do,” the stout man said, with a nod.” “Rather see him in bed than out of it. I’ll go up Which way, my ducky?”

It will be seen, that the stout man was as gallant as Professor Jachimo, but his gallantry was of quite a different order. It was much

smoother, and a hundred times more disagreeable. His last affectionate apostrophe was addressed to the chambermaid, who not only indignantly repudiated it, but made ineffectual attempts to bar the passage of the adventurous stranger, saying:

“Name, if you please, sir, name. You can’t go up like that. Number Twenty-seven’s in bed, and don’t like to be disturbed.”

“Name! nonsense. Say I’m his aunt Sarah. Why he’ll be as glad to see me, as if I was his rich grandmother come from the East Indies with a guinea-pig and a ship full of five-shilling pieces. Stop,” the undaunted man proceeded, “say I’m Mr. Nobody. Mr. Nobody come to see number Twenty-seven on most partic’lar business. There, there! That’s your sort. We’re like brothers when we’re together. Now show me the way, that’s a good girl. Good bye, Miss.” This to the clerk in ringlets.

The chambermaid could never after explain how it actually happened; but it is a fact,

that before you could pronounce the oft-banded name of Jack Robinson, the stout and persevering stranger whose name was Mr. Nobody, had encircled her waist with one of his rough gloves, chucked her under the chin, slipped a crown-piece into her hand, and was gently pushing her and the dish of tea towards the upper regions.

It wasn't, perhaps, so much a push as a gentle guiding and directing motion; but it answered its purpose very effectually. The chambermaid led the way, decidedly against her free will, but, considering the circumstances, with much cheerfulness. They were not long in reaching the door of number Twenty-seven, when Mr. Nobody, clutching the girl's arm, as she halted with the tray in her hand, muttered in a very decided and low-pitched key:

“Take in the tea. Give it him, but not a word of anybody wanting to see him. When you come out, leave the door ajar. Take care, or it will be the worse for you.”

There was an unmistakeable air of a person

accustomed to be obeyed in his injunctions. There was something in Mr. Nobody's black eyes, which showed that he was not a man in top-boots to be trifled with, and which made the chambermaid tremble. She knocked gently at the door; the strong voice of the Professor cried, "Come in!" and in she went with that momentous dish of tea, ordered so long since by number Twenty-seven.

CHAP. XXI.

THE PROFESSOR GIVES A NEW ADDRESS.

THE manner in which it was done was thus-
wise.

Mr. Nobody, left alone to his nonentity, waited very patiently at the bed-room door till the chambermaid had done her spiriting, emerged from the chamber, and till the last sound of her retreating footsteps had died away on the staircase. Then cautiously pushing the door wider and wider, till the opening was sufficient to admit his portly body, he first protruded his head into the apartment; and, casting a rapid and comprehensive glance around—taking stock of every thing within his sphere of vision, from bed-

tester to portmanteau-stool — first assured himself that there was neither looking nor cheval-glass so placed as to cause the reflection of his person to be visible to the man in the bed. Then he stole, as softly as though his top-booted feet had been velvet-shod, into the area of the room, calculating on every step he made, pausing before he ventured on another, waiting again to discover whether the footsteps themselves produced any effect on the person on whom he was making so peculiar a morning call.

But ignorance was bliss to the Professor, so far as regarded his unseen visitant; and it was folly to him, under that condition of unconsciousness, to be wise. He sat up in bed, calmly sipping his dish of tea, and from time to time yawning slightly. He laid down the cup at last, with a satisfied expression of countenance, whereupon Mr. Nobody took another step forward, with a satisfied expression on his countenance too. Then he looked around, as men in bed, on the point of rising, will do; and it was close betting that his next

move would be one towards the evacuation of the citadel of his slumbers.

Now, this happened to be the very moment fixed upon by Mr. Nobody for *his* next move. A very rapid, unceremonious, astonishing move it was; for it consisted simply in the Bow Street Officer giving a jaguar-like leap right on to the bed, and pinioning the amazed Professor in his burly arms.

“John Pollyblank, before our Sovereign Lord the King — charge of forgery — Dundalk,” he explained, in sharp, jerking sentences, and in the intervals of the fierce struggle taking place between him and his scarcely less robust opponent.

“It’s no use, Jack,” was his friendly remonstrance, as, after a desperate resistance, the Professor began to show signs of being no longer sound in wind and limb; “you’d better give in.”

Mr. Nobody — otherwise Leathersides — of the Public Office, Bow Street, was right in his generation. There was no longer the slightest use in Professor Jachimo — or as we may now

as well recognise him as an old acquaintance — Jack Pollyblank, formerly of the borough of Southwark, and 'yclept Captain — offering any further resistance. The game was up, *pro tem.*, with Captain Jack, and the stakes were for Leathersides, the top-booted, to claim. No naked, or rather half-dressed man, were he as strong as the Russian Count Orloff (who, they say, crumples up silver salvers with his fingers, as though they were wafer-cakes), or Milo of Crotona, has a chance—for any continued wrestling—against an opponent of his own calibre, fully clad, and doubly armed in the advantage of having begun the tussle by being uppermost. The astute perception of the Professor-Captain soon convinced him of this. He found his muscular resources unequal to cope against the odds he found arrayed in his disfavour; and, not very graciously, but still very unreservedly, with a hearty expletive, he “gave in” as requested.

Mr. Leathersides availed himself of the capitulation of the fortress to remove his long bony fingers from the very donjon-keep of the

stronghold, that being the Captain's throat, which he had been investing pretty strongly lately; and then to produce from the hinder pocket of his coat a neat pair of steel handcuffs. Then seating himself by the side of the bed, but still keeping one firm grasp on his prisoner's shoulder, and both his lynx eyes on his face, he intimated his desire that the Professor should arise and assume his raiment as soon as was convenient to him, in order, as with Arcadian simplicity of diction he expressed himself, that he might make all things nice and comfortable.

“Lord! only to think, Jack,” he added reflectively, “the time I've been looking for you. You thought your Leathersides had forgotten you; but you were never out of his thoughts, my pippin. Back'ards and for'ards, from pillar to post, have I took journeys from Dublin to Liverpool, from Liverpool to Edinburgh, from Edinburgh to London. The po'chays you've cost, Jack; the rump-steaks and bottles of port; the bread-and-cheeses and bottled ales; the goes of brandy-and-

water warm with; the shillin's I've given to ostlers, and the half-crowns and the hugs to chambermaids! Lord bless us. And to think I should nab you at last!"

"You're a nice bloodhound to track a fellow about, grumbled his victim, drawing on his stockings with malevolent looks. "I thought you were on another tack. They told me the scent lay over in New York, and that you had gone there, else I'd have seen Liverpool broiled alive before I'd have trusted myself in it. A nice fool I was to trust myself here at all."

"Not such a fool, Jack, as you think," politely rejoined the Bow Street Runner. "The scent *did* lie over yonder" (and he pointed with his thumb towards a portrait of Prince Leopold, in which direction it may be supposed he assumed America to be); "but you doubled, Jack—you doubled, my lad, and got caught at last. Besides, who was goin' to pass an Act of Parliament, special, to make the 'Merrikens give you up. Capital dodge that, though — Professor Jachimo, hankey-

pankey — eh! Why, they say you've made a mint of money."

And, as he ended thus, Mr. Leathersides, as it were abstractedly, began to turn over the Captain's coat, take a manipulative bird's-eye view of his waistcoat, and hand-survey of his pantaloons. He speedily tossed over these articles of apparel to his captive, in order that he might clothe himself; but it is a remarkable phenomenon, that both as regards coat, and waistcoat, and pantaloons, the pockets were all turned inside out, and that they were as empty as the great Tun of Heidelberg.

Mr. Leathersides had so much confidence in the conversion of the Professor-Captain to the doctrine of non-resistance, that he quitted his hold of him altogether, and sat down in a chair some two paces removed from the bed. But he was evidently a man of active habits, and one emulous of the fame of the diminutive but busy bee; and as he sate, he twiddled now those shining steel handcuffs I have spoken of; now his equally neat and shining steel-barrelled pocket-pistol, with a curiously fretted stock.

The Professor dressed himself in dogged silence. He had no weapons, and he knew the man who had captured him was not unsupported. To be shot like a dog did not enter into the calculations of John Pollyblank; it did into those of a determined Bow Street Officer of Eighteen Thirty-five.

Certainty as to his enemy's reinforcements soon became manifest. The *eidolon* of Mr. Leathersides—the same top-booted party who has been already introduced as sitting in the gig at the hotel door, and who rejoiced in the name of Darby—speedily made his appearance in the bed-room, not quite so noiselessly as Leathersides, his *confrère*, but still with much cautious deliberation. He was a man of few words, and confining himself to a gruff inquiry of his coadjutor as to whether the job was done, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, sat down on a chair close to the door, and chewed a cigar-light with much philosophic calmness. Simultaneously with his friend's arrival, Mr. Leathersides took advantage of the advanced state of his prisoner's

toilette to slip the handcuffs (which he playfully designated "bracelets") over the wrists, whose possessor would have so dearly wished to have used them as pivots to the hands that might strangle him. So here was an end to Captain Pollyblank's professorship. All the hankey-pankey tricks, the pigeons that flew out of the portfolios, the bouquet-yielding hats, the inexhaustible bottles, had come to this undesirable finale of present capture, and handcuffs, and imminent incarceration, and prospective transportation beyond the seas on a charge of forgery. Where committed? how committed? it concerns us not to inquire at this moment, since the Professor and the Officer, how much they might have differed on other points, seemed perfectly well agreed upon this: that there existed such an accusation, and that it must be answered at the proper time.

While these momentous events had been taking place at the Adelphi Hotel, and while this stern struggle between law and (alleged) crime had been working out in the hotel bed-

room, another struggle, scarcely less severe, had occurred in the humble bed-room in Mount Pleasant, where we left Philip Leslie on the previous night.

The poor lad woke up in the morning to contemplate a far different horizon to that which his professional friend vainly imagined was spread before him, when he ordered that dish of tea, already so frequently alluded to in these columns. To Philip Leslie, this same horizon is dark and drear. The sky and sea were stormy, perturbed, and dismal; and the only sail that he could descry in the offing of his soul was that golden-freighted bark, cleared he knew not whence, and bound he knew not whither, whose cargo was worth just twenty-one shillings.

And yet the guinea must have come from the conjuror; there could not be any doubt of that. Jachimo had some purpose in gaining Leslie to himself,—what that purpose was he knew not; but from what he knew of the man, it must be an evil one. He hesitated a good half hour as to what

he should do, weighing the coin in his hand, turning it, trying to form something like a theory by which it might have come into his pocket by accident — might have lain there long unthought of — the residue of some by-gone paid-up salary. But, alas! the few guineas that he had received during many months, he knew by heart—no; the conjuror, and no other man, had put the money there.

“ I don't know why I should annoy myself about it so,” he said moodily to himself. “ I've earned the money honestly enough, supposing the fellow's life to be worth a guinea at all. Ten shillings of this plaguey bit of gold now would change my old landlady's frowns into smiles; the rest would carry me on comfortably till the end of the week, and by then the ‘Cottage-door’ I left at old MacMull's, the picture dealer's in Church Street, might be sold. *Might* be sold! heigho! heigho!”

He looked round the room with a very disconsolate air. There was certainly a great

need for something to be sold, or, perhaps, even more for something to be bought, to restore anything like comfort to that cheerless apartment. It was an attic commanding an extensive but somewhat monotonous view of the high dead-wall of a chapel—a huge “brick barn of dissent”—opposite. The furniture which the iracund Mrs. Craven had placed at the disposal of her impoverished lodger, was of the scantiest and humblest description. A stump bedstead (of the well-known Codrus’ pattern) which bore an ugly resemblance to a bier; a paralytic wash-hand stand; one forlorn rush-bottomed chair, from whose worn seat, frayed rushes struggled and asserted themselves feebly, like bristles on a witch’s chin; a cracked looking-glass, which, even when it was whole, reflected only a hideous image; a ragged square of druggetty carpet inefficiently sprawling over the rickety flooring, like a dilapidated wig on a cranium too large for it; and a deal table that, whenever the wind blew in through the innumerable crevices, shivered as though with

palsy, and beat the devil's tattoo with its unequal legs; this was all the domestic furniture the unpleasant landlady of the Mount Pleasantian mansion would vouchsafe to her *locataire* for four shillings and sixpence a week. To be sure he owed a good many four and sixpences. The grimy-paned bull's-eyed window had so many small panes, that its chequers looked like the interstices between dungeon bars. It had not a vestige either of blind or curtain — this garret casement; and a window without a curtain is as unsightly to look upon as an eye without lashes. It was an excellent room to hang oneself in, to arsenicate oneself in, to asphyxiate oneself with charcoal, or throw oneself out of window from; but it was not by any means the kind of room in which to indulge in a carpet dance, a bowl of punch, or a rubber at whist. The bed was a fit one to die upon, but not to lie on one's back upon, and sing comic songs; which last, is one of the pleasantest uses of a bachelor's bed.

Mrs. Craven had not accomplished everything in the decoration of this apartment for a single gentleman. The semi-theatrical, semi-artistic tastes of the lodger, were shown in a paint-stained easel; a battered old oil colour box, from which the japan had been worn in many places, showing the tin through, as the knee of the beggar peeps through his tattered trousers; a pair of foils crossed on nails on the wall, with a lockless old horse-pistol over them; a besmeared plaster Venus, with a broken nose, and one leg wanting; a crimson velvet cap with a gold band and tassel, but gone to irrevocable seed: some odds and ends of the painter's craft, such as brushes and pencils, exhausted bladders of colour (metallic tubes as yet were not), and a portfolio with dog's-eared edges; a honeycombed human skull, on a horrible grin perpetually; a pair of buff slippers covered with tarnished spangles; a hare's foot with some rouge on the furry paw; a pair of dingy gauntlets, and a collar of imitation point-lace, very yellow and quite

ragged. For Philip Leslie, though his speciality was that of a scene-painter at the Royal Fontenoy-street Theatre, had frequently been compelled, owing to the paucity of the company, to "go on in small parts;" and in his time had not only painted Grindoff's Mill and the Clachan of Aberfoil, but had also worn buff boots as a robber, and tartan and bonnet as one of the Highland foes of of Bailie Nicol Jarvie.

Sitting on the bed's edge, in what may rather be termed a "blue" than a "brown study"—for the fiends, jocosely hight cerulean, haunted Leslie continually—he remained mentally weighing the *pros* and *cons* of the financial situation, till by a strong effort he started up, clapped his cap on his head, flung the door wide open, and made his way down the precipitous stairs in a hurry that would have been natural in a man who was going to receive money, but was difficult to be accounted for in one who was about to abandon possession thereof.

He was so afraid of his new-born resolution

giving way and coming to an untimely end, that he stopped not once in his downward course, not even at the door of the mouldy little parlour, where — among birds in rusty cages, which seemed (the birds) to be perpetually moulting, flower-pots which never made any greater horticultural display than a foundation of brown mould baked into fissured cracks, and feeble twigs like fragments of school-dame's rods past service, and an indefinite number of cats — Mrs. Craven sat and grumbled, and made out her weekly bills. He paused for a moment, and with a beating heart, at the street door, as if apprehensively (though it may have been wishfully) expectant of the almost every-day visit which, on the ragged door-mat, he was wont to receive from his landlady and creditor, there to be objurgated on his shortcomings. But he heard no sound this time, and went out into the street.

“I'll give him back the money,” he said, walking rapidly towards the Adelphi Hotel, “come what may. And if he wont take it,

I'll throw it at his head. Surely old MacMull will do something with the 'Cottage-door,' by Saturday."

There was a knot of servants on the steps of the hotel, who, contrary to all statutes of hotel discipline, known and provided, were talking noisily together. The cook, who, night-capped as he was, ought never to have been seen above stairs at all, gave his opinion confidently. The head-waiter spoke his mind, and the head-chambermaid compared notes with the porter; the "boots" was Ciceronian, and fly-drivers listened to him with admiring looks and applauding murmurs. What could have happened!

There was a strong chaise at the door — a four-wheeler — with a strong horse, held by the assistant hostler — equipages of that description did not often stop at the aristocratic Adelphi.

"Is Professor Jachimo up yet," Leslie, considerably astonished, asked of the head-waiter.

"Up," echoed that functionary, with ready

derision, "he'll be precious soon down, I think."

"He's a do," the cook remarked oracularly.

"A willin," the chambermaid threw in affirmatively.

"A regular bad un, and an out-and-out counterfeit," the porter said conclusively.

"I don't know what you all mean," exclaimed the painter, somewhat pettishly, "I merely want to know where I can find him."

"And what might you want with him, young man?" a shrill voice exclaimed, as the young lady of the ringlets and the ribbons, who attended to book-keeping by double-entry in the glass case, swept through the throng, her feelings evidently much exacerbated. "P'raps you can tell us why such carrying on should be allowed. Such a thing," she continued, with an aggrieved air to the spectators, "hasn't happened at the Adelphi; no, not since it was built."

An indignant murmur rose from the group of retainers, who appeared to feel their own

reputation compromised by the thing which had never happened before, but which had seemingly happened now. Many uncomplimentary remarks were aimed, though they fell rather wide of the mark, at Philip Leslie; and the confident cook intimated his conviction, that the painter was "one of 'em," whoever "'em," or they may have been.

But the colloquy received a sudden check; and there was a cry of "They're coming down! They're coming down!" The servants formed a lane, a very short one, for it had a turning on the chaise at the door, and down "they" came.

A very simple procession. Mr. Leather-sides, alias Nobody, on the right hand; Mr. Darby, *nom de guerre* unknown, on the left; both arm in arm with a big, bad-looking man, handcuffed, who looked neither to the right nor to the left, but straight ahead with a grim smile.

"The Professor, by Jove!" exclaimed Leslie, with a start.

"At your service, my boy," the victim of

mistaken identity or prejudice, or ignorance, or whatever else it may have been, replied coolly.

“ In Heaven’s name, how came you here? ”

“ Charge of forgery. Sovereign Lord the king. Stand clear! Aid and assist in his majesty’s name. Now, then, governor, look alive! ”

“ Governor ” was the Professor, and Mr. Leathersides was the respondent good enough to reply in his own curt phraseology to Leslie’s query. Before he could put another, the officers, with celerity astonishing, though deliberate, had seated their weighty prisoner in the vehicle, had seated themselves beside him, and the assistant hostler had given the strong horse his head.

Leslie shrugged his shoulders, and gazed bewildered at the spectacle — the prisoner in the chaise meanwhile contemplating him scrutinisingly.

“ Here, I’ve something for you, ” the Painter cried out hastily, as if he had in the confusion forgotten the original purport of his errand.

“You must have given me this last night. I won’t have it; take it.”

He took as good an aim as he could, and threw the coin as he thought on to the chaise-apron. But it missed, fell over on the other side, and so into the gutter.

“Keep it, you fool, you,” the Professor said impatiently. “Here, Leslie, I want to speak to you. Leathersides, let me speak to him for a minute — a moment.”

But Mr. Leathersides was of opinion that he had already waited long enough; and giving only a simple response of “gammon” to his prisoner’s request, whipped the strong horse, and rattled away gallantly. The Professor had only time to cry out to Leslie, “If you are coming to London, I shall be in Newgate.”

Leaving which strange card of address, Captain Jack Pollyblank, now more in difficulties than ever, resigned himself to his fate, cursed the united body of Bow Street runners all round, and moved not limb, and spoke not word, for hours.

CHAP. XXII.

SEEKING FORTUNE.

LESLIE, as may have been already inferred, had no very great liking or respect for the equivocal character who had just been borne away *en route* to her Majesty's jail of Newgate. The capture and incarceration of the Professor, or, indeed, his ultimate transportation beyond the seas for the term of his natural life, seemed sufficiently in accordance with the fitness of things; yet, as the vehicle faded away into the distance, there seemed to fade away, too, from before Philip's inward eyes, the last ray of a Hope he nourished, he knew not why, and of whose very nature he could not form a definite idea. He disliked

the man, and had repudiated his assistance; yet now he was gone, he regretted not, perhaps, that he *was* gone, but that he had ever come, to leave him so, more forlorn than ever.

“You’d better pick up that yellow boy, young man,” remarked the assistant hostler, looking very covetously at the golden coin as it lay in the kennel, as though he would have dearly liked to pick it up himself. “You don’t want the chickings to swallow it, do you?”

The first impulse of Philip Leslie, was to adhere to his original resolution, and let the guinea lie. But the resolve was short-lived. A burning blush suffused his face as he stooped, picked up the money, and, holding it quietly in his hand, walked slowly away from the hotel. But he would not have faced that group of grinning menials again for any number of guineas.

He went home to his lodging, determined, however loosely the money might have been come by, to have nothing further to do, personally, with the accursed thing, but to give it

to his landlady. Then an inward monitor — not conscience, but a monitor of a more abdominal nature — told him that he was very hungry and had had no breakfast. He would give Mrs. Craven ten shillings, he thought, then; and, for fear even this new resolve should die as soon as conceived, he set off running, and never stopped till he came to his own door.

“You don’t come in *here*, Mr. Leslie,” an acrid voice exclaimed as he neared the threshold. “You pay me my rent, or else out you go. I’ll have no more of such hoity-toity jackanapes.”

The speaker was a thin, wiry, acidulated female, with a nose “as sharp as a pen;” very scant, ropy hair, of a russet colour, ill-concealed by a cap of texture as equivocal as was its colour; and a rusty black gown that fitted tightly where it should have been loose, and loosely where it should have been tight. Mrs. Craven, in truth.

“I want my rent,” the Liverpudlian Nemesis resumed.

“I have just received a little money,” the painter hesitatingly answered; “and I can spare you, Mrs. Craven, ten shillings out of it.”

Heavens and earth, what mean things the want of money makes us do! Here was a man — young, comely, strong, talented — compelled to cringe before a low-bred shrew. He feared her as much as young Biggs, minor at Eton, fears Doctor Slashington. He would have flattered her, evaded her, if that could have availed him aught. He should have paid her the entire aggregate of shillings and sixpenses, you will say, and then there would have been no need for him to have suffered such humiliation. Virtuous sir, the poor fellow *couldn't* pay all: he was so hungry, so forlorn.

He would have increased his offer, however, I have no doubt, to fifteen, seventeen, eighteen shillings, leaving himself but the bare wherewithal to purchase a meal; had not Mrs. Craven scornfully repudiating such instalments altogether, expressing her determination to have

all her rent or none; and issuing her fiat that her recalcitrant lodger should either pay or go.

“Nine weeks you owes me,” she observed with more financial than grammatical accuracy; “and nine weeks I has here, on this blessed spot; and its shameful so to deceive a poor lone woman, and the mother of four children, one of which has been down with his spine nine years come Christmas. Money, which it is my right, I’ll have, or else out you goes like an ingy-rubber ball. *You* call yourself a Hartist, indeed.”

He attempted to reason with her, to softên her. He offered her at last the guinea in its entirety, but she repeated her intention of having all her claim, or none; and finally, in an access of passion, she rushed into the passage, slammed the door behind her, and Philip Leslie was locked out.

Perhaps, with the not unusual caprice of the sex, she repented of her precipitancy as soon as she had regained her *sanctum sanctorum*, in the back kitchen, and had smoothed—partially smoothed—her ruffled temper, by making a

violent assault upon the nearest cat and the nearest child she could find. Perhaps she regretted that she had not taken the sum on account tendered, however small, for though she held the painter's wardrobe and other effects in gage, she had weighty misgivings as to how far their intrinsic value would be useful towards defraying her debt. She waited very long for Philip to knock, but Philip did not knock, and she lost her temper again, and the cats and the children had a bad time of it.

The Painter looked vengefully at the closed door, and then at the unchanged guinea in his hand. It was his only true friend, after all. It is, it is indeed, the only one. Money! Put it in thy purse; garner it up, throttle thy brother, sell thy country, thy friends, to get it; but get it. *Rem, rem, quocunque modo, rem.* Body of Bacchus! what poor, naked, starveling, forked rogues all these ermined, velveted, broadclothed thanes and prosperous gentlemen would be but for this guinea! Strive for it; fight for it; bite and tear for it; cringe for it; beg for it; stand on your head for it — but

get it. It will wash the blackamoor white, and purify Lady Macbeth's hand. It will buy you a marble monument, with a Latin inscription by a Fellow of Trinity, accusing you of all the virtues under the sun. It will cure the leprosy. It is the only true thing under the sun. And this counsel, I know, is destruction, and he who follows it will probably end at the gallows; but how many thousands of wise men are there who hold this tenet in their hearts, if they declare it not with their voices? And who am I, that I should controvert the implied philosophy of untold ages? So stick to the guinea, my son, and be happy — if you can.

“Come,” cried the Painter, “a guinea isn't such a very strong sword to open the world's oyster with; but I'll do my best. I'll go and see if old Mac Mull will give me anything for the picture; and if he won't, I'll buy a spare shirt and a pair of socks, and walk to London.”

It was but a tiny little morsel of a cabinet picture, slightly but prettily painted, in the intervals of daubing huge flats and act-drops

with size and whitewash and double-tie bushes. Men often accused Philip Leslie of laziness, and even hinted at incapacity, because he did not paint more, and better, and larger oil pictures. How was the poor fellow to paint them, without models, frequently without sufficient colours and media? Napoleon Bonaparte, 'tis said, in an early stage of his career, could not accept an appointment in India for want of a pair of boots. Philip Leslie had been prevented from sending a picture to the last exhibition of the Liverpool Academy for want of two pennyworth of turpentine. The one was kept at home to become, in time, an Emperor and King; whether the other was reserved from being a provincial exhibitor to become a Royal Academician remains yet to be seen.

As it was, Mr. MacMull, of Church Street, would have nothing whatever to do with the "Cottage-door." He would not buy it; he saw no chance of selling it; he refused unconditionally to lend money on it. The market was overstocked, Mr. MacMull said; so with a

heavy heart, Philip took his little picture away from the unprofitable mart; and, having purchased some trifling articles for the toilette at a cheap hosier's close by, tied picture and all up in a handkerchief, slung the bundle over his shoulder on a short stick, and in broad noon-day, set out from Liverpool to walk to London, there to seek his fortune.

It was no good visiting the Fontenoy-street Theatre, even to bid adieu to the *corps dramatique*. The manager was hopelessly bankrupt; the company was in a state of chronic revolt, and many were on the verge of starvation—the only member of the histrionic body who fed well being the low comedian, who lodged at a butcher's shop, made love to the butcher's daughter, and was by her succoured with surreptitious beefsteaks, though he lived in perpetual dread (for the butcher was a stern man) of the paternal indignation, and the paternal chopper. It is, however, with marrowbones, I believe, that butchers ordinarily correct their disobedient daughters.

Two hundred and ten miles to London!—scorching summer-time, and but some loose silver in the pocket! A weary walk! Who but those who have been on the Tramp, and have gone through the dreadful valley of the shadow of dust, know the agonies of pauperised pedestrianism? The heart-weariness, that keeps pace with the foot-weariness; the awful monotony of eternal hedges, white turnpike roads, distressingly-green trees and park-gates, within whose refreshing shades the miserable tramp may not enter; of farmers in chaise carts, milestones, and straggling villages, and staring red-brick country towns, all as like one another as pea is unto pea? And, when there is no oasis of comfortable hotel and succulent repast in the Sahara Desert of toe-travel—when the purse is depleted, the shelter rude, the food scanty, or altogether wanting; and when—above all—when the goal is uncertain, and there is no anchor of hope hanging to the digits of the sign-posts, then does pedestrianism become, not a relaxation, but a level treadmill; then

does the weary pilgrim—"remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow"—long even to meet a "*lena affamata*," a gaunt lioness, or a spotted leopard, a Giant Despair, where it is to be devoured by him; long even to find a Slough of Despond by the wayside, that he, the traveller might cast himself into it and be at rest.

Two hundred and ten miles to London; and a day nearly consumed in toiling out the first ten! Dusty tramps, travel-stained tinkers, slatternly women, imbecile sheep, morose pigs, absorbed cows, phlegmatic horses, rattling stage-coaches, lumbering waggons and market-carts, semi-barbarous children, labourers too tired to talk, ale-wives clamorous for cash before resigning the cooling mug into the eager hands of the "thirsty soul," and shrilly repeating that "poor trust was dead;" gipsies sometimes abusive and sometimes simply repulsive in their whining importunities, or insidious proposals to open sibylline books in travel stained palms; farmers, and farmers' wives, too proud in the high estate of their

jogging chaise-carts to notice the walking wayfarer: these were Philip Leslie's travelling companions. And the shillings from the guinea melted away like wax before the fire; and Time seemed to have dumb-bells tied beneath his wings, so slowly did he fly from milestone to milestone.

Two hundred and ten miles to London; but the monotonous tale of daily miles had been exhausted, recommenced and exhausted again, time after time. Four days and nights (the latter passed, some in friendly hayricks, and some on hard cottage pallets) had elapsed, and nearly one hundred miles had been wiped off from the tremendous distance-score arrayed against Philip Leslie.

It was nearly the dusk of the evening, as he toiled along a high embankment by the weary wayside; the eventide, *entre chien et loup*—"between dog and wolf"—as the French peasants characterised the mysterious season of twilight. The Painter was full of thought, deep sunk in memories of days that were dead, but whose ghosts came now to haunt him.

One hundred and ten miles to London! Should he ever, he wondered, reach London at all?

He heard the rattle of wheels behind him.

He did not heed much — it was a stage coach, probably, he thought: the sound the rattle, was too rapid for a waggon. Yet it was too light for the “Liverpool Wonder,” or the Manchester “Highflyer,” too. He raised his head, which had been bent clodwards, and with a languid curiosity, looked at the vehicle, which, from the louder rattle he knew now must be immediately in his rear.

It turned out to be a yellow post-chaise, and it whirled by him at the utmost speed of the horses, scattering the evening dust, and confounding the evening birds, which flew aloft, and wheeled about the disturbing equipage in screaming tumult.

There was nothing so particularly deserving of notice in the sudden apparition of a post-chaise, burning the King’s Highway at dusk, and at full speed. It might have been a young couple running away from their parents,

or a merchant running away from his creditors, or a lawyer hunting a rich client, or a doctor hastening to a rich patient, and determined to be in at the death.

But there was this remarkable in the rattling carriage, that as it gained on Philip Leslie, reached him, passed him, and left him far behind, there came upon him with lightning rapidity, the panorama of a post-chaise window, and that at the window, leaning out, and gazing at him, as he thought, with eager interest, there was the face of Manuelita the dancer, niece of Juan Manuel Harispe, who kept the *Fonda*, and was addicted to the use of the Knife.

There could be no mistaking about the girl's face. Philip saw it plainly, distinctly, though only for a moment, with its pretty hair and large clear wistful eyes. But he was not so certain as to Manuelita's companion, and could not, for the life of him, discern who that muffled figure was that sat back in the chaise, and had on a cap with somewhat of an undress military appearance about it.

Two hundred and ten miles to London: (one century of the sum abolished) nine days' and nine nights' worth of life—sand poured from the upper into the lower cone of the hour-glass, and the journey was over, and Philip Leslie was, for the first time in his life, in Babylon the Great—in London, with one and-eight pence in his pocket, and the “Cottage-door” as a reserve, for personal property.

He had come into London by Pinner, Edgware, Kilburn, and Paddington, and was so ignorant of the *conditio vivendi* of the town, that he imagined that he could form no better first-sight acquaintance with London than by walking to London Bridge; so toiling through the town, amazed and almost stupified at its vastness, down Holborn, up Newgate Street, up Cheapside, he found himself upon that bridge of Size—the “Sighs” belong to Waterloo.

Half an hour's wandering convinced him, that though he was now face to face with the great, rampant, sweltering life of London: it was not that phase of metropolitan existence

which he desiderated. For the poor fellow, drowning in the great sea of poverty, was clutching desperately at that last straw of salvation, the "Cottage-door," and he looked anxiously up and down all the streets in the vicinity of the bridge in the endeavour to find a picture-dealer to whom he might sell his canvas-treasure, even for a few shillings.

Picture-dealers on London Bridge, among lighters, panting steamers, wharves, colliers, high chimneys, barges and hay-boats! Picture dealers in swarming Thames Street, among sugar-casks, brewers' drays, piles of dried sprats, mounds of kippered salmon and kegs of whiskey! Picture-dealers in High Street, Borough, or in Tooley Street, among hop factors and marine slop-sellers! He found, indeed, one peripatetic dealer in works of art in King William Street, who had two staring landscapes in tawdry sham-gilt frames slung over his shoulders, one in front and one behind; but he sold and did not buy pictures; and a glance at his coarsely-daubed wares gave Leslie anything but a favourable impres-

sion of the state of artistic taste in London. There was a real picture-dealer's shop, too, in the street of William the King—a street then new, and considered very palatial; into which shop, with many misgivings, the Painter entered; but the proprietor, a fat gentleman of the Jewish dissuasion, wearing a profusion of jewellery, dealt in cigars and Turkish pipes as well as pictures, and shook his head very ominously when Philip tendered the "Cottage-door" for sale. Although if what Philip had to sell had suited his market he would have bought it, as he would have bought a cashmere shawl, an ourang outang, a cargo of carbonate of soda, or the Koh-i-noor diamond.

"Vatchyeaschk;" inquired the proprietor.

Philip, managing to comprehend that the Hebrew gentleman wanted to know what he asked for his picture, hesitatingly suggested two pounds ten shillings.

"Itsh vay theep, vay theep indeed, ma tear," said the proprietor (who must have been quite fresh from Judea, so rich and mellifluous was his talmudical brogue); "itsh a peautiful

pictures—peautiful! But it ishn't in ma line, ma tear."

Philip bungled out the expression of a lame hope that he might find it in his line; but the proprietor shook his head again.

"You're from the country, eh?" he asked.

Philip was from the country.

"Now, don't ye vant some prime Havannah thigars, now?" asked the dealer, with a bland smile and an insinuating manner; "they're real cabannash—peautiful thigars—and *tho* theep!"

Philip despairingly explained that he was lost in London; that he was almost destitute; that his only chance of succour was in the sale of his picture. The dealer was like the majority of his co-religionists, a civil fellow, and willing to do any one a service—that didn't cost him anything. He didn't buy Philip Leslie's picture; but he told him he had better "try Vardour Street," where there were "lotth of dealerth," who would give him at least something for his "Cottage-door." And so, wandering afresh, and wandering, wandering,

wandering—now forgetting the topographical directions given to him by the courteous Israelite—now taking wrong turnings—now mis-directed—now gaining the right road for a moment, and then losing it again—the Painter came at last into Oxford Street—“stony hearted step-mother”—and so at last into that famous repository, of things out of date—Wardour Street.

The Rag Fair of Art, as the mouldy thoroughfare may be called, was in its glory then; and Philip was quite bewildered by the number of old curiosity shops and picture-dealers, and by the miscellaneous nature of their contents. It seemed as though all Vanity Fair had been sold up the day before yesterday, and the odds-and-ends of the auction had been transported here, *en masse*. He entered one establishment, at last, hap-hazard, attracted by the preponderance of pictures in its windows over the heterogeneous masses of furniture, armour, old china, and other *bric-à-brac* which crowded the neighbouring shops.

He was not, at the best of times, a very

pushing or importunate fellow, and he stood at least ten minutes in a remote corner of the warehouse, unnoticed, silent, and abashed, not so much by the presence of the well-to-do Wardour Street tradesman, as by that of a lady—young, beautiful, and richly dressed, who was closely examining a picture, and to whom he conjectured a carriage at the door, with footmen in handsome liveries, must belong.

Pending the condescension of the proprietor of the repository to ascertain the object of his visit, he employed himself in taking a survey of the shop itself. He was an artist, and loved art for its own sake; but the course of his love, true as it was, had hitherto run anything but smoothly. His lines had been cast in the most unpleasant places; and the mistress he adored had been of the coyest, the cruellest, and the most capricious. She had been to him even as the odalisque of some haughty Eastern pacha to a despised Feringhee: kept in strict seclusion; and the stray glimpses he had been enabled to catch

of her beauty, and the furtive touches he had been permitted to enjoy of her hand, had been through a harem-lattice, or as the lumbering araba, jealously screened with curtains, only from time to time slowly averted, had borne her to her caïque, or to the valley of Sweet Waters, or as, enveloped in *yashmak* and *shintyan*, she had perambulated the dusky avenues of the Bezesteen, or threaded the mazy avenues of Stamboul on her way to the bath. Pardon the metaphor, for it has a foundation in truth. Of all fair women, Art is the most difficult of access. How many know her only through soiled prints peered at through shop-windows, or through cracked plaster-casts exhibited among pots and kettles at second-hand stalls? Yet these pauper devotees, these modest admirers, who, like the *Fahnenwacht*, dare not name the lady of their love, but only hope their love will be requited, have as heartfelt an adoration for the enshrined beautiful, as those who sigh in golden boudoirs, and pour out their vows beneath silken canopies.

The show in the Wardour Street merchant's repository, to those accustomed to wander through the museums of kings and the galleries of peers, rich in art-treasures which money could scarcely buy, and which money would never replace, might not have proved either a very rich or a very interesting one; but to Philip Leslie, who, in his wandering life, had only met with Art by the wayside, and Art in a garbled, translated form, the picture-dealer's store seemed a galaxy of pictorial splendour, which amazed, and dazzled, and delighted him. He had never seen so many or such good pictures collected together at one time. To him the master-pieces of the departed great ones of the easel seemed to be here. He took all the pictures cheerfully for granted as genuine. Yonder portrait must be a Reynolds, yonder sea-piece a Vanderveelde; this Dutch *fête* a genuine Teniers, that smirking pastel an undoubted Greuze; the mountain-pass, to the right, bore unmistakably the touch of Salvator, the cows were all by Cuyp, the pigs by Morland, the goats by Karl du

Jardin, the birch-brooms by Mieris, the waterfalls by Wilson, the nymphs by Etty, the sombre, capuchined monks by Zurbaran, the noble Spanish cavaliers by Velasquez, the churches by Steinwyck, the dogs and wild boars by Snyders, the beggars by Murillo, the jolly Flemish burghers carousing by Jordaens, the young damsels with stiff necks by Guido, the fauns and satyrs by Poussin, the rabbis by Rembrandt, and the milk-and-water *Madonne* with their *bambine* by Rafaele. Poor Philip Leslie! He knew not the secrets of Wardour Street yet. He knew not that Art is as much a manufacture as Birmingham halfpence or Manchester madapollams. Guiltless of Art-deception himself, he suspected not that fraud might be practised by others. So the neophyte, worshipping on the threshold of the temple, in fervent devotion, dreams not that the high priest is a mountebank and a cheat—that the oracle is a sham, the worship a juggle, the haruspices tricks done by conjurers to deceive fools.

He had no eyes for anything save the pic-

tures in their massive frames, which lined the walls, or were arranged on shelves, on either side of the shop. Yet there were many more objects, had he been archæologically, instead of exclusively artistically biassed, to have attracted his attention. Old carved chests, chairs, tables, *prie-dieus*, reredos, screens, lecterns, rood-screens, and fragments of Elizabethan columns and mediæval door-panels; ancient armour, in which the rust struggled with the rich *niello* work of gold and silver; ancient weapons—halberts, habergeons, poignards, maces, arbalestes, Indian sceptres, Caraipe tomahawks, Persian tulwars, and Australian boomerangs; rapiers, arquebuses, inlaid pistols, damascened sabres and Albanian yataghans; old tapestry, old China bowls and tea-services; old looking-glasses with China frames, old porcelain monsters, and shepherds and shepherdesses; buhl clocks and cabinets; Louis Quinze "*gueridons*," couches covered with Utrecht velvet; steel mirrors, carved ivory chessmen, mosaic slabs, Bacchantes, Murrhine vases, and Nereids in bronze; old

point-lace, dogs in terra cotta, caskets in tortoiseshell and alabaster, and mother of pearl and malachite; antique brooches, and signet gems from Pompeii; enamels, intaglios, Egyptian clear bottles, ostrich plumes, warriors' shields, ladies' fans of chicken-skin, morions, gauntlets, brocade petticoats, high-heeled shoes, jewelled snuff-boxes, and chocolate cups of *pâte tendre*; illuminated missals, fald-stools, candelabra, Indian peggalls, Canton lanterns, Moorish slippers, Bohemian glass, porphyry pateræ, gilt consoles, Dutch pugs in Dresden china, Majolica and Palissy ware, clouded canes, card cases, patens, rosaries, fragments of stained glass, Saxon drinking horns, hour-glasses, "vinegar" bibles, Japanese lacquer-work, antique horologes; Cromwellian buffcoats, Highland dirks, sporans, and Cairngorms; astrolabes and miniature sun-dials; Irish bog-oak ornaments, fillagree baskets, embroidered purses, Persian miniatures, Chinese concentric balls, New Zealand canoe-heads, Cingalese pearl and shell-work, and diminutive deities in painted and gilded clay.

When I say he had no eyes for these, I am right. He let them pass as mere upholstery; but were I to say that he had no eyes for *anything* save the pictures, I am to a certain extent in error. He *had* eyes for one other object—the beautiful young lady who was talking to the dealer—though, even for that matter, *it* might have been said that she was a picture too, and I should be right again.

“You ask a great deal too much for this landscape, Mr. Undervamp,” she said, with a pretty toss of her head. “Five guineas would be quite sufficient for such a mere sketch.”

The merchant was glibly pouring out mingled excuses and protestations that the picture had cost him all the money—within a few shillings—which he demanded for it; that he really did not know whether he should not be a loser by the bargain, that the work was exceedingly cheap, etcetera, etcetera; but his fair customer, not heeding his verbiage, it seemed, much, swept past him to the window, and holding the picture to the light, declared

that five guineas were a great deal too much for it; and that it was not worth more than three, at the utmost. Beautiful as she was, the lady was evidently expert at making a bargain.

As for the bargainer, if I am to continue the quotation of art prices, she was worth any number of thousand golden guineas, at the very least. So, at all events, thought Philip Leslie.

CHAP. XXIII.

HOPE IN THE NIGHT.

LET him stand forth who declares that beauty unadorned is adorned the most. Let him declare it, and I will answer him, and tell him that he is a ninny. I grant the "Venus" of Milo, the "Venuses" of Correggio and Titian. I grant the statue that stands in the Pitti Palace in Florence, and so standing "enchants the world." But the beauty of these fair ones is ideal; and ideality clothes them as with a rich garment. The beauty of flesh and blood and civilised life cannot be so idealised; it would be *contra bonos mores* were it to be so. Not only must

it have a *toilette*, but it must be of the very best—the richest in material that the looms of Spitalfields, or Lyons, or Broussa, can send out, the most tasteful in fashion that Mesdames Vouillon and Laure (are they Court *modistes* yet, I wonder?) can devise. Amína in her simple skirt or bodice, or simpler robe of white, is all very well; but when, on her marriage with Elvino, the Count Rudolfo, in order to make bygones thoroughly bygones, comes down with that generous dowry, I will wager my dukedom to the good will of a street-crossing, that the bride will appear in a costume that shall astonish all the lads and lasses of the village (or gentlemen and ladies of the opera chorus), in its mirobolant variations, and make Lisa ready to cry her eyes out with envy. I have a tenderness for my Norah Creina dear—my gentle, bashful Norah Creina, and for sweet Jenny Wren, who, previous to her marriage with Cockrobin (in the nursery ballad), promised that red-waist-coated swain that she should “wear her brown gown and never dress too fine;” but I

infinitely prefer Lesbia, the superb—Lesbia. who has not only a beaming eye, but a robe of silk, and who knows how to flash the one, and rustle the other.

The young lady who had thought five guineas two large a sum for Mr. Under-vamp's pictorial merchandise, did not appear to have passed more than eighteen years in this sublunary sphere. In some remote planet, she must, Philip thought, have lived some thousand years rather as an angel, a houri, a sylph, before she had charitably visited the dull earth to rain a sunshine of beauty on it. She was very fair. Philip saw that, with a pang that he felt with pleasure, and yet, lying to himself, called pain. What business was it of his whether she was dark or fair? and why should he, a fair man, have been better or worse pleased if she had been a dark woman? She had such an abundance of golden hair that any attempt to band it, braid it, curl it, twist it, force it violently off the temples in the manner called in my youthful days "scrag

fashion," invented by the Chinese, and to be naturalised in Europe by the pretty Empress Eugenie, would, she seemed to acknowledge, have been quite useless; so she let the hair have its own rebellious way, and it wandered at will beneath her bonnet, and formed a golden nimbus round her face. Then she had a brow, not of marble by any means—marble is corpse-like; not alabaster—alabaster is waxy; not ivory—ivory is milk-and-watery; but a brow of flesh and blood, the most beautiful a woman could have—high, broad, snow white, but *voilé* with the most delicate tint of rose, just as is a ball dress of pure white, with an almost imperceptible "slip" of pink gauze beneath. Her forehead was a beautiful mountain; and at the delicate declivities of her temples tiny blue veins mapped themselves out modestly, like nascent rivers, growing as they descended into the happy valleys beneath. Her eyes were not blue—deep, ultramarine blue, as Philip had hoped, and the discovery of his error caused him to be angered for a moment—but very large, dark,

earnest, *gray* orbs, with lashes that drooped like the fringes of a baldaquin over a catafalque—mournful eyes, that made you sigh—dreamy eyes, that made you wonder—stern eyes, sometimes, that made you tremble. What care I if the rosy blush on her cheek were due to rouge, if the arches of her eyebrows had been cunningly pencilled, if the rubies of her lips had received the last lapidary's polish from the hands of a subtle abigail? I was not—Philip had not been—at her dressing-table to see; and what the eye had not seen, the heart had no need to grieve at. Her eyes were not painted (I have heard that the Eastern ladies can and do paint them); her hair, her teeth, her dimpled chin; her tiny ears, with their small lobes quivering almost to pain beneath the weight of the massive ear-rings, but resigned to their fate, as if knowing that in order to be beautiful we must suffer; her slender neck, rising and falling beneath the yoke of a jewelled collerette (for necklaces had not quite gone out of fashion two-and-twenty years ago)—

surely these things were not due to art. She could scarcely have put her hands into lemon-squeezers to make them small, or called in a Chinese pedicure to diminish her feet—her feet, pshaw! the little Cinderella's shoes would have been a world too wide for them. What care I—what cared Philip—if she were tight-laced? if her handkerchief were redolent with one perfume, her robe with another, her mantle with a third? These things must be, Pyrrha must not bind her golden hair with penny-twine, but a riband of Tyrian dye; the *gracilis puer* must not be scented with Cavendish, but with Frangipani and Wood-violet. To my mind, your satirists and humourists—*carne-fices* of dandyism, whipsters of the follies of the age—make too much, and a monstrous pother about the little tricks and whims that Beauty delights to enhance her charms withal. We want the Effect, and the effect is there—grand, glorious, transcendant, and refulgent; and what does it matter to us how the effect has been produced, and how much pretty chicanery and coquettish fraud

there may be in it? We are not all going to marry Beauty; and he who does is either a philosopher or a fool, and in either case will do well to hold his tongue about the mysteries of Beauty's toilet-table. "The Shepherd in Virgil grew acquainted with love, and found him a native of the rocks, &c., &c." If you happen to contract a matrimonial alliance with the Honourable Miss de Grey Malkyn, and she turns out to be a CAT, *pur sang*, ere the honeymoon be four-and-twenty hours old, buy her the best of Houbigant's mauve kid gloves, and the most expensive of point-lace lappets to hide her claws and her whiskers withal. If she mews, maintain it is a cabaletto from the "Traviata;" if she swears, insist that the caterwauling is in the exact manner of Mademoiselle Piccolomini. At home, *you may keep her to her mousing*, and shoe her with walnut shells if you like.

As to the lady's dress — but, shade of Diana! what have I to do with, and how can I describe a lady's dress? As well could I give a description of the mountains in the

moon. To me it is always the same admirable extravaganza—to be wondered at but not comprehended—this *toilette*, this salmagundi of rags, tags, bobbins, odds, ends, skirts, flounces, flying buttresses of lace, towers, campaniles, ogee ornaments, glittering baubles, and chain suspension-bridges of precious metals. I look at it as I do upon one of Mr. William Beverley's culminating tableaux in a burlesque. I don't know why the young ladies of the ballet should rise from the capitals of columns, and form living friezes to fairy palaces. I have not the slightest notion why the red, blue, and green fires should wind up the proceedings in a culmination of preternatural splendour; but I am delighted with the whole of the gorgeous spectacle, and shout as loudly as any one, when Mr. Beverley is called for and walks across the stage, and after him Mr. Roxby, and after him Mr. E. T. Smith. So it is with a lady's dress. What it is all about, I don't know. How it is put on, and how it comes off, are to me mysteries; but

I admire and adore it as the shrine of my Beloved, and I bow down before it as I would have done to Phryne, to Diane de Poitiers, to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, before she took to painting and left off washing, to Molly Lepell and the beautiful Gunnings, to Victoria Colonna or Louise de la Vallière, to the Duchess of Devonshire, and as I bow down now before the adored one of my heart who lives in Hyde Park Gardens, and does'nt even know of my existence. I am not quite sure that I am aware of hers, like the misanthrope who said he thought that he had one friend in the world, *and when he could remember his name he would write to him.* However, Hyde Park is a better address than Hackney.

The upshot of all this was, that Philip Leslie had been staring at the lady of the picture for as long a period as she continued examining narrowly—for ladies do not stare—that work of art. It so fell out that the young lady, of course by chance, raised her eyes at the very moment that Philip had his orbs of

most earnestly fixed upon her. The painter blushed bright crimson, and for the moment would have bartered all his future chances of fame and fortune, whatever they may have been, and visionary as they were, for the temporary loan of one of Mr. Undervamp's cross-barred morions wherein to hide his abashed head. The lady did not change colour in the slightest degree: how should she—rich, beautiful, and superb—at the gaze of this man forlorn, and all but tattered and torn? She simply, with the rapid motion of one tiny hand, brought a flimsy screen over her face, a mere pretext for a veil, on whose cobwebby reticulations silver sprigs sparkled; and gently subsiding, with an ethereal rustle of drapery, into a great, carved, antique fauteuil, shrouded herself from the painter's gaze, half among some antique tapestry, half in the increasing twilight, which began to make the strange old furniture of the shop cast dark and mysterious shadows. But, even through the obscurity, Philip Leslie felt, if he could not see, those earnest gray eyes fixed upon him

with a mournful sternness; and though he had done nothing worse than stare at a pretty woman, he trembled as though he had done a guilty thing.

It occurred to Mr. Undervamp too, at precisely the same moment, to turn his eyes towards the stranger. Mr. Undervamp had no beauty with which to entrance, no gray eyes (he had but one, indeed, and that of a gooseberry hue, in all) with which to awe; but he had a loud harsh voice to ask the stranger what he wanted, and he made good use of it, by asking him accordingly.

The "Cottage-door" was for sale; would Mr. Undervamp buy it? He would sell it very cheap. It was the same mournful litany over again, with this addition, that every word that Philip said seemed wrung out of him by the most exquisite tortures of the Inquisition, and that he mentally combated a burning desire to break the "Cottage-door" over Mr. Undervamp's head, snatch one embrace from the veiled lady, and then either make away with himself with one of the damascened poniards, or give himself up at once to the police.

Mr. Undervamp's *idée fixe* would probably, had his inmost thoughts been analysed, have been to kick Philip Leslie out of the shop. His spoken answer left very little indeed to be desired on the score of plainness; he simply said, "No; don't want it," and glancing disdainfully at the painter's worn and travel-stained attire, extended his hand towards the door.

Philip Leslie bit his lip nearly till it bled, took back his picture, and moved towards the gestured portal. The background of hope's anchor-foundry faded away, and in its stead there came a set-scene of a river under a bridge—a river that mirrored the gas-lamps on the parapet above, and in whose water something heavy, falling through the darkness, splashed.

Somebody had been walking by Philip's side all through that dreadful two hundred and ten-miles pilgrimage—somebody who carried a stake through his body in lieu of a walking-stick—somebody who had an unaccountable propensity for loitering at the con-

fluence of cross roads; who ever and anon whispered to the wanderer: "You are one too many; you are indeed. It's all over in a moment. Most respectable people have done it before. Consider the late Cato, the eminent Lucius Junius Brutus, the immortal Castle-reagh. Have a dip in the lucky-bag. Don't go to London. Come with me to Necropolis. It's close by. It isn't very painful. Why starve? Why live?"

"Stay: show me the young man's picture, Mr. Undervamp."

The speaker was the lady in the veil. She took the young man's picture from the dealer without any sign of acknowledgment, rose from her chair, walked again to the window, and examined it more narrowly than she had done the dealer's goods. Philip could have fallen down and worshipped her. He could have told her, in impassioned accents, that he would slave for her night and days and for years; but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and he stood stock-still, and said nothing. He was better dumb. It would have

been an unwarrantable breach of etiquette to have so given vent to the thoughts in his heart.

“ Let him call to-morrow at one; meanwhile I will take away this picture, and look at it by a stronger light. You can let him have some money if he wants it: he looks as if he did.”

She handed a card to the dealer, who, bowing low, received it. She was not looking at Philip now. In that clear, ringing, silvery voice of hers, her words sounded so disdainfully contemptuous that the blood rushed to the painter's heart, back again and again, and he drew himself forward, extending his trembling hands.

“ Madam, I will take the picture myself; I am not accustomed—”

“ You had better,” the calm, ringing voice interposed; and Philip knew that the eyes were fixed on him again.

He slunk back like a beaten hound; and, with her brave drapery all rustling, she swept out, beautiful, haughty, scornful, and with

his picture in her hand, to her carriage. Mr. Undervamp had bowed her out; the powdered menial had bowed her in; the steps had been put up, and the carriage had rattled away, and still Philip Leslie stood with his hands extended.

“ Well, young man,” Mr. Undervamp said at last, giving him a sharp pat on the arm, to awaken him from his reverie, “ you’ve done it at last, and no mistake.”

“ Done what?” asked Philip.

“ Why, got an out-and-out good customer, to be sure. She paints like an angel, and buys pictures of me like a born lady, as she is. Mad after pictures, I think,” he added *sotto voce*. “ There’s the card, and mind you’re there at one o’clock, sharp; for if you’re five minutes too early, or five minutes too late, you’ll just get shown to the door for your pains.”

Leslie took the card, almost mechanically, and read its inscription.

“ VISCOUNTESS BADDINGTON,
14, Curzon Street, May Fair.”

“Is—is she married?” faltered the painter.

“Married! ay, to be sure she is, and a precious old sinner that”—He checked himself suddenly, and continued, “But this isn’t business: mind you’re there at the time, that’s all. And now, as I’m going to shut up, I’ll say good evening, and wish you luck; I dare say she’ll stand a fiver for the picture.”

Philip hesitated, though sorely against his will.

“I—I—I thought,” he said, “that the lady left word that I might have some money, if, as she very considerately remarked, I wanted it, and I do want it terribly.”

“Oh, ah, yes,” Mr. Undervamp acquiesced with anything but a financial readiness of speech. “I believe she did mention something of the sort. Perhaps you’ll look in to-morrow, eh? We’re shutting up, you see. Money’s so scarce.”

Mr. Undervamp left to the imagination of his hearer to realise the somewhat vague connection between the scarcity of money and

the bolting and barring of his strong iron shutters.

“It’s so scarce,” Philip retorted impatiently, “that I think I had better look in to-night; or else I shall be obliged to look in at a baker’s shop-window and take a loaf from it.”

Mr. Undervamp looked at the Viscountess Baddington’s *protégé* with a grimly-irresolute air. He evidently did not dare to disobey the instructions of his aristocratic customer; but he as evidently disliked parting with any ready money to this unknown and dilapidated petitioner. He screwed up his face, however, at last, with the expression of one who is compelled to do a thing much against the grain, and said:

“I suppose a crown will do?”

“Anything will do,” muttered Philip.

“Well, then,” the picture dealer continued, “you may as well just give me a bit of an I O U for it, and—” he seemed loth to part even with these miserable five shillings, and hailed the prospect of the delay that would

accrue while the I O U was made out as a blessed respite. But just as Philip was about to signify his willingness to give the requisite, or, in fact, any acknowledgment, the door opened, and there appeared on the threshold a flunkey.

“ Tall, calm, majestic, haughty—one of the caryatides to the Temple of Fashion—one who had served so long, and with such dignity, that extremes met, and servitude might almost be mistaken for command. He was powdered and middle-aged. He was the Lord Viscount Baddington’s footman; but he had served in many noble families previous to his appointment, and his name was John Peter Plushley.

“ M’ lady ses you’re to give the young min two suffrins, Mr. Undervamp.”

He spoke, and there was silence. He passed out of the shop, and left behind him the odour of hair-powder and the sanctity of plush.

Grumbling to himself, Mr. Undervamp replaced his crown-piece in his pocket, and going to a drawer, unlocked it, and produced the required coins. Philip wrote a hasty ac-

knowledgment, and with a lighter heart than he had borne in his breast for many a day, bade the dealer good night, and stepped briskly from the shop. He did not ask him his way, for two sovereigns are a pioneer all over London. Hope gleamed again before him, and the panorama of the gas-lighted bridge, and the cold black river, and the Somebody with the stake who had been his travelling companion from Liverpool, passed away from before him like the memory of a dream, though like, oftentimes, the dream, it was but a few minutes old. But dreams, for all their incoherence, die not, and are registered, and have their meanings and their recurrences.

“ I thought,” soliloquised Mr. Undervamp, standing on his door-step, with his hands in pockets, and snuffing up the evening fragrance of Wardour-street, “ that I had one of the rummest customers in London in my lady Viscountess there: but I think I shall have a rummer one in this dusty young sign-painter. It wasn't a bad bit of colour, though. Wish I'd bought it. My lady would have given me a tenner for it.”

He strolled into his shop, and, watching his shop-boy put up the shutters, soliloquised again, and, as he did so, softly whistled.

“ To think of that old Trojan, Baddington, who’s been a customer of mine and of father before me this forty years, going and bringing home a bit of a gal from—where’s the place?—Wisbaden, Baden-Baden—something of that sort—as Lady Baddington. British chaplain at Baden—ha! humph! I wonder what his dear niece, Mrs. Falcon, and the family, think of it I wonder what that tearing soldier-officer, Captain Falcon, thinks of it, even if he’s heard of it yet. He owes me two pound for a pistol; so does his grand-aunt-in-law. for cash advanced. Curious, isn’t it? I must be early at Christie’s to-morrow.”

He seemed to apostrophise a rusty man-in-armor as he spoke; but there was no speculation in the warrior’s orbless eyes, and Mr. Undervamp whistled again, and went to his supper; and afterwards to a select club to which he belonged, the “ Holbein’s Head,” in Berwick-street, where he “ swopped ” or bar-

tered a Gerard Douw (warranted) to little Mr. Simmons, of Hanway-yard, for a Claude (unframed), a skeleton clock, and a piping bullfinch. There was a run upon Gerard Douws and Claudes just then; and the picture forgers could not manufacture them fast enough; so both Undervamp and Simmons thought that they had made, each, an excellent bargain.

CHAP. XXIV.

PHILIP LESLIE SEES THE BEST SOCIETY.

WITH two sovereigns, the Viscountess Baddington's card in his pocket, and a light heart in his bosom, Philip Leslie strode away from Mr. Undervamp's Wardour-street Art-repository, building, as he went, castles in the air sufficient to relieve London from the stigma of architectural sterility for years. Money, it has been said, will heal all diseases. I have heard of a gentleman, who, on the receipt of a ten-pound note from his god-mamma, incontinently recovered from a severe attack of rheumatic gout. It is certain that it is a sovereign remedy for heart-sickness,

soul-weariness, faintness of heart, paralysis of will, and nausea of mind.

Our painter was new to London, and found himself cast, a mere cock-boat, upon that mighty ocean, for ever boiling and surging, and, in its insatiable encroachments, submerging islands and continents of suburbs, washing them away with brick and mortar surf, and whorls of waves that roll and moan the whole night-season through. Philip, to use a very common simile, was as tired as a dog; yet he was to the full as lively as the most weary-footed canine traveller, who, in the waste of wandering, has suddenly come on a *fontaine de Jouvence*, with broken meat laid out on its marble brim. To pursue the canine metaphorette, the effect of the two sovereigns, so ungraciously and scornfully bestowed on him by the lady of the veil, had not been unlike that experienced by a dog who has been pelted with marrow-bones: the bones hurt him, but the marrow fed him.

He walked about four good hours in that city which might be paved with gold, but

which is assuredly roofed with slabs as hard as the nether millstone. He grew more fatigued at every step; but he did not entertain the idea of going to bed — first, because he had a lordly uncertainty as to where he should sleep (having money); secondly, because the scene was so new and strange to him, that he could not resist walking up and down, and going to and fro, in the marvellous streets he encountered, always finding out something new, something astonishing, something prodigious. There are some men whom nothing astonishes, and who, were their grandmother's ghost to rise before them, would confine themselves to a yawning expostulation with the phantom on the impropriety of appearing in a bed-gown; and would finally ring the bell for the housemaid, and bid her show the late Mrs. S. the door. But Philip Leslie had a reverent and an inquiring spirit. The qualities are compatible. He was always asking questions; but he could be astonished to awe at the reply.

So he went up and down, and before mid-

night struck, he had seen Hyde Park Corner and Temple Bar. He had passed great club-houses with windows lighted up, in whose embrasures bald-headed old gentlemen dozed over the evening paper, and through whose plate-glass panes he could see the sumptuous coffee-room dinners laid out, and white waist-coated diners sipping their wine with a relish which might have been enhanced by the consciousness, that their club subscription enabled them to imbibe the best of Port and Burgundy at trade-price; past grand mansions, where there were balls and routs — for routs had not quite gone out of fashion then — where the thoroughfare was blocked up with carriages, where policemen shouted, and coachmen swore, and link-boys darted about almost as nimbly as the pickpockets; past theatres, whose aristocratic audience came mincingly out to their carriages in pink capotes and crush hats — whose humbler patrons rushed feverishly out (for the night was very hot) and dived into oyster-shops, and threw themselves into the consumption of cool beverages

with a thirsty frenzy. He straggled down Regent Street, almost blinded with the gas, dazzled and delighted with the shops overflowing with rich merchandise, jostled and hustled by the crowd of bearded foreigners, and shopmen, and milliners' apprentices, just released from the thralldom of the shop, all delighted at having nothing to do, and doing it to their hearts' content. He paced those two grand streets, Pall Mall and Waterloo Place, whose architectural splendours we somewhat too superciliously sneer at, but which, to my mind, need but a water, instead of a macadamised highway throughout their length, to rival Venice's Grand Sea-streets, and wake the genius of a new Canaletto.

He passed an ugly stone post, with an uglier bronze figure tottering on its summit, and descended a giant staircase into the Park. Among the green leaves and the glimmering gas-lamps he walked a good half-hour, glad as a relief to feel his footsteps fall so noiselessly, and enjoying a temporary rest from the roaring of the carriage-wheel waves. Curiously,

too, he peered by times at mysterious figures, clad—the light was strong enough to see that—in dank and greasy rags, who were huddled up on the wooden benches, seemingly asleep. The intuitive perception of poverty taught Philip who these living bundles were. They were destitute, and had no beds. He had changed one of his sovereigns, of course, by this time, and had dined plainly, but plentifully, at a great flaring eating-house in Oxford Street, where a flabby waiter, who seemed—so hot and meaty was he—to transpire pork gravy, had babbled out to him a wondrously incoherent rhapsody about “Veal-an-am-stewed-duck-roast-aunch-lamb’s-fry-salmon-very-nice sir,” and had slapped down before him a repast served in pewter, which, in flavour, appeared to partake of all the viands he had mentioned.

Philip flung a shilling to one of these forlorn wretches, who received it with a dull grunt, as though he had a settled hatred against society, which could not be appeased by such trifling alms; and appeared to think,

moreover, that once without a bed, always without a bed, so hiding the coin in some crevice of his rags, he huddled himself up, hedgehog fashion, and went to sleep again. Yet by some mysterious shibboleth of freemasonry, the secret of the donor's liberality seemed to have been instantaneously telegraphed all over the Park; for battalions of beggars began to debouch from leafy coverts, ragged regiments deployed from before the Horse Guards; from the very ground, even, there seemed to start up breadless and bedless vagabonds — men in rags, children in rags, babies in tatters, octogenarians with no shoes, and their piteous jerkins slashed with ellipses of bare flesh—and they whined and groaned, and anon fled swiftly, as a stalwart form in the distance seemed to presage an approaching policeman. And worse than all these, came floating dismally on the night air—even as the shadowy form of Francesca of Rimini came floating before the sorrowful sight of Dante — dreadful phantoms who should have been women, and young and fair; phantoms

with calico bed-gowns and velvet mantles, with rich silk dresses and shawls of tattered linsey-wolsey, with bonnets all flying and fluttering with tarnished ribbons and broken feathers, ghastly and garish, so that they looked like death's-heads bedizened in pink and blue sarsnet. All these strange and dismal things, regarding with a mournful surprise, the painter fled the Park; and losing his way in the mazes of Westminster, battled for another half-hour in a dreadful labyrinth of choked streets—narrow, crowded, evil-smelling: Great Peter Streets, Rochester Rows, Broadways, Tothill Streets, Blue Anchor Yards, Palmer's Villages, and streets without names, and alleys with no outlets, in the midst of a raging, roaring saturnalia of oaths, hot eel-pies, alcohol, cheap butchers' meat, costermongers' barrows, fried fish, red neckerchiefs, bare necks, bad sixpences, false weights, black eyes, naked feet, torn trousers, monstrous cabbages, rag-shops, comic songs, farthing rushlights, bundles of firewood, the overplus of a four days' old "take" of mackerel, sweetstuff, adul-

terated beer, stale celery, corduroy jackets, vice, ignorance, crime, and want. For in this guise looked Westminster twenty-two years since; and in that guise it stands now, in the shadow of the great Abbey, and in the rent-roll of the Dean and Chapter, to bear witness against me if I exaggerate.

We Londoners born, who have seen all these things unnumbered times, and come to look at them at last with a stale and accustomed air, cannot help the blunting of our perception of these marvellous contrasts. We see them every day, and they surprise us no longer. But he who is new to this gorgeous Gehenna of a city, shall hardly fail to come away marvelling and pondering, grieving and rejoicing, from the first contemplation of the night-wonders of London.

The Abbey encompassed the painter round about for many minutes, till he could extricate himself from the filthy toils in which he had become entangled. He saw the two great towers, ever close at hand, so it seemed, yet every effort he essayed to make for them only

threw him further back into the howling wilderness. He asked a policeman at last where he was.

“You’re in Westminster,” answered the functionary; “and if you’ll take my advice, you’ll get out of it as soon as ever you can.”

Several gratuitous hustlings which Philip had already received from ill-looking passers-by, evidently volunteered for the purpose of provoking a collision, made him much disposed to agree with the conclusions of the guardian of the Westminster householders’ lives and properties. So, at a venture, he asked his way to Charing-Cross, which he had read of as being centrally situated, and where he thought it probable he might obtain a bed. Probable, indeed! had he not near forty shillings about him? The Tavistock would have been proud to receive him, and had he been able to have raised a carpet-bag and the loan of a clothes-brush, there is no saying what aristocratic hotel would not have taken him in.

“First turning to the right, second to the

left, then go straight on——,” the policeman was commencing.

“It’s no good,” Philip interposed. “You might as well talk Hindostanee to me as tell me my way. Will you show it me?”

The policeman happened to be a good-humoured municipal into whose soul the callousness of long night duty on dangerous beats had not yet entered, and was, moreover, in a peculiarly amiable temper that evening, having given evidence in the morning, at the Old Bailey, against a resurrection-man, who, owing to the decline of *that* drama, had turned coiner, and whose exile to Van Diemen’s Land he had been instrumental in promoting. Z. 92 saw the striped bracelet of a sergeantcy in perspective. So he not only conducted Philip safely out of the Dædalian penetralia of Westminster, but did not leave him till he had set him fairly on his way up Whitehall—indicating with his forefinger Charing Cross, “which he might know by the large ’ouse with the lion a top a waggin’ of his tail,” (a humorous policeman this)—and directed him

to a coffee-house, where he could have a bed for a couple of shillings. "The sheets is well aired," he remarked to Philip, as a crowning witticism, "and the chambermaid's very pretty. She squints; but she's civil, and knows her cattyism like cream-cheese." So saying, he spun the shilling which Philip respectfully tendered him up in the air, in the manner of tossing piemen; and nodding affably to the painter, hummed the refrain of a popular air then in vogue, "All Round my Hat," and went on his merry way—a very Rabelais of the Z division, jocund in his blue broadcloth, and humorous in his oilskin and his heavily-soled highlows. And how easy it is to make the ways of life pleasant!

Philip was far too tired, on his arrival at the haven of rest pointed out by the policeman, to notice the personal appearance of the chambermaid, particularly from the visual point of view, or to satisfy himself, by examination, as to her theological attainments. He went to bed, slept with a dead soundness, was called at ten o'clock in the morning, and rose

up with a clear head, hopeful, and almost happy.

Punctuality in keeping appointments was not one of Philip Leslie's virtues; but when he did keep one, he was often an hour before his time, and rarely surprised the person he had to meet by the exact coincidence of his appearance with the time specified. In truth, he had an amazing stock of new brooms in his moral store cup-board; but they soon were worn down to the stump, or else the confining band of withies got loose, and the twigs went away anywhere. On the present occasion, mindful of Mr. Undervamp's caution of the previous night, he provided himself with a broom, the newest and strongest at his command, sternly determined to sweep the slightest speck of dust from off the pavement of his good intention. He began by investing nearly all his surplus capital in improving the condition of his costume, and by the kindly assistance of a bath and a barber, and the adventitious aid of a Jew tailor, who had so far forgotten the wrongs of his nation, and his

traditional hatred of the Nazarenes, as to offer to all the world his gigantic stock of summer garments at ridiculously low prices, he found himself, within half-an-hour, looking somewhat more like an artist, though still sufficiently poverty-stricken in appearance, and somewhat less like a dusty scarecrow. Young as he was to the ways of London, it is surprising that he should have been able to effect even this metamorphosis with so moderate an outlay. Had he been better acquainted with the inner mysteries of the Great City, he might have changed the semblance of his outer man at even a more reasonable figure. For, look you, he who knows London may issue forth from the Patmos where he hath lain overnight—issue forth, ashamed of the morning and its bright light, haggard, dirty, ragged, beaten, bruised, and seemingly hopelessly creased and tumbled; but, within an hour's time, and at the cost of a few shillings, he may walk down Regent Street a dandy. For there are cunning men, dwelling up occult courts and dubious "buildings" and equivocal

“rents,” who will mend the wayfarer’s torn habiliments, give a new gloss to his soiled broadcloth, paint his black eye with “Solomon’s seal” or yellow orpiment, give the lustre of a Venetian mirror to his bankrupt boots, simulate false heels for them, and anoint their leather wounds with sable cobblers’ wax, supply him with snowy fronts and false collars, stiff as mill-boards, iron out and build up afresh his compound-fractured hat, wash him, shave him, curl him, oil him, perfume him, send him out as from the nattiest of bandboxes, and all within the compass of a crown’s expenditure.

There were divers temptations in the way when Philip’s toilet was completed—temptations in the shape of print shops and picture dealers, which might, under other circumstances, have confined his peregrinations within half a mile of Charing Cross for hours; but he kept Mr. Undervamp’s caution steadily in his mind; and one had not long struck before he found himself (after much direction, misdirection, and re-direction) in Curzon Street, Mayfair.

Satisfying himself that he had the best of the venerable sandboy (the only sandboy, by the way, who is not jolly)—he walked slowly up and down some dozen times, that odd little thread of almost underground stone-paved passage, which runs from Curzon Street to Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, between the high brick garden walls of two lordly mansions. And there, another refuge from the wheel-waves—there, where there was a sweet country sound of leaves rustling and rooks cawing, and where the distantly-musical butcher or baker's boy might have been heard whistling o'er the lea, he fell to building castles, and musing and musing again.

Why was she Viscountess Baddington? Why was she married? Why was she always to be married to somebody—engaged to somebody else? Why was he always to be falling in love with the wrong person? Falling in love—rather, tumbling into! jumping into love, burglariously forcing his way into love! for a Viscountess, and a married Viscountess, must be as a fountain sealed, and as a gate walled up, and as a temple barred with steel and with adamant.

Some men have a faculty for falling in love with the wrong woman. I have. Why did I fall in love with the young person aged forty, marked with the smallpox, and with the stoop in the shoulders, when the grocer's daughter would have had me?—(she told me so afterwards, when she herself was wrong. I quarrelled with her because she insisted on pronouncing February "Febuary." I was a fool.) The young person aged forty died, and the grocer's daughter married the shopman, and they live at Clapham Rise, and have land and beeves, or at least money in the three per cents., which is as good, if not better than beeves. Why did I——

Why did Philip Leslie saunter up and down the stone-paved passage, while the leaves rustled and the rooks cawed, building those absurd air-castles of his, till a neighbouring church-clock struck the *quarter* after the hour; but not a quarter after twelve, no, misery of man! a quarter past *one*.

He fled the passage as though he had just slain a kinsman or a dear friend, or shot a

robin-redbreast, or wrung the neck of an albatross, or committed some dark and dreadful deed of the kind. Late again; always too late.

A dozen times, as he made a half-running half-limping progress towards the awful "14" in Curzon Street, he resolved to abandon the "Cottage-door," and his patroness, for good and all. He would run away again—but whither? He would enlist for a soldier—he wasn't athletic enough; he would enter as a sailor on board a man of war—who would have him, a lubberly landsman, even for a loblolly boy? No; he would risk the ire of that scornful patroness, be the consequences what they might.

Number 14 was a narrow slip of a mansion;—they have re-numbered the houses since, and the Curzon Street of the day knows not its former numerals—a mansion just large enough for an old lord, who had a young wife, and who was without any very reasonable expectation of a small family, to dwell in. There was a handsome carriage at the door,

the same that—oh woe! woe!—Philip had seen the night before in Wardour Street. The heart of the painter sank within him, as he saw the tall horses, the tall flunkeys, and the rosy coachman.

The door was closed. There was a knocker in its midst, so grimly leonine in its cast-iron expression, so relentless — so the wretched painter fancied — towards those who were unpunctual in keeping their appointments, that he dared not, for the life of him, have raised that knocker, even to inflict a single rap on the boss on the panel. There were two evilly-disposed looking bells, too, one on either side of the door: one labelled “Visitors,” the other “Servants.” Pride and fear had a hard tussle of it in Philip’s perturbed mind, as to which tintinabulum was to be sounded. Pride said “Visitors” — he was an artist, and a gentleman. A gentleman, God help him! Fear said “Servants” — he was an artist; but such a wretchedly poor one; and then, was he not twenty minutes behind his time?

Pride had the best of it at last, and he pulled

the "visitors'" bell — softly, as he thought, but it rang out with such a sonorous re-echoing, that he felt half-disposed again to run for it.

"What might *you* want?" asked the same majestic flunkey whom he had seen in Wardour Street, as, opening the door, he held it half a-jar, as though afraid that the bell-ringer were some wild animal whom it would have been dangerous to admit. The footman had seen him before; but it was between the lights, almost at dark, and who can expect these ethereal beings to have common mundane memories?

"This card," the painter said, shortly, handing the lacquey the Viscountess of Baddington's talismanic pasteboard.

The footman glanced at the card, and relaxed the vigour of his defence of the aristocratic fortress, so far as to admit Philip within the door. Then, when he had him on an island of door-mat in an ocean of vestibule, chequered in black and white marble, he condescended to cross-question him again.

“Any name?”

“Mr. Leslie,” the painter answered. “I was to call at one o’clock, by appointment, on Lady Baddington, but I unfortunately overstayed the time by one quarter of an hour.”

“*Mr.* Leslie,” the footman repeated, moving towards the staircase. He seemed sublimely heedless of the last part of the painter’s communication, but emphasised the “Mister,” as though he thought it rather a liberty than otherwise for a man with such a shabby look about him to give himself a handle to his name, and ring the visitors’ bell.

Did your blood never boil, dear reader, at the insolence of a footman. Or, perhaps, you have been happy enough to avoid contact throughout your life with that plush-legged, plush-souled class. There is a philosopher I have heard of—a captain, who goes about London and attends all levees and drawing-rooms, balls and soirées (the exterior thereof, I mean) with a penny cane, for the express purpose of thrashing the footmen’s calves, when he can catch them perched on the foot-

board behind the carriage. He does so, he says, in the discharge of a high moral duty.

He castigates those liveried varlets, not as men, but as footmen. I revere that martial philosopher's code, and only wish that my terror of the law of assault did not hinder me from following his example.

The footman came down after the lapse of a few minutes, and saying archly, "You're to wait!" exchanged a wink of portentous significance with an obese porter, who was dozing like a hippopotamus in gold lace in a huge black leathern arbour studded with gilt nails. He so far derogated from the icy haughtiness of his manner as to point out to the "visitor" a very hard, polished hall-chair, with the Baddington arms emblazoned on the back; and on this French-polished stool of repentance Philip Leslie sat, biting his lips, till the hands of the Baddington hall-clock marked two past meridian.

Then a bell rang from above, not with an angry clangour, but with a clear, silvery, composed sound. The footman went up

stairs, came down again, and addressed the painter:—

“You’re to step this way, if you pliz!” he vouchsafed to remark.

He said “pliz,” instead of “please,” probably as a compromise between saying something polite and something rude. Philip Leslie followed the footman up the softly-carpeted stairs, through an ante-chamber and a drawing-room, and at last into a deliciously-furnished boudoir. Here the footman indicated again a chair, but a far different one from the hard polished sedilia below stairs, and, with another intimation that he was to wait, disappeared.

“Carriage is to wait, Tummas,” the footman remarked to the fat hall porter. “The old un’s a-goin’ out.”

“Sure-lye!” the hippopotamus in gold lace returned. “And where may my lord be a-goin’ now, John-Peter?” He was a reverent man, this hippopotamus, and said “my lord.”

“Why, of all places in the world,” said the footman addressed as John-Peter, “to Noogate prisin.”

“To Noogate prisin! to Noogate prisin!” mused the fat porter, “what the dickins can he be a-goin’ a-wisitn’ to Noogate prisin for?”

“To see his relations, ’praps,” the sardonic John-Peter suggested.

“Ah, sure-lye, sure-lye,” said the fat porter, “sure-lye.”

How long he might have gone on soliloquising is uncertain; but at this moment the soft cushions of the black leathern arbour, studded with gilt nails, asserted their influence over him, and he fell into a fat-headed slumber.

CHAPTER XXV.

YOUTH AT THE HELM AND PLEASURE AT
THE PROW.

A THICK, soft, *moëlleux* Aubusson carpet, so thick and soft that a giant in his seven-league boots might have stridden over it, without making more noise than a white mouse, in those delicate pink slippers with which Nature has gifted that pretty but unpleasantly-perfumed little quadruped; a ceiling covered with fluted white and blue satin with silver rosettes, and from whose centre hung a swing-lamp, formed by a silver Cupid holding a censer; walls hung with an arabesque pattern in pale blue damask; a doorway veiled by a richly-embroidered curtain, with a ground

of deep blue velvet; an abundance of ottomans, *causeuses*, *boudeuses*, *solitaires*, “*pouffs*” — multitudinous inventions of astute upholsterers for enervating the art of sitting into that of lounging; frail tables and *etagères*, in ebony, ivory, and mother-of-pearl, among which the eager eyes of the Painter noticed a marvellous cabinet, with open doors of filagree, and whose shelves and summit were crowded with delicate little artistic playthings — sugar-plums of refined taste, enamels and miniatures by Petitôt and Zincke, ivory carvings, diminutive tea-services in porcelain, of that lustre and glaze known as the “Grand mandarin,” and the secret of which is lost now, even to the Chinese themselves; varied little scraps of Majolica and Palissy ware, and sillily amorous little marchionesses disguised as shepherdesses, and shepherds disguised as marquisses, in Dresden china. But the fittings of the boudoir were not confined to art-curiosities alone. There was a magnificent vase in Sèvres porcelain, painted with the story of Cupid and Psyche, and filled

with the rarest flowers; there hung on the walls six or eight water-colour drawings, by masters of fame—Philip knew their characteristics at a glance; a charming little Dutch interior—perhaps a Mieris, which, in its unapproachable excellence of execution, made him sigh for the inferiority of the “Cottage-door;” and a superb Greuze, in a carved frame of ebony and mother-of-pearl. There was, besides,—it was difficult to imagine how so many objects could ever find place in the boudoir—a wondrous little cabinet piano, all ebony and marqueterie work, nestling in one corner. There were two windows in the boudoir, hung with diaphanous curtains of pale blue silk and lace; but the window-glass itself was discreetly ground, that the effect of the art-treasures within might not be neutralised by the brick and mortar vulgarities of over the way in Curzon Street. And, opposite the door, a glazed recess contained a tiny conservatory, where gigantic trailing and climbing exotics seemed eager to hug the whole diminutive palace with their Briarian limbs, and

crush it altogether, and in whose midst, among plants and flowers of the brightest hues, a miniature fountain threw up a dazzling jet, and sprayed in its descent the rippled surface of the water in an alabaster basin. And all over the boudoir lay, scattered in enchanting confusion, exquisite little knick-nacks — jewelled bouquet-holders, feathery fans, caskets of malachite, paper knives in Damascened silver, with coral-sprig handles, albums and keepsakes, and scrapbooks, blushing in morocco and rich gilding. It was a place for a thief to have the run of one short half hour, and come out too rich ever to care about stealing again.

Have I forgotten aught in the boudoir? Ay, one little thing. A slender easel in polished maplewood — an easel fitted with every subtle improvement and nice device to make a royal road to painting that the most courtly artists' colourman could invent or patent. An open colour-box stood by the side of the easel; a palette and its brushes were carelessly thrown on a stool before — a

stool embroidered in rich needlework; and on the easel itself was a canvas, stretched on its frame, but with its back turned to Philip. For the life of him, the painter could not resist the temptation of turning round this canvas, to see if there were anything painted on the other side. It was a breach of confidence he felt, guiltily, as he committed the act. He would as soon have dreamt of breaking open the seal of a letter addressed to a stranger, as of opening one of the gilt and embossed books on the table; but the temptation of looking at this possible picture, with its face to the easel, was too much for him. So he turned it, and gazed upon it.

It was the half-length of a woman, life-size—a woman arrayed in a costume half classical, half oriental, with a species of jewelled diadem on her brow, who, with her bare arm extended high, clutched a jewelled goblet. It was a face so beautiful, so refined, yet so hardened and scornful, with its pale yellow hair, and cold blue eyes, and exquisitely-formed yet thin and close-set lips, that Philip remained

gazing at it, minute after minute, forgetful of where he was, careless of the danger he was incurring.

“No woman ever painted that head,” he muttered, half aloud. “The head! pshaw, that arm alone shows the power of a master. What force, what power of drawing; how grandly the muscles are indicated, how nobly the drapery falls! And the goblet, too! By Jove, what colour! What reflected lights! Ah! unfinished, I see. She must have picked it up at Rome, or somewhere abroad, and won’t allow it to be touched now. I know that I wouldn’t dare to put brush to it. And yet, no; why, I declare the colours are wet. Can she —”

A spiteful little clock, with snaky figures twinkling in gold on a dial-head of blue enamel, clicked out the hour of two, with accents as bitter as the tongue of a calumniator, ending its performance with a sharp, ringing little chuckle. The Painter, as startled by the chime as though he had been Macbeth, and had heard the fateful bell of Glamis,

hastily raised his hand to replace the picture in its original position; but he was *too late again*. Louder than the chuckle of the clock, the unfortunate heard the rustle of silk and lace, and turning his head, beheld the Scornful Lady standing in the doorway, holding aside the tapestry, and gazing at him with inexorable eyes.

Down, with a crash, fell the portrait of the woman with the diadem—down on the Aubusson carpet—luckily on its back. Devoutly did Philip wish, that he, too, could fall, not on the carpet, but right through it and the flooring, and into the coal-cellar in Curzon Street, and so into George Street, Sydney, supposing that point of the antipodes to be within just plummet distance, to the bottomless depths of a limbo of annihilation.

“You begin well,” Lady Baddington said.

Philip felt as though he were choking, and so, discreetly, said nothing.

“Pick up the picture.”

Being addressed as a slave, he obeyed as a slave, and tremblingly stooping, replaced the

picture on the easel. It had suffered no injury. Unluckily, Philip omitted to turn its face to the easel again; and leaving it there at a signal from Lady Baddington, felt now that he had two pairs of stern eyes gazing upon him, instead of one. Having picked up the picture, his next impulse was to pick up his hat, and fly from this boudoir of torture; but the cruel footman had taken away his head-gear, and was, very probably, at that moment, disdainfully perusing the name and address of his *chapelier*. It was a second-hand hat, bought cheap. Philip was bound to the stake as tightly as a Mohican, who has been taken prisoner, and is about to be "operated" upon by the Pawnees.

He felt so immeasurably debased, standing, or rather shambling, in the centre of the rich carpet—shabby, and worn, and mean-looking, in the midst of all this splendour; he felt so wretched, abandoned, despised a wayfarer, that, strong man as he was, he felt inclined to burst out weeping. Despise him not, oh, reader of the strong mind, if a tear did,

indeed, tremble on his eyelid. It is weak, pusillanimous, womanish to cry; but there are times when we must either cry or die. He had not asked for the patronage of this rich, beautiful woman. He would sooner have taken a crown and a curse from a coarse wretch like Undervamp, than a purse of gold from this cold Viscountess in lace, whose very condescension seemed an insult. He hung his head to hide the tear which *might* have been ready to roll down his cheek.

“There, there,” the Viscountess said; and a magic kindness seemed suddenly infused into her voice and manner. “You could not help peeping at the picture; could you, silly boy?”

She could not have been more than eighteen, this Enchantress, and he was twenty-five; yet she called him silly boy. She might have called him Caliban, so she spoke him kindly, he thought.

“Sit down here,” the lady continued; “I want to have a long talk to you.”

She sank right royally on to a luxurious

divan as she spoke, and pointed as royally to a seat immediately beside her. So close was the seat, that her drapery touched him, that he felt the presence of her perfumed breath, the wind from the waving of her golden hair playing on his hot cheek.

“Your name is Philip Leslie. You need not start or look amazed; if you will sign your pictures ‘Philip Leslie, Liverpool, 1835,’ and afterwards offer them for sale, you must expect your name to be known.”

“Your Ladyship has stated my name correctly,” was all the Painter could make answer.

“But it was not thus my Ladyship first became acquainted with your name,” his fair interlocutor went on; “though I confess that had I not seen your signature to the picture you brought to that man in Wardour Street, I might never have known that the poor artist I saw at dusk yesterday evening, was the person of whom I was in quest; yes, of whom I was in quest,” she repeated, watching the expression of astonishment in the painter’s countenance.

“You come from Liverpool,” she continued. “One need be no conjuror to know that; but you fell in love there.”

“I, my lady!”

“Yes, I, my lady. I, my lady, fell desperately in love with a little black-eyed Spanish dancing-girl at some place with an atrocious name, which I forget. I, my lady, was following her home one night, as I, my lady, had been in the habit of doing night after night, like a brave and loyal young fellow—so, at least, the little dancing-girl thought—to see that she came to no harm.”

“It is true,” the perplexed painter acquiesced.

“Then I—then you, rather,” Lady Badington resumed, referring to a little mite of a volume of ivory tablets, bound in violet, velvet and gold, “met and followed—he too was following your little dancing-girl—a conjuring man—Professor somebody or something. This fellow, who ought to have been thrown into the river—if there be a river at Liverpool—you saved from being stabbed with a knife,

wielded by the girl's uncle, an old Spaniard. Was not the uncle's name something like Harispe?"

"It was—it was his very name; but how, may I ask, Madam, did your Ladyship——"

"There my conjuring ends," the lady said, shutting the golden clasp of the tablet with a provoking snap of the metal, and a more provoking smile playing over her own red lips. "What has become of you ever since, and what you have been doing from the time you were born till the evening you saved the Professor from the poniard, I know no more than that I met you yesterday evening in the Wardour Street, curiosity-shop. It was to learn this, that I sent for you this morning. Why were you not punctual to your appointment?"

As far as this last query she had spoken with a delightful kindness, with a soft frankness, with a cheery, encouraging manner, that had filled Philip's heart with strange but blissful emotions. But in the inquiry, "Why were you not punctual to your appointment?"

she was the old scornful lady again; and her words froze his new-born flow of spirits. He blushed, stammered, prevaricated, and became a helpless object.

Heaven assoilzie us! What shamefaced, awkward, ungraceful bunglers are the majority of us, talking to a pretty woman! What can there be in the eyes, the rosy lips, and the yards of skirts and flounces; the wave of a little hand, the tap of a tiny foot, to cast all our self-possession adrift, dissolve our stern resolutions into an anarchical jelly, and turn all our flowing eloquence into dry leaves, to be tossed about by a November wind of trouble? Is a woman a divinity, that we should tremble as we adore her? Is she a Gorgon, that she should turn us to stone? Is she a Circe, that she can make us even as swine in stupidity? What spell can there be in the eyes, the lips, the skirt, the flounces, the hand, and the foot, that can make a little school-girl of sixteen, only just emancipated from pinafores, frilled trousers, and bread and butter, stronger and wiser, and shrewder in

her way than a Richelieu or a Lauzun, a veteran diplomatist, or a stern warrior? How brave we men can be among our fellow-men—coolly trotting out Lily or Caroline, as though she were Blinkbonny, the race-horse, and expatiating knowingly on her points and paces; how steeled we are against Emily's wiles; how laughingly alive to Lucy's pretty hypocrisies and charming treachery! We are not to be vanquished; we are not to be deceived. Oh, no! But once get us into a drawing-room, the fourth seat of a carriage, the vacant chair in a private box at the play, and, lo! the ingenious Candida will wind astute Ulysses round her finger, and tough General Hercules falls down straightway at Omphale's feet, and holds silken cat's cradles for her to unwind.

“Do you know,” continued Lady Baddington, with a slight symptom of return towards kindness, but still with a sufficient infusion of scornful bitterness in her manner to make the painter miserable; “Do you know that I was very nearly sending you away from the door this morning for that very want of

punctuality? I hate a man who has no energy, no purpose, no decision of character, no WILL," she added.

But added, with such a wild vehemence of tone, with a flashing of the eye and a curving of the lip, and a throwing out of her round white arm—she was in a muslin dishabille—that, raising his eyes to her face, Philip thought he saw the very counterpart of the diademed woman with the goblet.

"Are you a stock or a stone," she continued, sweeping round to him and fixing him with her keen eyes, "that you have nothing to say for yourself, but sit there blushing and shaking like a school-boy? Are you accustomed to have taunts thrown at your head, that you can bear them so meekly as this? That brown-faced dancing-girl of yours can find her tongue readily enough."

There was this, and so much in Philip at this very moment, that he rose up, and said it manfully:—

"I have only this to remark, my lady," he said, very firmly and respectfully, "that I am

a very poor, obscure, friendless man. I painted a picture, which I presume your Ladyship, being a lover of art, entertained some notion of purchasing. I know the performance is slight, and its execution is, I dare say, very inferior. But I suppose your Ladyship thought there might be something in it, or you would not have been kind enough to advance me two sovereigns upon it last night. Of the manner in which that money was advanced, I have no more to say, save that I would much rather have had a limb cut off than have taken it, and that I would sacrifice two to be able to give it back now. With regard to my want of punctuality, I bitterly regret it; and if by it I have lost your Ladyship's patronage, I only hope that you will allow me to leave my picture with you as a security, and to assure you on my solemn word of honour, that within four and twenty hours, I will either bring you back your money, or throw myself over one of the bridges."

He was astonished at the length of his own speech, but was not frightened now, and stood looking on the Viscountess proudly.

“A coward’s alternative—money or suicide,” was the observation of that noble lady. “Have you anything else to say?”

“Very little, save to express my earnest and respectful desire that you will allow me to quit this house as quickly as ever I can, as I don’t want to go mad, to bring about which consummation seems to be your own particular desire.”

He felt, as he uttered these bold words, that he had cut away the anchor of hope, and that his bark was drifting towards irremediable shipwreck. But it was too late to retract, and he moved towards the door, still keeping his eyes on his tormentor.

Was the woman mad? or if sane, why was she so inexplicably capricious. She sprang past him with a movement as swiftly tortuous as that of a lizard, held the tapestry behind her with her little hands, and barring his passage, looked in his face with laughing eyes.

“Not so fast, not so fast, Mr. Philip Leslie,” she cried, in a mocking but not an unkind

voice. "I want to hear a great deal more about you before you leave this room. Pray, would you like my husband to come in here, and find me keeping a gentleman in my boudoir by main force? Hav'n't you heard that Lord Baddington is dreadfully jealous? Besides," she concluded, "I don't allow persons who quarrel with me to leave me in this manner. When they offend *me* I ring the bell, and have them turned out by my footman."

She saw, perhaps—the mischievous child! she was but a child, she could not have been more than eighteen—that she had gone too far again. One little hand released its hold on the tapestry behind her. She held it forward, first coquettishly inspecting it herself, as though to institute a comparison between its blanched brightness and the heavy gemmed rings that studded her fingers. Then she held it forth to the painter amicably.

Was Philip mad himself now? What possessed him? What could have dared him to the rash attempt — the rasher commission? But he could not help it. He could not have

helped it had the headsman of Munich stood behind him with that terrible double-handed sword, whose blade is hollow and loaded with quicksilver, ready to smite off his head the moment afterwards. He stooped and kissed the lily hand.

“There now, we are friends,” the lady said smilingly, withdrawing her hand, and not, seemingly, much displeased. “What a strange creature you must think me. What *do* you think of me?”

“That you are an angel.”

“Sir!”

And there was the old cold look again. But simulated, Philip — perhaps conceitedly — thought, and with no real anger in it. I retract, on reflection, even the hesitating “perhaps,” and boldly assume that she was *not* offended. Leonardo da Vinci, painter, sculptor, architect, chemist, poet, philosopher, mechanic, and astronomer, lays it down in one of his axioms that no woman — ugly even though she be to the verge of monstrosity — can pass through life without having

at least one admirer. I take it as another maxim, as trite as true, that no woman,

“ Be she fairer than the day
“ Or the early meads in May,”

be she as magnificent as Cleopatra, as proud as Zenobia, or as rough as Christina, who murdered Monaldeschi, can be really offended — however she may pretend to be so — at a compliment whose spontaneity seems to argue its sincerity. They can no more help a gratified smile at a compliment to their beauty, than a dog can help licking his lips after swallowing a pound of butter. Both are *so* nice, and slip down *so* easily. But neither compliment nor butter will prevent either Beauty or the Beast from biting you immediately after the nice flavour has departed, and biting you, too, till their sharp, shining teeth meet in your favourite calf.

“ Now, Sir,” resumed the Viscountess, “ when you have done staring at me, and twiddling your fingers as if you had just been detected in stealing a pot of currant-jelly, perhaps you will sit down exactly where

I bid you sit before, and tell me what I expressly sent for you to tell me."

"What may that be, my Lady?"

"Your history, and the truth. No romancing, no calling things by wrong names. Speak out plainly, and it will be the better for you. Nay," she added, "I don't know that I won't even buy that little picture; though, allow me to tell you, my young friend, that I have seldom seen a painting commenced with such good intentions, and finished in such a careless and slovenly manner."

He bowed his head meekly to the censure, for he felt that though somewhat unqualified, it was not undeserved. Then he sat himself down again on the divan, as his lady, his tyrant, had commanded him; but she sat no more near him. She drew the embroidered stool that was before her easel towards her, and snatching up her palette and maulstick, made a few careless touches on the picture of the diademed woman.

The painter watched her out of the corner of his eyes, and could see with what a firm

hand she held the pencil, with what a broad firm sweep she had begun to lay in a fresh shadow on the face. But he felt that his time for diffidence had ceased, and, bidding a long farewell to diffidence, he commenced his tale.

There was no positive reason why he should do so. Was it not impertinence on her Ladyship's part to ask him for an account of his life, instead of asking him the price of his picture, and, paying it down to him there, let him go. He felt in the ridiculous position of an actor in a drama commencing an explanatory speech with, "It is now some twenty-five years since —," but he took heart of grace at last, and spoke.

He told her that he was twenty-five years old, and that his remembrance could recede to a time when he could not have been more than four or five years of age. That he could remember his mother, a tall handsome woman, who often used to cry over him, and tell him that he was the image of his father, who (she said) was fair, and had blue eyes.

In his early youth, he said, they, mother and son, appeared to live in affluence, but not in comfort. His mother was violent, passionate, often cruel, and always perverse to him — forbearing to chide him when he deserved it, treating him with absurd fondness when he least merited caresses, and with unreasonable severity when he was not amenable to blame. His mother had strange fits of hysterics, and stranger trances of deep, dead sleep. He admitted with a falter and a blush, that his mother's maid had told him, when he was about seven, that "mamma got tipsy," and though he was ignorant of what the thing meant at the time, he had never forgotten, and grew afterwards to learn with shame and horror, the real meaning of the words. He told her that he had visited with his mother, while still very young, both France and Italy, and in both countries had been for a short time at school, and that even after this lapse of years, he yet retained some loose smattering of the two languages. When he was about ten years old, he said, he and his

mother were living in Italy, at Florence, he thought; but there was another gentleman living with them then; a tall, strong, fierce gentleman, with long moustaches, who drank even more than mamma did, although he never seemed to get tipsy, and smoked large cigars all day long. This gentleman was called Major, and used to call him a little ragamuffin. He beat and ill-treated him in every possible way; and even his mother's affection seemed now entirely departed from him; and she was alternately utterly neglectful, or utterly barbarous to him. He admitted (with shame and regret of his own, this time) that when they came to England some time after this, and he was put to a cheap, mean boarding school, in a wild part of the West of England, near Dartmoor, and close to a deserted place which had once been a receptacle for French prisoners of war—a school where he was badly fed, badly treated, and scarcely taught at all—he ran away, far, far away over the wild country side; and whether his schoolmaster thought him so

unremunerative a scholar as not to be worth pursuing, or whether he had failed in discovering his place of retreat, he never knew; but that he was never captured, that he had never heard from that day to this of schoolmaster, his mother, or the strange man who was called Major.

He lived for days, he said, on raw turnips and peas, like the fugitive Duke of Monmouth, after Sedgemoor, which he took from fields, and wild berries. He was on the verge of starvation, when he took up with some gipsies, rude thievish, kind-hearted vagabonds; with whose blanket-tent, camp-kettle, donkey, and brown-faced children, he travelled about for more than a year.

“Did you ever steal anything when you were a gipsy?” asked the Viscountess, turning round from her easel. She had not been painting anything for some minutes.

“Never, on my honour, Madam.”

“Not a turkey, or a brace of fowls, now and then?”

“Not so much as an egg.”

“No linen off hedges?”

“Not even a pair of baby’s socks.”

“I wonder you did not. I am sure I should. Poor fellow!” said the Viscountess, and she rose from her stool and stroked the painter’s fair curly head.

The touch of her taper fingers vibrated through his brain as though an electric current had passed through it.

“Now go on,” the lady said, passing away from him. But she did not return to her easel. She sat instead at the wondrous piano, all ebony and marqueterie; and as the painter resumed his story, ever and anon struck a fitful chord on the ivory keys, but more frequently remained with her fair head bending over the instrument.

CHAP. XXVI.

LADY BADDINGTON IS REMARKABLY KIND.

THE Painter went on with his story.

He told the lady that he had ultimately abandoned the gipsies, in consequence of a slight misunderstanding with a certain "Romany chal" of decidedly predatory propensities, who, whatever may have been his real cognomen among the children of Egypt, was known to the world at large as the "nimming blacksmith," and who, with an incurable perversity of low pretension, not understanding, or pretending not to understand, the unwillingness of young Philip to "nim"—or, in other words, steal—a pony with a swish-tail, the property of a reverend

gentleman in Gloucestershire, had manifested an intense desire to make an abnormal eyelet-hole in his waistcoat with a long knife. So he fled from those dark tents of Kedar.

“After I left the gipsies,” continued Philip, “I can scarcely tell your Ladyship how I managed to live. It must have been something, I fancy, after the fashion of the young ravens, only the worms came in very slowly and in very small quantities. I think I hawked tracts and cheap novels for some weeks, and I am certain I earned a precarious livelihood for some time by reciting ‘My name is Norval,’ ‘Now stood Eliza on the wood-crowned height,’ and similar scraps of the ‘Enfield-Speaker’ description, the remnants of my school reading, in the parlours of way-side inns. But I am afraid I weary your Ladyship with such trivial details.”

“You would weary my Ladyship much less,” the Viscountess returned, impatiently stamping on the pianoforte pedal with her pretty foot, “if you would go straight on with your story. Can’t you see, silly fellow, how it interests me?”

“I am sure, my Lady, that I am delighted if——”

“There! don’t be vain,” and a warning finger was held up. “What an impulsive creature it is, to be sure! You are not to know, sir, or to inquire, *why* I am interested in the recital of your vagabond adventures; it is sufficient for you to know that I wish to hear them out; so, pray continue without further interruption.”

“I was engaged—after hardships, too terrible, some of them, to be described—by a company of strolling players, who, with a portable theatre (if a few poles, planks, tressels, and rudely-daubed canvasses, could be called by that name), and a portable stock of tinselled rags of dresses, went about from fair to fair. The manager took a fancy to my declamation of ‘The Isles of Greece,’ and ‘Parrhasius,’ and I received the munificent sum of five shillings per week for assisting in what was termed the ‘outside patter’—that is, reciting on the platform before our proscenium, and acting as a foil to the deep base

voice of the principal tragedian. I am afraid that to beat a big drum occasionally, in the intervals of eloquence, also came within the terms of my engagement; and I am not ashamed to add that, possessing some personal agility—‘heasy and hairy grace,’ the manager called it—I not unfrequently performed the college hornpipe and the Highland fling, when Enfield’s ‘Speaker,’ as it sometimes happened, was at a discount, and the pennies were slow in coming up the ladder.”

“Were you ever a clown—that tumbling man with the paint on his face, who says droll things and picks pockets?” Lady Baddington asks.

“Never, my Lady. Yet I have been in the ring, for all that. After perhaps a year of ‘outside pattering,’ I was pronounced to be a sufficiently ‘bould speaker’ to take a part in the performances in the interior of the booth. But I was not much of a favourite there. I believe my fellow performers disliked me because my h’s were generally in the right place; and I am sure I was not popular with

the audience, because I could not strike sparks enough from my opponents broadsword in the terrific combats. I had plenty of offers, though, from other sources. The proprietor of one of the most favourite dwarfs in the United Kingdom discovered that I was exactly cut out—so soft spoken was I, he said—to act as a guardian to the little abortion, who lived in the three storeyed house, and rang a diminutive door bell; and to give the explanatory lecture upon his birth, parentage, education, and experiences of foreign crowned heads and fashionable society. But I declined that situation, as I did that of secretary to an Abyssinian giant, whose name was Jiggins.”

“Why?”

“Why, your Ladyship, because there had been growing on me all that time a love for a thing I scarcely knew by its proper name then, but which I have since grown more familiar with, and adore it.”

“You had a strange education for the career of an artist.”

“So strange that I can scarcely realise to

myself, now, in what manner I first learnt to cut a pencil, or to lay a palette. But I did learn this, somehow, and a little more besides. I dabbled in painting all the time that I was with the strollers, touching up the vile and ragged smears—the haunted caverns and baronial chambers they called scenes. I began to sketch clumsily and lamely from nature. I began to take portraits—dreadful ‘Guys’ those portraits must have been, though I beg your Ladyship’s pardon for using such a word: nay, from time to time I earned a few shillings from some village Mæcenas for taking his ‘missis,’ or from the proud mother of a family of five children for painting the likenesses of those little innocents—all of a row. The first really artistic opportunity I had, determined me to quit the profession of the legitimate drama, and I accepted an engagement in an equestrian company—a travelling circus indeed—as scene-painter, property-man, and assistant riding master.”

“Who taught you to ride?”

“No one, my Lady; and when I entered

Poocherani's Royal Circus I had never ridden anything more equine than a rocking-horse. It is true that my duties as a riding-master did not call for any very daring feats of equitation. I had merely to put on a braided coat, spurs, and a stripe of gold lace to my trousers, and crack a long whip to the music of the band. These, with occasionally standing on the parapet of the circus to hold a hoop for a young lady to jump through, and exchanging a very old and very stupid witticism now and then with the clown, were all the duties of riding-mastership I had to perform. But I learnt to cross a horse, and with some success too, for all that."

"But your painting, your art, my young friend?"

"There does not seem, at the first glance, to be much opportunity for scene-painting in a circus; yet there was always something to be done. There was the circus itself to be re-painted every time we entered a new town, for the kicks of the horses, and the flying up of the sawdust, very soon tarnished our

decorations. Then there were 'properties' to be patched; triumphal chariots and banners to be emblazoned; and, especially, there were the huge pictorial placards describing the extraordinary feats of horsemanship, and other countless attractions of Poocherani's Royal Circus—all of which had to be painted in the brightest colours, and were liberally displayed in front of our establishment. Hundreds of such placards have I painted in my time."

"They were better than yon trifle—the 'Cottage-door'—I hope."

"They were *not* better, saving your presence, Lady Baddington," the Painter answered firmly, though modestly. "They were miserable daubs; but I learnt to do better."

"I am glad to hear it; go on."

"I have scarcely anything more to tell; my life since then has been so devoid of interest to others, though so full of it to myself. It has been one arduous pursuit of art—under disadvantages, under difficulties, in poverty, in misery, in obscurity; but never, I hope, in disgrace. I have travelled all England, Ireland,

and Scotland; now with a circus, now as regular scene painter at a small country theatre: now as an itinerant portrait painter. I have just managed to live, and that is all; and till I had the pleasure of meeting your Ladyship last night, I can conscientiously declare that I had not one single friend in the world—”

“He hesitated, stammered, blushed, and concluded, “I hope your Ladyship will pardon me for qualifying your notice and patronage by the name of friendship. But I am so solitary and so forlorn, that when a hand has been extended to me as yours has been, I cannot help fancying that it must be a friend’s.”

“I am not going to be angry,” Lady Baddington said kindly, as she rose from her seat, and held forth her hand once more to the painter, who, exercising some discretion this time, contented himself with bowing over it respectfully. “But ‘friend’ is a dangerous term to use to persons such as I am. We can’t afford to have friends in Mayfair, my young painter, any more than we have human breasts or human feelings. We have diamonds,

ostrich feathers, and point-lace instead. But have you told me all your tale."

"All, my lady."

"Hypocrite!" the lady exclaimed, with an irritation charmingly feigned, it was easy to see. "Where is the record of all the tender passions you have sighed and threatened to die about? Speak, Sir, how many? Let me have the list? How many, before you fell so desperately in love with that little brown-faced gipsy Manuelita?"

"I fall in love with Manuelita!"

"Yes, in love with Manuelita: am I speaking Greek, that you don't or won't understand me?"

"I do not even know her personally, Lady Baddington. I have seen her very seldom."

"If you have seen her once or five, or five hundred times, you are in love with the girl. Don't tell me a falsehood, or I shall be angry in right earnest."

"I certainly had a considerable respect, and I may say admiration, for her: but, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have not seen

her twenty times in my life, and I am confident that I have not interchanged words with her more than twice."

"If what you say be correct, Mr. Philip Leslie, and I will not do you the injustice to suspect that you are deceiving me, how comes it that this same Manuelita is to the full as desperately in love with *you*, as you in all due and reciprocal gallantry must be with her?"

"I do assure you, my Lady—"

"Assure me nothing!" cried the Viscountess, in a pretty pet, "and don't contradict me; or, on my word, I'll withdraw my patronage, or friendship, or whatever you may please to call it, and send you and your 'Cottage-door' packing. There is no harm in your loving this little brown-faced child, most romantic of artistic wanderers. You have nothing but your pencil to depend upon for a livelihood, she has nothing but her nimble feet, unless her crabbed old Spanish uncle forgive her for running away from him, which, from the character I heard of him he is not likely to do."

"Manuelita run away!" ejaculated the

painter. And lo! there passed swiftly before the eyes of his mind a vision of a dusty road, a yellow post-chaise, and sitting therein a figure in a mantilla, and by its side another of a man who had something like an undress military cap on his head.

“You are positively the most provoking creature I ever met with,” exclaimed the Viscountess impatiently; “you never give a direct answer to a question, and echo my observations like a parrot.”

“I am very sorry——”

“You have no right to be very sorry, Sir; you have a right to be sensible.”

“I should be glad to——”

“You are very glad, and you are very sorry. There, hold your tongue for goodness’ sake, till you have reason to know whether you should be one or the other. Wait.”

She said this not angrily, not haughtily, but as she said it an arch expression rippled on her lips. Then she opened a secret door in the blue and silver hung wall—a door of whose existence Philip had never dreamt, as who

could? so artfully concealed was it—and cried softly, “Come!”

And there came and stood on the sill of the secret door, a little trembling, blushing figure, a girl with a dark face and large black eyes, and this was Manuelita, the niece of Juan Manuel Harispe.

CHAP. XXVII.

“ SHOULD OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT.”

IN the very heart of the enormous city, between the Gate of Lud and the Gate of the Bishop, there is a huge quadrangular mass of frowning granite, dignified by the name of a gate, and ingress into which is obtained through three narrow, low-browed doors. It is the eye of a needle through which a camel might attempt to pass, but would assuredly stick midway in the attempt. It is a gate that is freely opened to all who knock at it; but its heavy door once closed again, egress is difficult, if not impossible. This is Newgate Prison, whose walls might be built of petrified human hearts, and cemented

with human tears. This is Newgate, the implacable, the inexorable, the inevitable, to him who forsakes the narrow path for the broad. It is the only reality — a stern, remorseless reality, in the shadowy land of crime, where all things wear an aspect not their own.

To me, who am a town-bred man, this jail of Newgate has always been an object of ravenous interest and of insatiable curiosity. There it stands — stern, menacing, silent in the midst of the teeming city life — alone, impassible: alone indifferent to the great world's doings. It rouses nature, and is a desert in the midst of an oasis. Bustling Newgate Market, hard by, overflows with rubicund butchers, and more rubicund house-keepers laying in a stock of good cheer. Over against the north-side of the prison is that noble palace of education, the Bluecoat School, with its hundreds of little lads in their quaint semi-monastic dress, their blue gaberdines tucked under their crimson girdles to show their yellow petticoats, running, and leaping, and capering at football, and shouting, in all the

hilarity of youth and innocence. But gloomy Newgate stands aloof, like the Usher in Hood's magnificent poem, and whispers awful tales of travellers murdered on lonely heaths, and dead bodies hid in caverns. The Old Bailey has its thronged taverns, and houses of call for jovial graziers; within bowshot on its one side is Ludgate Hill, all wealth and commerce, and glistening with its crowds of city beaux and city belles; at the other extremity is Holborn Hill, continually, at the period of which I write, disgorging its rebellious troops of horned cattle, and crowded with lumbering drays. Smithfield, rich in reminiscences of jolly, disorderly, disreputable Bartholomew Fair, is close at hand; the Hospital is there; studious Paternoster Row, redolent with odours of newly-stitched paper, is not far off; the Great Post-Office, carrying news and gossip, human thoughts and feelings, the expressions of love and hatred, sympathy and friendship, all over the world, stands at the top of Newgate Street; but the Prison stands still contemptuously indifferent to the turmoil of the working world

around it. It is complete in itself. *Se contiene. Farà da se.* A hundred hospitals may open their beneficent wards to the sick; but what cares Newgate?—it has its infirmary. A hundred bells from as many steeples may ring in the faithful to prayers — Newgate has its chapel, its jail ordinary, its prison communion-tables, its condemned pew. Let the dead bury their dead in as many cemeteries as they choose elsewhere — Newgate buries its own sudden dead within its own precincts, in that dismal corridor where, beneath the flags, moulder a whole hierarchy of assassins. For Newgate is a city within a city, and a world within a world; or rather, it is a Cronstadt of crime, whose granite ramparts no broadsides of virtue can shake, and whose barred windows are as embrasures, whence guns of penal calibre point menacingly to the world outside.

On the very same summer afternoon, and about the same time, that Philip Leslie was conversing with Lady Baddington in her boudoir in Curzon-street, Mayfair, the carriage of that noble lady's equally noble lord was

rolling leisurely through the streets towards the prison, the very mention of whose name has seduced me into the foregoing digression.

The Viscount's carriage (the disgust of the refulgent flunkies behind, at finding themselves journeying towards so low a locality, can be better imagined than described) drew up at last before the principal entrance of the jail. But ere its occupant descends from it, let us take a brief glance at that noble personage, whom you and I, reader, have not seen since a certain wedding-day, in November, eighteen hundred and thirty.

Five years had wrought a marvellous change in Viscount Baddington. You must remember that the Reform Bill had passed since we last met him — a legislative measure which was popularly supposed to be the first step towards bringing about the millennium, and which was to do all sorts of wonderful things for all sorts of people. By persons not exactly belonging to the popular side, the Reform Bill was the inevitable forerunner of the utter dissolution and thorough smashing-up of the

world; the cloud-capped towers, solemn temples, gorgeous pinnacles, and great globe itself being only indulged with a momentary respite, by the fortuitous introduction of the Chandos clause into Whiggery's detested enactment. The contingent effect of the abolition of Gattou and Old Sarum upon his Lordship had been to change him into quite a young man. In 1835, though with many remnants of the old beau of the Regency about him, he had yet somewhat of a venerable appearance; but now he was, outwardly at least, entirely youthful. Youthful in the possession of a splendid head of curly brown hair; youthful in a pair of bushy whiskers, which would have been a little more natural to look at, had they not been quite so purple in hue; youthful in a dazzling white set of teeth, a tight waist, and blooming cheeks; youthful in a costume adapted to the height of fashion. No more fur collars or broad-brimmed hats now; but velvet collar, satin stock, under waistcoats, gold eye-glass, tightly-strapped trousers, and patent-leather boots. That stout bamboo stick

on which his Lordship seemed to lean somewhat heavily, his hands on its knob, his chin on his hands, was youthful, too, in its buckish silken tassels. As to the double gold eyeglass, how many men, quite young, are there who, through study or late hours, are near-sighted? And as for the slight bend in the back, everybody knows what a slovenly nonchalant bearing some young dandies affect. Oh, Lord Baddington was very young indeed in 1835 — quite a lad; and as for the furrows and the crows' feet, and the yellow, goose-skin-like integument on his temples and his small be-ringed, be-wrinkled hands, why those were probably freckles incurred during his Lordship's late continental trip — a trip whose *dénouement* was his bringing to London his young and beautiful bride — which a flask or so of Rowland's Kalydor would easily eradicate.

This juvenescent Peer stepped with a senile briskness from his carriage when it had reached its destination, condescending, however, to make pretty liberal use of his bamboo cane, and the outstretched arm of one of

his attendants as he quitted the vehicle. The carriage had been, indeed, so lightly hung on its springs by the accomplished Long Acre coach-builder from whose *atelier* it had come, that it gave a graceful rebound as the body of the Peer left it; and he, having one foot on the step at the time, was, in consequence, very nearly precipitated on his noble nose on the kerbstone.

Lord Baddington had a special permit from the Secretary of State for the Home Department not only to visit the jail of Newgate, but a prisoner confined therein—and who was confined in Newgate on remand previous to his transmission to Ireland, there to purge himself of an accusation of forgery—by name John Pollyblank. The turnkeys in the outer lodge—rough, gruff, curt-spoken, and somewhat snappish men in general—clustered obsequiously round the possessor of the fine carriage as he entered, and bowed even lower when the Home Secretary's order was read, and they found with what a noble visitor they had to deal. The governor was not,

just then, in the way; but was immediately sent for to conduct his Lordship round the jail, while he, worthy nobleman, for his part went about his business in this wise: You are to know that when prisoners in Newgate are permitted to see their friends, it is only for a short time, and from across a double range of iron-bars, in the space between which sits a turnkey. When, again prisoners have interviews with their solicitors, it is in a room with glass sides, round which walks a turnkey who can see everything, but hear nothing. But Lord Baddington was the bearer of a special order, empowering him to see John Pollybank in his cell and alone. I doubt if, now-a-days, when *tout-se sait*, and when the smallest *laches* on the part of authority are commented upon with ruthless severity by an Argus-eyed press, whether even a nobleman could have such a privilege conceded to him by the Secretary of State. But twenty-two years ago, prison discipline was not quite so rigorous, nor the walls within which it was maintained quite so transparent

as they now are. In this case the high official's order was an undisputed “Open sesame,” which was the abode of not forty, but more probably four hundred thieves; and preceded by a turnkey, Lord Baddington traversed a seemingly interminable series of corridors and yards, yards and corridors.

At last they entered a small paved court, two sides of which were studded by cell doors. Opening one of them with a resounding clang, the turnkey called out, “Visitor, No. 45;” fell back in order to allow Lord Baddington to pass, closed the cell-door again after him, discreetly turned the huge key in the lock—(there was a “Judas,” or small trap, open in the door itself)—and then leaning with his back against the wall, fell to staring at the quadrangular patch of blue sky above him with as much intensity and apparent interest as though it had been a view of the Bay of Naples or a panorama of the Battle of Waterloo.

No. 45 was sitting on his bedstead (at the upper extremity of which the bedclothes were

artistically rolled up *à la militaire*). No. 45 did not seem to be particularly well pleased with his white-washed parlour. There was a great Bible with a Hymn-book beside it on a reading-desk nailed to the wall, but he did not seem to have much inclination to read them. He seemed more occupied in unfraying the woof of a silk pocket handkerchief, thread by thread, in whistling with a grim persistency some very dismal air, whose dolorous melody seemed peculiarly adapted to the atmosphere of a prison, and in beating the devil's tattoo with his foot on the stone floor.

“At last!” he said, looking up as the nobleman entered.

Lord Baddington did not seem to relish the look or the society generally of No. 45. In truth there was a exceedingly ominous and dangerous look about Jack Pollyblank, or Professor Jachimo, or whatever you may choose to call him. His clothes were as fine as of yore, but they had the unmistakable jail tarnish and mildew about them. And his

grand and glittering jewellery, where was that? Alas! sequestered by ruthless turnkeys, and safe in prison pigeon-holes.

He was unshaven and dishevelled, it was not shaving day in Newgate, and jail-birds were not quite such bucks of disciplinarianism twenty-five years ago, as now. There were brown rings under his eyes. He was not at all a loveable sight to look upon; and so, evidently, thought Lord Baddington, who started—it may be involuntarily—back as the prisoner addressed him; till he bethought him of the open trap in the door, and the turnkey who was sure to be watching outside, which immediately re-assured him.

“ Yes, Mr. Polly, Polly — what’s his name? — Oh, Pollyblank,” he answered hastily, “ I’m here at last; and I devoutly wish it was to see the last of you. What have you sent for me for?”

“ Why, look you here, Governor,” the unabashed Pollyblank replied — “ you’ll excuse the liberty I take in calling you ‘ Governor’; but it’s a way we have in the army, or in Newgate. You see the fix I’m in ?”

“You have brought it on yourself.”

“I don't deny that for an instant, my ancient,” the hardened man continued; “you speak like a book, like a Blue Book, like a Court Guide; but that's no reason why other people shouldn't try to bring me out of it. I'm here for a forgery matter yonder” —he pointed, as he spoke, to a corner of the stone wall which might be supposed to represent the direction of Ireland, —“and my impression is, that when I go up before an Irish jury, the verdict will be ‘Guilty, my Lord,’ against yours truly, and serve him right. I like foreign travel, but the climate of Van Diemen's Land, I am afraid, would have a noxious effect upon my liver. I have a very peculiar liver, and so I'd rather not be transported.”

“The best thing that could happen to you,” grumbled Lord Baddington.

“May the difference of opinion, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera,” continued Pollyblank, with a graceful wave of his hand. “But it isn't alone for this forging business that I'm

in here, else I should a week since have been packed off to Dublin, *viá* Liverpool. I am the victim of prejudice, my Lord; and one of those prejudices fomented by that scoundrelly Bow Street Runner, Leathersides, is, that I have something to do with a large robbery of bank notes, committed some time since; the plain truth of the matter being, that the notes were lost, and that somebody else found them."

"Well, well!" broke in the Peer impatiently.

"It is not at all well, well—you'll excuse me," Jack Pollyblank objected. "It's ill, ill, and no mistake, with yours obediently; and if it had been well, I shouldn't have sent for you, my Lord."

"What is it you want?"

"Want! Is anything easier than to see what I want? How would you like to be mewed up in this whitewashed cage like a one-eyed weazel with a complaint in his lungs? Want! I want to get off Scot-free. Want! Why I want my liberty. I'm a man

who lives up to my income. I like good wine, pretty girls, and first-rate cigars, watches, chains, good clothes, a trap, and a fast-trotting horse. So did you when you were my age, I'll be bound. So do you now, as far as your powers will let you, my old bird."

"Fellow!" the Peer indignantly exclaimed.

"Fellow me no fellows, as the man in the play would say," retorted Pollyblank, rising from his bedstead, and absolutely snapping his profane fingers in the face of the hereditary legislator. "You must get me out of this scrape, old boy, or, so surely as my name's Pollyblank, you'll get into a deuce of a scrape yourself. Look you here," he continued, holding out his large, coarse palm straight before him, "I hold in my hand the honour of the house of Falcon. You know that your niece was only your nephew's leman, and never his wife. You know that your grand-nieces and nephew are all bastards, and that Captain Falcon—Captain and Falcon, forsooth!—is heir, not to the Baddington

Peerage, but to a bar sinister. You know that you gave Seth Tinctop and myself a thousand pounds to keep this secret, five years since; and that it has been kept, and well kept till now. I want to get out of this infernal place, and to get some more money out of you as a fine for renewing the lease of the secret, my old bloke.”

“I cannot compound a felony,” the perplexed Lord Baddington expostulated. “I have no power to stay the proceedings against you. As far as I can see, the law must take its course, and—”

“A fig for the law, compounding of felony, proceedings, and all the rest of it. You vote against the ministry; can’t you vote for them? You have shoals of grand friends; can’t you make them squeezable? Hang it, man, aren’t you a Lord?”

He had struck the right key-note. Yes, he was a Lord, and there is almost as much divinity hedging one, as that which is fallaciously supposed to hedge a king. And again, the Lord’s name, like the King’s, is a

tower of strength. Estates may be sold, or mortgaged, and re-mortgaged up to their arm-pits; entails may be cut off, plate pawned, diamonds sold; the bailiffs may be waiting in livery at the town-house; the sheriff with his writ of *fi fa* in possession of the country seat; but be a Lord, and you may live, aye, and in affluence and in honour, on the credit of your Lordship, still.

CHAP. XXVIII.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

“MR. POLYGON—Pollyblank, I mean,” said Lord Baddington, “you must be reasonable.”

“I’m reasonable enough,” the ex-Professor replied, resuming his seat on his iron bedstead; “at the same time, I’m consistent. I ought to be a statesman—Home Secretary at least—I’m so full of reason and consistency. An egg full of meat is nothing to what I am. Be you as reasonable and consistent yourself, and we shall soon come to terms.”

“The case to be argued, then, between us,” resumed the Peer, “is, as far as I can see, this: You happen to have fallen into difficul-

ties, and, very naturally, wish to extricate yourself from them. You are in possession of certain information which you use as a lever, whereby to extort—well, to procure—money and impunity for yourself from me. Now, as I told you before, I am quite unaware to what extent any influence of mine may be available to obtain your release; but all that I can do, shall of course be done. If you would plead guilty to some transportable felony, now, I have no doubt that on your arrival in the colony—”

“ I will see you, the judge, the jury, and the colony peculiarly well hung before ever I leave this place as a felon,” Mr. Pollyblank calmly interposed.

“ Well, then, I must consult my lawyer. I am no man of business myself, and haven’t the slightest notion how these things are managed. He will call on you to-morrow, and I will give him instructions to do everything for you in the way of reason.”

“ Stop, my Noble Friend, as they say in the House of Lords; I shall want something else besides liberty.”

“Something else? What?”

“‘Stumpy,’ ‘rowdy,’ ‘blunt,’” answered Pollyblank, significantly.

A Viscount could hardly have possessed an acquaintance with the slang phraseology of the lower orders; and it could only have been intuitively that he was enabled to jump at once at the prisoner’s meaning.

“Do you mean that you want more money?” he inquired.

“Exactly so. I want another thousand pounds.”

“A thousand pounds! Why, you and your accomplice Tinctop have already had one thousand pounds between you.”

“The firm of Pollyblank and Tinctop,” the prisoner contemplatively remarked, “have now dissolved partnership, and the business is carried on by J. Pollyblank, who, while returning thanks for past favours, takes this opportunity of hoping, by strict attention to business, to merit a renewal of them. Orders executed with promptitude and despatch.”

“I wish you and your balderdash and vil-

lany were all at the bottom of the sea," muttered the peer to himself. Then, turning to Pollyblank, "What security have I," he asked, "that I shall not again be exposed to a similar demand, and for a sum, perhaps, as large?"

"Security!" echoed Pollyblank, with a loud laugh of derision. "No security at all, my hearty! Why, what an unsophisticated old baby you must be, to imagine that you will ever get rid of me. I'm your friend, my worthy; your incubus, your Old Man of the Sea. You are board, lodging, and washing to me. You're my perpetual stocking with the money in it. You're my landed estate that I draw my rents from. You're my interminable and never-to-be-deferred annuity. You and I are one, are partners, are in the same boat, the same swim, and we will never, never sever, until death do us part!"

Lord Baddington could not help shuddering as the ruffian spoke; for he felt how much bitter truth lay hidden amidst his ribaldry. Save us! how many incongruous partnerships—how many unholy alliances such as this,

are there in the world! Not only misery makes a man acquainted with strange bed-fellows: prosperity will bring as strange help-mates, who claim both bed and board with a grim pertinacity, and to whom you must play *Amphitryon*, willy-nilly. How many a coronetted grandee, rich in the possession of a family-tree growing out of the Conqueror's double-breasted waistcoat, the boughs all bending with golden apples, has for a partner—though he would deny the fact were you to tax him with it—a low stable tout and race-course swindler—a cogger of dice and sleever of cards! How many a fine lady, whom you envy as she sits in her diamonds and her box of the grand tier at Covent Garden, is in secret league, and has a dreadful pact with her chambermaid—the woman whose mother keeps a coal and potato shed, and doesn't aspirate her h's; but who, nevertheless, is my lady's guide, philosopher, friend, and accomplice; knows all her secrets; where that magnificent point lace came from, and how long the milliner has been waiting for the money;

who gave my lady the gold enamelled *châtelaine*, which she said was a present from her grandmamma, but which was, in reality, purchased by Captain Cutchery, of the Governor-General of India's body-guard, and some time in Europe on sick leave. The worst of these alliances is, that the associate has generally been a mere office-cleaner or junior clerk to the firm; but when taken into the house, becomes—he or she whilom so meek and subservient—a raging tyrant, who bullies the senior partner dreadfully.

“Be it so,” Lord Baddington said, wearily, as he looked at his watch, and moved slowly and nervously towards the door, as though he were not quite certain that his entertainer would permit the interview to be finished so speedily. “I will instruct my solicitor to call on you to-morrow; and I will set to work myself at once to see what can be done. But, remember, there is a limit even to my patience. I am very far from rich. My heir has positively nothing but his pay and what I allow him; and if you pull the string too tight, Mr. Pollyblank, it will burst, believe me.”

“ I don't want by any means to pull it too tight, my lud,” the interesting captive returned. “ I only wish to give your ludship plenty of rope, and you are sure to hang yourself. But I must have the other thousand pounds for all that !”

Lord Baddington winced and turned pale—perhaps at the largeness of the sum he was called upon to disburse; perhaps at the horrible familiarity of his disreputable partner. The idea of a Lord hanging himself!

“ One word before I go, Pollyblank,” he said. “ You may fancy I am an inexhaustible reservoir for money, a milch cow that is never dry. In that assumption you are mistaken; but let that pass. Let me ask you one question—Why, in heaven's name, when you had five hundred pounds, did you not invest them in some safe and steady line of business? Surely five hundred pounds were a large sum for a man in the destitute condition in which you appeared to be.”

“ Safe and steady! Haven't I been half over the world since then? Haven't I been to

America? Aren't they a safe and steady people? I was a professor of natural magic and preternatural prestidigitation when those infernal Bow-street officers took me. Wasn't that a safe and steady profession?"

"You appear to have mixed up forgery and robbery with it. Why can't you earn your money legitimately, and be prudent when you have?"

"Because," answered the prisoner with superb complacency, "I have the tastes and feelings of a gentleman, and like to enjoy myself, and spend the vile dross freely. You need'nt sneer at me, my Lord Viscount Baddington; I *was* a gentleman once—only I let my first-floor furnished to a most consummate blackguard, the present tenant of the house I live in. Did *you* always earn your money legitimately, my noble friend with the eyeglass and dyed whiskers? You've shaken that old elbow of yours, and made the bones rattle at Watier's many a time and oft, or else those wicked Sunday papers tell enormous fibs. Were *you* always prudent when you

had money, you old painted mummy? You'd do for a penny show, with the spotted girl for a sister-in-law. Who spent his wife's fortune to the last penny, drawing at the same time from the opera treasury the salary of Mamselle Follejambe, the dancer? Who's over head and ears in debt, and post-obits, and mortgages, and lawyer's costs? — who but the noble Lord, who's going to let me out of this blackbird's cage and give me a thousand pounds?"

"To be wasted in the same dissipation, or employed to promote the same schemes of villany and fraud. Why can't you be an honest man, Pollyblank?"

"A *what?*"

"An honest man;" and while he alluded to the poetic abstraction, whom Mr. Pope has neatly declared to be the noblest work of God, it is a fact that Lord Baddington blushed a deeper crimson than that stereotyped permanent blush on his cheeks, which came, not from his heart, but from Mr. Atkinson, the perfumer's, in Bond Street.

“Why can’t you, at least;” he added, qualifying the term, “keep on the safe side of Newgate?”

The two cynics were face to face. Jack Pollyblank looked at the Peer very assiduously, sitting all the while on his bedstead, his hands on his knees, and his head on one side.

“You mean why do I commit crime?”

“Exactly so,” Lord Baddington acquiesced.

“WHY!” the man on the bed reiterated, as with a sort of shriek he leapt up from his couch, just as you may see a hyæna from a corner of his den, when the keeper with the wheelbarrow-full of shinbones of beef comes round the corner. “Why! why, *because I like it*. Because crime is meat and drink to me — because the fairest woman, and the raciest wine, and the most mettlesome horse, and the loudest dice in the world, are all flat and insipid, and mawkish, in comparison with crime. I’ve been at it since a boy. I could lie before I could speak, and thief before I could walk. I’ve forged my schoolmaster’s

name, and been beaten nearly to death for it. I was a young burglar at home, and had as much pleasure in breaking open a cupboard to get at the cold pie and the bottle of currant wine, as I should have now in breaking into Stowe Palace or the Jewel House in the Tower. There never was but one great man in history, and that was Colonel Blood. Jack Sheppard and all the rest of them were mean, peddling, worsted-stockings rascals. I tell you again, old man, that I was born a gentleman; educated as a gentleman; that my name is no more Jack Pollyblank than it is Jack Thurtell; that I broke my mother's heart, and drove my father to curse me; that I am here now, have been in jail, have committed—well, I am not going to give you a catalogue of my mistakes just now; that I have lived fifteen years by crime; that I intend to live by crime for thirty years longer, and then I suppose I shall die by crime, and the devil will have his own."

He had been talking with extreme volubility; but, from his first exclamation, in a

subdued tone. The drops were running down his face; his eyes were glistening; the little muscles in his chin were quivering; his hands kept continually closing and unclosing; and for once, I entreat the reader to believe me, Jack Pollyblank was speaking the truth.

Lord Baddington, an old man, though the tailors, barbers, cosmetic vendors, and stay-makers had made him so young, trembled a little, looking at the man on the bed. His noble forehead, and temples, too, assumed a certain yellowish and parchment-like hue, though the bloom on his cheeks defied alike his Lordship's agitation and the unwholesome atmosphere of the cell. He was obliged, though, to wipe his brow with a cambric handkerchief (with a coronet worked in the corner, in Miss Golightly's, of the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, own hair), for he felt a clammy perspiration breaking out in beads.

"I believe you are the greatest villain in the world," he said, very slowly.

"You're quite right — present company always excepted," the prisoner returned, now

the old, urbane, humorous Pollybank again. "Do you make haste, and commit a little more villany on my account. Go and suborn somebody, or perjure yourself, or sell yourself—anything to get me out of this mantrap. The iron's entered in the calf of my leg, I tell you, and confoundedly rusty iron it is too. There—go along with you: I've had enough of the conversation of a Peer of the realm. I'm not proud, but my time is precious. Don't lose a moment in setting about business. You need'nt trouble yourself about the thousand pounds till I come for them. I won't let the grass grow under my feet, you may be sure. There—if you hallo through that trap in the door the turnkey will come and let you out. Bye-bye! love to all at home."

With which affectionate farewell Mr. Jack Pollyblank turned his back on his noble friend, and became not only dumb, but apparently deaf; for to a kind inquiry on the part of his Lordship as to whether he required any small sum for pocket-money then, he returned no word of reply.

There was no need for the Peer to "hallo," as he had been advised by the prisoner, through the trap in the cell-door. He had only to show his noble visage on the horizon of that quadrangular aperture, when the turnkey, who to all appearances had remained immobile, and staring at the sky ever since I left him at the commencement of this lengthened interview, hastened to release his Lordship, and then respectfully led him through yard and corridor, corridor and yard, towards the great entrance-lobby.

"A curious person that, my man," Lord Baddington condescended to say, as they paced through the echoing passages.

"So cur'ous, your Honour's Lordship," returned the turnkey, touching his cap, "that it's uncommon lucky for him that Sir Robert Peel's alive and kicking, and that Mr. Justice Bayley's dead."

"How so?"

"Why, you see, Sir — my Lord, I mean — that Sir Robert's done away with all these hanging laws; and it's only for murder and

one or two things of that sort that they stretch a man's neck now. But, Lord bless you—I beg pardon, my Lord—if old Mr. Justice Bayley had been alive, he'd have had the black cap on in a jiffey, and hung that precious Number Forty-five, without a jury, if the law had allowed him."

"You don't seem to have a very good opinion of him," the Peer observed, smiling uneasily.

"I've just such an opinion of him, your Lordship's honour," returned the official, unlocking the last door with which he had to deal, and standing on one side, with another touch of his cap, to allow the Peer to pass, "that I think a little hanging would do him a deal o' good; and I tell you what it is, my Lord," he added, confidentially, "if he isn't a lifer this time, and if he ever comes back here again, though Sir Robert is alive, I'm blest if Number Forty-five won't be taking a glass of wine, and a shaking hands with the sheriffs some of these fine Monday mornings. Thank ye, my Lord."

He significantly closed one eye, dropped his head a little to the right, and touched the gland beneath the left ear with his forefinger. Then pocketed his half-crown, and delivering Lord Baddington to other turnkeys, went his way up narrow corridors, taking a legion of echoes along with him.

CHAP. XXIX.

LORD BADDINGTON MEETS WITH AN UNEXPECTED
SHOCK.

A GENTLEMAN'S carriage in the crowded, narrow streets of the city always puzzles me mightily. It seems a social anomaly. I look on it as I would at a fly in amber — (did I ever happen to see such a phenomenon; which I never did). I met the Archbishop of Canterbury's chariot once in Barbican: fat purple footmen, mitred panels, shovel hat, and silk apron inside, complete. I am sure I followed the vehicle full two hundred yards, and I daresay the devout bystanders thought I was desirous of craving the archiepiscopal benediction. His Grace did not bless me: but

I blessed myself if I could account for his presence in that dingy locality. What do the drones so near the working bees? What did the purple and fine linen of Lambeth Palace so near the greasy corduroy and foul cotton rags of Smithfield and Whitecross Street? To be sure, the good Archibald Campbell Tait, Bishop of London, has preached to the cabmen in a stable-yard near Cow Cross since then. But what *could* J. B. Cantuar want in Barbican? I asked. The only private carriage one ought to see in the city is the Countess of Jersey's brougham—is not her ladyship a partneress in Child's bank?—or the Lord Mayor's coach.

Similar thoughts may have come over peripatetic philosophers in 1835, as the patent axle-wheels of Viscount Baddington's carriage honoured the stones of the Old Bailey with almost noiseless revolution, and as, his Lordship inside the vehicle, the horses' heads were turned Mayfair-wards. And, of a truth, his Lordship seemed in strange companionship; for a butcher's boy in a suetty cart, with a

trotting pony, dared follow immediately behind the vice-comital carriage, whistling defiantly, and ever and anon addressing irreverent witticisms to the vice-comital footmen, principally directed against the gleaming calves of those officials; while, before the carriage, had the impertinence to rattle on a vile knacker's-cart, bound to Cow Cross, an unhandsome van, in front of which sat two coarse men, with short pipes in their mouths, and the hinder end of which was occupied by the carcase of a defunct cab-horse, his poor head and neck hanging over the tail-board, and swaying to and fro in a ghastly manner, to the barking of a yelping cur, which followed behind, jubilant with the prospect of teeming dog's-meat barrows, and over-loaded skewers.

Now in those days, it had occurred (not for the first or the last time in the history of the world) to certain commissioners, or works, or boards, or contractors, to tear up the pavement of London streets, and lay bare the vitals of the city, exposing the mysteries of its gas-

pipes and the secrets of its sewers. Not that there was anything particularly the matter with the gas or the sewers, or the pavement just then; but I suppose the Board thought it a good thing; and the excavators and mud-larks, who went down dirty and came up dirtier, thought it a better, working a little and smoking a great deal, with considerable patriotic enthusiasm; while that wonderful army of people, who never seem to have anything to do—that army of all ages and all sexes, who “moon” about the streets, blinking at the print-shops, or glozing over a fallen omnibus-horse, or nosing street accidents as Hamlet nosed King Claudius’s chamberlain in the lobby—those wonder-seekers stand gazing vaguely upwards, as if they expected the sky to rain roasted potatoes, a shoal of sucking-pigs in full aërial flight, a comet to hit the Admiralty telegraph with its tail, or the lion on the top of Northumberland House to perform that long-promised feat of waggery: to these good people the disembowelment of the thoroughfares was the very best thing that

could have happened. The print-shop windows were deserted immediately; and round every gaping trench there gathered troops of "mooners," from the wealthy-looking old gentleman with the vacant face, the buff waistcoat, and the watch-seals; the doctor's-boy with the covered basket, containing that "mixture as before," with which, if he doesn't make haste, Moribund, the sick man, will do without as well as with; to that inscrutable lone female with the scanty shawl, the pinched blue nose, and the key hanging from her finger, opening, I am sure, nothing but a phantom door in Shadowland — who is the most pertinacious "mooner" I am aware of, who sometimes has a half-starved looking girl with her, and who ever and anon scrubs her blue nose-tip with a corner of the scanty shawl in question. They stared and stared, as though a very dirty ditch were a mine of Golconda, and as though Roman remains were to be thrown up at every turn of the spade.

"What the deuce are you going down these back streets for, instead of Fleet Street?"

He had put his noble head out of the window, and so deigned to address his coachman.

“Fleet Street all up, my Lord,” he answered. “Strand all up as far as Hexeter Change, so the p’leeseman says. Can’t go no hother way, my Lord.”

“Drive on,” cried the Peer, pettishly. “I wish I had walked,” he muttered, as the carriage slowly pursued its way through a maze of narrow and unwholesome thoroughfares.

He did not seem at his ease, Lord Viscount Baddington. Some blight seemed to have fallen on him in Newgate; and, the truth must be told, notwithstanding the penalties denounced against *scandalum magnatum*, his Lordship, notwithstanding the juvenility of his costume and make-up, looked quite an old, old man. He tossed to and fro on his luxurious squabs, like a peevish invalid who loathes his couch of down from long lying thereon. He plucked at the tassels of the window-blinds; he crossed and uncrossed his patent leather booted legs; he settled, unsettled, and

re-settled his wig — forbid it, delicacy! — I mean his curly head of hair.

“ Was ever a fellow so tormented as I am! At home and abroad, by night and by day. As though I had not quite enough trouble with those infernal lawyers, and the muddle the estates are in, and the difficulty of raising ready money. Then there’s G n v ve, and that precious nephew of mine. The young villain will be in town soon, I suppose.” He gave a sudden start and nervous twitch here, as though he had suffered an acute twinge of the gout; then resuming — “ Upon my word, Charles Falcon, I’ll have you out, were you twenty times my grand-nephew — what a nephew too! faugh! — if you make love to my wife, I’ll blow your brains out, I will. I wonder what G n v ve wants with that fellow with the picture under his arm. She’s very fond of painting, the dear, darling, lovely angel. What an incomparable little devil it is, to be sure!”

This was rather an abrupt termination to so complimentary an exordium, in the case of

the lady the Viscount spoke of as *Généviève*. He seemed to think so himself, for from beneath his gorgeous underwaistcoats he drew forth a dainty little filagree locket attached to a chain, and in which was set the miniature of a very beautiful girl, whose light curling hair encircled her face like a golden glory.

“I wish we were at Baden again,” the Peer again muttered, as he replaced the locket in his bosom of fine linen. “Ah, dear me! dear me! why did I ever bring her to England. We might live in Germany in comfort upon half what we spend in England! I might get an embassy abroad, too, somewhere. How she would shine in society! How she would flirt—confound her; confound me, what a jealous old fool I am.”

For though all tell fibs, and the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, there are times when the unadulterated truth wells up from that oft-choked up and polluted spring; and Lord Baddington spoke as truthfully as man could speak.

“If I had stayed abroad,” he continued, “I should have avoided that unhung desperado — that boa-constrictor, who only wants to be let out of his cage to tear my flesh, and everybody else’s flesh off their bones. No; he isn’t a boa-constrictor, he’s a tiger — a raging lion. What a ruffian the fellow is; what a cool, calculating, brazen-faced, incorrigible scoundrel! He’ll leech and leech, and drain and drain me to the last drop. Suppose I were to repudiate him; suppose I were to dare him to do his worst? Suppose he were to divulge his story to the jail governor or the jail chaplain; would any one credit him? Once suppose him guilty, who would believe a convicted felon? I’m sure I’m not so fond of my nephew Gervase’s bastard brood, as to keep the story of their mother’s shame a secret, at the price of two thousand pounds, and perhaps more. Still there’s the honour of the family, still there’s —. By Jupiter,” he interposed, interrupting himself, “I wish the Baddington Peerage, its heir-apparent, and all its belongings, were in the infernal regions.”

Then a Spirit came and stood over against Lord Baddington in his softly-cushioned chariot; and, though he saw it not, almost made the hair of his flesh stand up. And the Spirit said, though it was voiceless, "Lord of Baddington, Lord of Baddington, if Génévive, thy wife, would but bring forth a male child, how happy wouldst thou be to transfer the coronet thou must one day lay down from thy hated grand-nephew to his baby brow? How happy thou wouldst be, if the brute Pollyblank were to declare the shame of thy kinsman and kinswomen, and of the woman their mother, from the highest belfry in London town!" And lo! as the Spirit faded away from the vision of the nobleman's soul, he made unto himself another dream, of a young mother very faint and pale, but with a smile like unto that of an angel on her beautiful face; and of a child in rich garments of lace that was being dandled by a nurse; and a delighted old man walking to and fro in a dining-room, giving away guineas to servants, and excitedly shaking a doctor by

the hand. A very mild, discreet doctor too, clad in raven black; Sir Paracelsus Fleem, high in office in the College of Surgeons, wearing a cocked-hat and a scarlet gown on gala-days in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the King's own doctor, forsooth. And then, which was very strange in a man sixty-five years old, some tears began to roll from the eyes that had the crow's feet beneath, and they traced out little rivulets in the island of rouge on the wrinkled cheeks.

Crash!

There was a shout from the crowd, a gathering round of bystanders, a tumult, and a murmuring, and a host of conflicting directions given, in voices hoarse and shrill.

The journey through the back streets had culminated in that *cloaca maxima*, into which painfully debouch myriads of well-nigh impervious thoroughfares, Drury Lane. There had of course been a stand-still; a gigantic coal-waggon was ahead of the Baddington carriage; an enormous van, laden with huge tubs, and bales, and packing-cases was be-

hind. There had been a false alarm of the way being clear, and the van had pressed forward. The coal-waggon, on its part, made a retrograde movement, and the consequence was that the carriage, jammed up between the two plebeian vehicles, came to a most signal and lamentable grief.

Lord Baddington was startled from his reverie by the sudden collision. The back part of the panel was smashed completely through, and the aged Peer was thrown violently forward, and a moment afterwards was taken out of his carriage, stunned. It was the narrowest part of Drury Lane, close to Wych Street, and over against the quaint tumbled-down little tavern which is fondly held by tradition to have been the favourite resort of the versatile Sixteen-stringed Jack, the last of the highway-men—a great man, but not understood by the age in which he lived, and which ignominiously hanged him. Who is understood by his age? The next age will understand Mr. Agar; the next may perhaps understand *me*. The back part of Lord Bad-

dington's carriage was all smashed to pieces, his Lordship lay insensible within; one of the costly horses had fallen, the coachman had been thrown off the box; the flunkeys had discreetly jumped off the foot-board just before the collision. It was altogether a very pretty piece of business; and, of course, nobody was to blame. We had the driver of the coal-waggon's own word for that, and his brother of the goods-van endorsed his opinion warmly.

They picked the coachman up. He, luckily for himself, though not quite so fortunately for the horse, had been pitched fairly on to the back of one of those noble animals, and beyond a multiplicity of bruises, and the utter ruin of his cauliflower wig, got no hurt from his involuntary equestrian feat. But with the noble inmate of the carriage the case was different. They lifted him out, quite insensible. He had no wound; no fracture of a limb; it was the Shock, people said.

There had been great cries all this time

of "run for a doctor," and the advisers of that rational course of proceedings had set a bright example, by crowding round the injured man, and doing their best towards excluding the air from him, and hampering the movements of those who were lifting him up. The intelligence that it was a "swell" who had been hurt, spread with great rapidity; and from all the filthy little alleys and courts between Charles Street on the one side, and Buckridge Street on the other, came trooping forth a ragged contingent of the lowest orders of English and Irish, who gazed with avidity at the ruined carriage, as though it had been a bark shipwrecked on the wildest shore in Cornwall, and they were land-pirates, craving for plunder, and already dividing the rich cargo among themselves.

There was no need to run very far for medical assistance; for a chemist's shop stood not half-a-dozen yards distant; and this fact, having by a most curious coincidence occurred to about half-a-dozen persons at once, Lord

Baddington was carried thither, still insensible, on the braced arms of half-a-dozen men.

It was a dark, dank, dangerous-looking, low-browed little shop, the windows, apparently, had never been washed since the flood. As to painting, it very probably had never undergone that operation at all: its frontage and door being simply of the colour of dirt, and dirty. There were red and blue bottles in the windows; but the red flask was broken, and the blue was fast mildewing into green, and both were lamentably dingy. There was one blister on view, curled up and brown, by long dessication and disease, like a child's gingerbread "mumbo jumbo," by long dryness and disuse, and which had been some years ago, I presume, a slough of despond to innumerable flies who had perished miserably in its cantharidian stickiness. There was a placard relating to leeches, there was a white jar, labelled "tamarinds;" but it had a broken top, and held not tamarinds, but dust. There was the model of a horse in plaster of Paris;

the steed had but three legs, performing an eternal-goose step, with a bunch of herbs slung across his back. There were a good many bunches of herbs, of an indescribably soiled, mouldy, unholy, magician's-laboratory look, hanging up; and these, with some dingy roots, gave rise to the assumption that the proprietor of the establishment added the calling of an herbalist to his other avocations. It was a shop, in fine, that it seemed inappropriate to call a "chemist's," or a "druggist's." It was emphatically a "doctor's shop," where they sold "doctor's stuff."

A grim cat, with an evil eye, and a brindled coat, very dingy and rusty in hue, lay *couchant* on a shelf, in one of the upper window panes, and lay there stealthily watching the crowd, as though they were so many mice, and she waiting for a convenient opportunity to rend them in pieces, and devour them.

The door of the doctor's shop was fastened, and it was only after considerable rattling thereat, agitating a rusty knocker, and pulling at a cracked bell, that the door itself was

opened, as far as the chain which secured it inside would allow, and a head was presented through the aperture. It was the head of a middle-aged man, rather bald, and garnished with hair that was of the colour of hay, and whiskers that were of the hue of straw.

“What do you want?” he not very courteously asked, for one who spoke with so soft a voice.

“Accident,” shouted the many voices. “Gent met with a haccident. Let us in. Make haste, Dawdle.”

“Go to Doctor Pybus, lower down,” answered the bald-headed little man. “I don’t take in accidents. Be off.”

Many cries of indignant remonstrance arose at this inhospitable reply. The Doctor seemed to be well known, and not very favorably so, among his neighbours; for shouts arose of “Old screw!” “Flinty heart,” “Sold himself to the devil,” “Who poisoned the babby?” and the like; and one little boy, fired with virtuous indignation, improved the fortuitous occasion, boldly to smash the left-

hand bottom corner window pane with his hoop-stick; and then, his young heart failing him, took to flight, and never ceased running till he got to Broad Street, St. Giles's.

The bald-headed man had withdrawn that first-named portion of his animal economy, and was preparing, so it seemed, to close the door altogether, when a big brewer's drayman thrust his brawny arm forward, and caught the Doctor by the collar.

“You wizened hatomy of a lilyvite Jew,” he cried, “if you don't let us in, we'll smash every winder in your mangy crib — we will, by Jerry!”

But just then the surging of the crowd brought the body of the injured Peer full in sight of the Doctor.

“Bless my soul,” he cried; “it's his Lordship, Viscount Baddington. Why didn't you tell me so before, stupids? Come in, come in! Stand aside, good people, for Heaven's sake!”

So they bore Lord Baddington in; and the crowd, after a desperate effort to follow him,

in which they were baffled by the almost instantaneous closing and locking of the door, consoled themselves by glueing their noses to the window-pane, and frightening the grim brindled cat away from her lair.

I think that I must have forgotten to tell you that on the entablature, above the shop-front there was, in half-effaced characters, this inscription:—

TINCTOP, GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

CHAP. XXX.

THE DOCTOR'S LADY FRIEND.

ALWAYS a lord, for ever a lord: write the title on a scroll, and tie it to the tail of a kite, or under the wing of a pigeon, and let it travel the whole world over. Trumpet it forth to the nations; for it is a name of power and might and majesty. Fill the ears of foreigners with it, for it is a great Sound.

They took the poor stunned nobleman into the general practitioner's back-parlour, and applied the usual "restoratives." The usual restoratives necessitated the removal of the wig, the stays, the padded under-waistcoat, and the patent-leather boots. The almost indomitable rouge ceded at last to lotions and

bathings; all the paraphernalia of juvenility were removed, scrap by scrap; and nothing remained lying on the doctor's couch but a withered, yellow old man, with false teeth.

He came to himself by and by, and staring around in a vacant manner, asked, nervously feeling his jaw and his shoulder meanwhile, whether he had not been rather poorly lately. For this lord was perpetually haunted by a spectre; and a skeleton sat continually at his banquets, whose name was Paralysis; and with returning consciousness came a fear that the ghost, which he was wont to lay at ordinary times in a Red Sea of fashionable enjoyment, had had him on the hip for once, and had smitten him down to be bedridden for aye.

He was soon re-assured on this subject, however, and was satisfied that he had sustained no more serious injury than a violent blow on the head. He began to talk cheerfully, on this information being conveyed to him—to talk volubly, facetiously, and, if the truth must be told, somewhat incoherently.

He was very much shaken, evidently. That blow on the head had brought no blood, but it had made him a very different Lord Baddington to the one who walked and talked an hour since. You may put on his wig again, re-rouge his cheeks, re-lace his stays, re-lacquer his boots, oh barbers, valets, and man-milliners!—but neither you, nor all the king's horses, nor all the king's men, shall ever make him the same Lord Baddington, or set him up again.

He began to babble about his carriage, horses, servants. The general practitioner had seen to all that. The carriage had been removed; the horses stabled in the neighbourhood; the bruised coachman seen to; the footman despatched to his Lordship's residence, to break the news of the accident, as discreetly, as possible to the Viscountess Baddington.

“What the dooce did you do that for?” the invalid asked, very testily, but very feebly. “What necessity was there for alarming her Ladyship at all? Her Ladyship's easily excited. I'm not in any danger, am I?”

“I sincerely trust that such is not the case, my Lord,” the general practitioner answered, with his soft voice and a low bow; “but I acted for the best, your Lordship having been for a very considerable time completely insensible. I also deemed it my duty, sensible of the heavy responsibility that hung over me, to send one of your servants to request the immediate attendance of your Lordship’s regular medical attendant, Sir Paracelsus Fleem, with whose address (your footman told me that he was the accredited family surgeon) I happened professionally to be acquainted.”

“You’re very good, I’m sure,” the Peer answered with a languid peevishness; “I’m very much obliged to you. Dooced officious you’re making yourself,” he added, mentally. “I won’t forget it, Mr., Mr.—”

“Tinctop, at your Lordship’s service.”

“Tinctop, Tinctop — don’t I know the name? Haven’t I seen you somewhere before, Mr. Tinctop?”

“I think not, my Lord,” answered he of the bald head, with another low bow; and I

think myself, that if ever any one deserved a medal of the brightest brass for telling a cool and deliberate lie, that bald-headed general practitioner was the man.

For it was indeed Seth Tinctop, erst assistant of Mr. Fleem, the fashionable surgeon, erst the deaf and dumb recipient of secrets. However he had escaped from the search of his loving friend Pollyblank, wherever and in whatever corner of London he had been hiding himself—he who was supposed to be abroad, thousands of miles away—can only be comprehended by those who are conversant, to its fullest extent with the immensity of the wilderness of London. It is the only place in the world where a man can play Timon of Athens to the life, where he can steal away and hide himself so that no human eye shall have power to see or human ear to hear of his whereabouts. If ever you commit a robbery or a forgery, my felonious friend, who may read these lines, don't run away to America—Daniel Forester will follow by the next steamer. Don't trust to the Anti-

podes—a detective will bring you back in the clipper, *Red Jacket*, in a neat suit of handcuffs, along with the gold-dust and the gold-diggers. Hide yourself in London, and you have a chance of safety; hide yourself in London, and you may read the advertisements in the newspapers, offering a reward for your own apprehension, and laugh in your sleeve as you read: for London is the only real Cave of Adullam, the only real city of refuge where all who are in debt and in difficulty, in danger and in discontent, may find an asylum well nigh as inaccessible as the Highland haunt of a red deer or the eyrie of an eagle.

Tinctop—self-promoted, I presume—promoted to be a general practitioner, but the same stealthy, soft-spoken assistant that we have known him of yore—slipped quietly off to his surgery to compound some medication, and left his patient alone for a few minutes. The reflections of Lord Baddington were not of the most agreeable description. He was in no immediate danger, of course. How could he be? His skin was

whole, his bones were unbroken. But he felt very ill at ease, notwithstanding. The ghost that haunted him would not be exorcised, but came and sat over against him with his arms folded and an ugly leer; and there was no Red Sea of fashionable enjoyment to lay the unwelcome guest in just then. He was an old man; he had led a wicked, graceless, merry, godless life; he had a young wife of whom he was jealous; he had an heir whom he hated. For all his place in the House of Peers, his coronet and ermine, his flatterers and dependents, the crowds, even, of his equals, who were glad to eat his toads and hunt his tufts and partake of his rich dinners, he could not bring to mind one man among the whole brilliant assemblage whom he could truly call his friend. These are the things that make sickness terrible. When you feel you are drifting away to a rock-bound coast, where there are no havens whose inhabitants will put out in life-boats to save you, mindful of the good deeds of charity, and love, and mercy you have done to them or theirs in

the old time; when no hand throws out a rope to save you; when there looms not for you in the distance that everlasting Rock of Faith, from whose sides the waters of life ever flow into the great sea of mortality, and whose summit is crowned by the Lighthouse that is a light to all the world.

A carriage drove up to the dingy shop door, and its occupant, Sir Paracelsus Fleem, was received by the bald-headed practitioner. The great surgeon recognised his quondam assistant at once.

“Tinctop, by all that’s wonderful!” he exclaimed. “I thought you were dead, or transported, or at least out of England for good.”

“Not yet, Sir Paracelsus,” returned the discreet Mr. Tinctop, with a bow to his former chief—a respectful bow, but one not quite so subservient as he had thought it decorous to bestow on the Lord inside; “still I am highly grateful for your good wishes. Will you please to walk inside, and look at his Lordship?”

“How did he come here? What is the matter with him?”

“A heavy vehicle—a van laden with dry goods, I believe—came in collision with his Lordship’s carriage, about half an hour since. The back of the carriage was driven completely in. His Lordship was thrown over to the opposite side with considerable violence, striking his head I am induced to believe, against the sill of the carriage window. He was brought in here stunned. I applied the usual remedies, and I now hand him over to you, holding myself completely at your disposal, should my services be of any avail.”

“You’re the same snaky, civil, soft-spoken son of a gun, my friend Tinctop,” muttered Sir Paracelsus, “that you were five years ago. You’ll have to send for me to the Old Bailey yet to give you a character, I fancy, though what I could say for or against you I’m sure I don’t know. You’re either the worst-looking good fellow or the best-looking bad fellow I ever saw. Which is the way to his Lordship, Tinctop?”

“This way, Sir; this way, Sir Paracelsus,” answered the other; and he led the way into the parlour behind the shop, where Lord Baddington had been lying on the temporary couch that had been made up for him.

Tinctop left him alone with his patient, and began making up a prescription in a mortar. It must have been a strange sample of the *fit mistura*; for I am certain that ginger, sal volatile, benzoin, tincture of rhubarb, opium, cocculus indicus, powdered gum arabic, sarsaparilla, bark, alum, essence of cloves, lavender water, quinine, ipecacuanha, magnesia, camomile flowers, cardamom seeds, and Dutch drops entered into the composition. At least he seemed to pour ingredients from bottles so labelled indiscriminately, or, which is just as likely, he was pestling the empty sides of the mortar. At all events Mr. Tinctop was in a profound reverie; and I don't think the patient, for whom the mixture was designed—supposing that patient ever to have existed—would have derived much benefit, interiorly or exteriorly, from the

elaborate nostrum. He left off pestling, and walked to the window. Then he took out a black pocket-book, and producing from it two worn and almost tattered papers, began to examine them closely, while a lambent light of satisfaction seemed to glow, but in a moist and marshy manner, like a will-o'-the-wisp, over his countenance.

“All safe, all safe!” he whispered to himself. “All safe, but one solitary paper, one that I missed, one that I would give worlds to find. Nine-tenths of the evidence, and only one little paper-link wanting. The newspapers tell me that Jack Pollyblank is safe in Newgate; and before another two months are over I hope he'll be safe on his way to Norfolk Island. And besides, if he were to split, he could prove nothing. He knows nothing, can do nothing, for he hasn't got these—he hasn't got these!”

He gave a triumphant chuckle, as, glancing once more at the papers, he carefully folded them up, replaced them once more in the pocket-book, and that again in his breast pocket.

Just then Sir Paracelsus Fleem came out of the parlour.

“I can't make him out at all, Tinctop,” he said. “He's not seriously injured, but he's in a very bad way. His head's all wrong.”

“Do you think his Lordship's life is in any danger, Sir?” the practitioner asked quietly.

“I do think ——,” replied the surgeon. He was about to continue, till turning his eyes on to Tinctop's face, he seemed to see something there that dissuaded him from giving further utterance to his opinion, “I think,” he then went on, modifying his discourse, “that the best thing we can do with his Lordship is to take him home at once to Curzon Street. My carriage is at the door, and if you will get some assistance we'll have him placed in it forthwith. Of course, you'll be paid liberally for your trouble, Tinctop.”

“You are very kind, Sir Paracelsus,” the inferior said, with a profound obeisance; “but

I have a little account to settle with my Lord Baddington, who will no doubt remunerate me for my trouble when that settlement is made."

"A little account! I thought you had settled that years ago," Sir Paracelsus observed with supreme contempt. "Didn't you get enough hush-money from him then?"

"You seem to be unaware, sir," Tinctop replied, "that such accounts bear *interest*. There is a trifling dividend yet due on my claim."

What answer the irate surgeon (who had the heartiest disdain and aversion for his former assistant) might have returned is uncertain; but at that moment another carriage—an honest hackney-coach this time—stumbled up to the door, and from it stepped her Ladyship, the Viscountess Baddington.

CHAP. XXXI.

CALLED TO THE UPPER HOUSE.

WHO could have been the "lady friend" of the general practitioner? and was not the title of the last chapter (the reader is entitled to ask) somewhat of a misnomer?

Not so. Mr. Tinctop's lady friend was no other than the Viscountess Baddington; for so soon as he had given her admittance, he took the liberty of staring in her face, at first with a look of blank amazement, then with one of familiar recognition, and then seizing her by the arm, he ejaculated:—

"Why, Polly!"

Polly! how on earth could her name be Polly? Wasn't she the Viscountess Badding-

ton? Wasn't she the wife of a Peer of the realm? Didn't her name appear in "Debrett" as Georgina, only daughter of the late Captain Andrew Chutnee, H.E.I.C.S., of —— Hall, —— shire?

She did not strike the caitiff to the ground, or wither him up in the great anger of her disdainful glance. She whom you have known so haughty in her boudoir, so cold, so proud, so pitiless in her contempt, so queen-like in her arrogant beauty—she who but an instant before had descended from her carriage radiant and majestic—who had sailed into the shop with the assured step of one of whom it can be said, *Incedit Regina*—she suddenly cowered and turned pale when the chemist's voice addressed her, and the chemist's hand was laid on her arm; and in a voice very low, but evidently agitated by contending emotions, she answered:—

"Hush, hush! for heaven's sake, be silent! You will ruin me if you call me by that name again. How is Lord Baddington? Is he in danger?"

“Before I answer that question, tell me what right you have to feel interested in him?”

“I am married to him.”

“Are you his wife?”

“I am married to him.”

“Listen to me, you jade!” Mr. Tinctop exclaimed, pushing his face close to hers, and hissing forth the words, rather than speaking them. “I’ll twist your wrist off if you don’t give me a direct answer. What have you been doing, you she-wolf you, you jewelled serpent, you shining crocodile, since you left me at Calais, after ruining me: left me without a franc in my pocket, and over head and ears in debt, when you had at least a hundred pounds’ worth of jewels on that viper’s body of yours?”

But he never lost his temper, the ex-assistant; his mild, placid face and shining bald head belied the vehemence of his words. But he kept a tight hold on her wrist the while, and his eyes ever and anon shot poisoned darts into hers. So I have known men, torn within by great passions, seem on the surface

calm, equable, impassible. There is many a volcano in the world from which not even the slenderest spiral of smoke escapes ordinarily; but the eruption must take place some day, and then the floods of boiling lava submerge whole cities, and the sky is in a blaze with the belching forth of flames.

“Pity me, pardon me, spare me,” the beautiful woman, thus humbled, went on. “Defer your revenge, at least. My husband is rich, and I will bribe you to your heart’s content.”

“What have you been doing since you left me, I ask again? If you don’t answer me, I’ll make my fingers meet in your flesh, I will, you green lizard, you.”

“I have been — I have been — Well, I have been —”

“What you always were, what you are in your heart, a —”

“An adventuress. Who made me one, Seth Tinctop? I was the orphan of an Indian colonel at Baden last autumn. I had a female companion — you remember Whiddy; her I have pensioned off. I really had some con-

nection with the East Indies, for I had been the wife of a colonel in the Company's service all the winter at Turin. Lord Baddington fell in love with me, and married me then and there."

"You *are* married to him, then?"

"Y-y-es."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"I am."

She said this in a bold and decided tone, and almost out loud. The chemist drew back, scrutinising her face narrowly. Then he went towards her, and said —

"If you really are married to him, you haven't made quite such a good thing of it in a money point of view as you may imagine. In my opinion, the life of your dear husband (of whom you are, of course, outrageously fond) isn't worth three days' purchase. Sir Paracelsus Fleem, who is inside with him, thinks so too."

"I have my jointure."

"Which isn't worth much, the Noble Lord's estates being mortgaged up to the eyes, and himself over head and ears in debt."

“I have my title.”

The woman said this proudly, confidently, as though she knew that the possession of a coronet — even of a dowager-viscountess — secured immunity for her for the future.

“I don’t think that your title will prove a very profitable investment, my dear; for if this old rip dies, I mean to marry you myself. It will sound well, won’t it; Seth Tinctop, Esq., and the Dowager Lady Baddington?”

She shuddered from head to foot, in her anger, and would, I am afraid have returned some indignant answer; but there was a great stir in the inner room, and Sir Paracelsus Fleem suddenly burst into the shop.

“Tinctop, Tinctop! here, make haste! His Lordship’s in a fit!”

The ex-assistant turned round, laid a finger on his lip, and darted one meaning glance at Lady Baddington. Then he followed Sir Paracelsus into the parlour, she close upon his heels, and trembling in every limb. At the door Fleem became aware of her presence, and bowing low before her, essayed, but with

the greatest respect, to stay her further progress.

“ My dear madam, if your Ladyship would allow me, I think you had better not. Such a shock to your Ladyship’s nerves.”

But she repulsed him very calmly and firmly, saying, “ Sir Paracelsus, when my husband is ill, his wife’s place is by his side. Pray do not stop me, I beg.” And so passed into the chamber.

Into the dark and dingy chamber, where there were more musty herbs hanging up, more hideous reptiles in bottles, more odours of defunct prescriptions, and as a pictorial ornament, a ghostly cartoon of a man out of his skin, but in his under layer of muscles, coloured *au naturel*. And on the temporary bed, his mouth drawn on one side, the foam on his lips, and his eyes upturned, dreadful to look at, was the poor old man who had dressed so gaily, spoken so mincingly, and stepped so gingerly an hour before. The Viscountess, his wife, was on her knees by his bed-side, her arm supporting his head, in a moment. The

tears streamed from her beautiful eyes; with her golden hair fluttering round her face, she looked like a ministering angel; and the Devil, who was doubtless at that moment sitting with his legs curled round one of the glass bottles that had the reptiles inside, must have laughed to look at her.

Charles Delahawk Falcon, Viscount Baddington in the Peerage of Ireland, died, after a rapid succession of fits, at eight o'clock that same night. His Lordship's constitution, naturally feeble and already shattered by an irregular life, gave way even under the trifling injury he had sustained by the collision with his carriage. "He died in the arms of his bereaved and disconsolate wife, and in the presence of Sir Paracelsus Fleem, his regular medical attendant, and Mr. Febrifuge, F.R.C.S., who had been hastily summoned to the bed-side of the deceased nobleman, assisted by Mr. Seth Tinctop, M.R.C.S., a respectable medical practitioner, close to whose surgery in Drury-lane the fatal occurrence which led to his Lordship's death took place, and who

paid him every attention till the arrival of other medical assistance. We are enabled to state that—.” But I am quoting the *Morning Post* for July, 1835.

The remains of Lord Baddington were removed to his house in Curzon-street, Mayfair, the same evening, and there was a grand masquerade of the very blackest hue, and of the costliest description. They buried him in velvet and embroidery, and on his tomb they put an infinity of things that were not true. For he was a Lord to the last.

CHAP. XXXII.

CAPTAIN FALCON COMES TO HIS OWN.

THE affairs of that Lord of Baddington, who came to his end in a doctor's shop in Drury Lane, were found, on investigation, to be in a most satisfactory state of complication and embarrassment. I use the term satisfactory advisedly; for the condition of semi-bankruptcy in which the peer had died was a subject of the most heartfelt gratulation, not only to his lordship's professional advisers, but to very many gentlemen of the long robe and the short coat, who dwelt in chambers of the mustiest and most mildewed description—chambers of such vile odour, indeed, that it seemed as though whole generations of ruined

and desperate clients had committed suicide within their mouldy precincts, and had been buried in the sarcophagi of the japanned tin boxes on the shelves—chambers situate in divers honourable inns of court. And, moreover, not only did these sable and white-neck-kerchiefed gentlemen rejoice greatly at the dead man's difficulties, but the contagion of jubilation spread even to their articulated clerks, and to the very office boys and pallid-visaged runners, and red-nosed laundresses, to whom it was given to feed upon the scraps of green ferret, and the crumbs of parchment that fell from the legal table. The pickings were *so* rich. Oyster-shells were to remain, perhaps, eventually for the heirs; but between them there was a dainty mollusc—juicy, succulent, and appetising; costs, in fact. Many conservatories were added to solicitors' villas at Tulse Hill; many barristers' wives had sable pelisses, new beaver bonnets, and trips to Brighton; many clerks' daughters listened to the troubadour at Beulah Spa, and went a donkeying on Margate sands; many office-

boys had surreptitious banquets of saveloys and porter; many runners and law-writers contributed materially to the profits of Messrs. Thompson and Fearon the distillers; many rubicund-visaged laundresses supplied their husbands—the broker's man, the undertaker's assistant, or the Doctors' Commons license tout—with delicious little hot suppers of pigs' feet or lambs' fry: and all these treats and regalements owed their origin to the rich pickings of the embarrassed Baddington property: to the costs, in fact. Wherever those costs came from must remain one of those legal mysteries to be unravelled only by some future Braeton or Noyes. Yet it appears to me incontrovertible, that lawyers are the only persons who possess the Rosicrucian secret of ^{the Rosicrucian} skinny flints, and eliminating the hide and fat from fleas, the milk from paving-stones, the butter from eggshells, the sunbeams from cucumbers, and of extracting gold from all. They laugh at the proverb "*ex nihilo*," and bring forth banknotes and shining guineas from empty purses and pocket-books, with as much facility as

my poor Professor Pollyblank was wont to extract pounds of feathers and legions of toys from the seeming vacuum inside an old hat. It may be that there is a hocus-pocus and hankey-pankey in both professions.

The Baddington estates, in Ireland, were entailed, which must have been a great comfort to the gallant Captain Falcon, the present heir to, and possessor of, the family honours: seeing it gave him a remote chance of deriving—when some millennium of rent-paying arrived—an income of some thousands per annum from them. At present, they were capitally managed by an agent—quite an aristocrat, who was a half-pay captain, rode to hounds, drew a fat salary, visited the first families in the county, and proved, without the possibility of doubt, that none of the tenants ever paid any rent, and were, moreover, in the inexorable habit—dating from the time of Brian Boru, the Round Towers, and the Annals of the Four Masters—of throwing all bailiffs, putting in distresses, into the River Ballywhack, and compelling all

process-servers to eat their own writs, under pain of death by the shillelagh. So the new Lord Baddington was safe as regards Ireland; and much good his estates there were likely to do him.

There was an estate in England, which, being mortgaged to above five times its value, and unentailed, was sold, by consent of somebody and order of somebody else. The insignificance of the sum it produced was very nearly the cause of apoplexy to the heads of several highly respectable money-lending firms of the Jewish persuasion; but it having been discovered in the nick of time that it ought not, at least under existing circumstances, to have been sold at all, it was thrown (by order of another somebody else) into Chancery, where it became a nice quiet little action—the costs being costs in the cause, to the great profit of the lawyers aforesaid, who drew upon it amazingly, and looked upon it as a very good thing, promising quite a tortoise-duration of existence.

So much for the real property, The per-

sonalty was sworn as under fifty thousand pounds. I think, that if money in the funds, and money in the hands of Messrs. Coutts and Co., bankers, Strand, had been reckoned, if the freehold of a little shooting-box near Twickenham, in whose vicinity the partridges, goodness help them! (even supposing that there were any), had never been disturbed in the late lord's time; but within whose sly little garden-walls there had been, *dans le temps*, very many pretty little archery meetings, one Daniel Cupid being chief bowman, and sundry *figurantes* of the King's Theatre toxopholites, the Baddington head gules the target, and the bull's-eye gold of the real Danæan ring:—if all these had been counted, together with the lease, chaste furniture, rich decorations, valuable plate, and choice pictures of the house in Curzon Street, and the late peer's wardrobe, books, and linen, down to his dog's-eared copy of Catullus, his noble waistband, and his most noble shirt, fifty hundred pounds would have been nearer the mark whereby to estimate this famous per-

sonalty. And even this calculation might have been wanting in accuracy; for it appeared that by a deed of gift executed six weeks before Lord Baddington's death, lease, furniture, fixtures, pictures, plate, linen, decorations, everything appertaining to the fairy palace in Curzon Street, became the sole and entire property of Génévieve, Viscountess Baddington, and were hers and her heirs'—to have and to hold for ever.

Nor was all told yet. It furthermore appeared, that in the hands of trustees there stood in the Three-and-a-quarter per Cent. stocks of the Bank of England, for the use and benefit of the before-mentioned Génévieve, Viscountess Baddington, no less a sum than twenty thousand pounds sterling. Wherever this sum had come from, what Jews had been squeezed, what loan-mongers swindled, what rouge-et noir bank at a German watering place broken, to secure that bonny nest-egg, no one could tell; but there it was, glistening, exciting, intact, the fury of the heir and the creditors, and the chagrin even of

certificated attorney and utter barrister; for the title to it was indisputable, and there were no costs to be gotten from it at all.

Of course, efforts were made to wrench the rich prize from the bereaved and disconsolate widow, in a genteel court-moving way. But the court was not to be moved in any way adverse to Lady Baddington. She, too, had lawyers of her own—stern men, who would not stand any nonsense, and who wanted what few costs out of pocket there might be for themselves; and so the great army of vultures and ravens that were wheeling and croaking over the prostrate carcase of nobility got nothing by their motion, and the widow held her own.

You, cunning man of law, expert in unravelling twisted cases, and in finding flaws in titles, will quarrel with and carp at me, very probably; and sneer down the picture that I, poor-story teller, have drawn of a great man's inheritance. Go into your closet, sleek black rat, and fetching down those calf-bound re-

ports, tell me on your oath—(kissing, not your thumb, but the book)—whether I have exaggerated in one tittle—nay, even in the volume of a grain of silver sand—nay; even in the duration of the life of an ephemeral insect—nay, even in the circumference of a single hair—the be-devilments with which you and yours who have received the baptism of pounce and green ferret, who catch up innocent lambs that you may turn their skins into vellum whereon to inscribe your unholy abracababra of “hereinafter mentioned” and “aforesaid,” can surround the clearest case of A. having nothing to leave to B., or C. leaving all he is possessed of to D. Was there not a great painter who died the other day, leaving his immense fortune, acquired by his own unaided talents, and by as clearly a written will as ever was witnessed, to the Nation, to the funds of an asylum to be erected for the relief of his brother artists fallen upon evil days? Who immediately began to pick nice holes (such as magpies pick to hide their stolen cheese within) in his will, pleading

fervently for nieces and nephews, for whom the dead artist cared not one farthing, and who would have tranquilly left him to rot if he had not been an Academician and a prince among painters, and worth a plum? Who but you, sharp men of law—who but you will amass fortunes out of the beggar's inheritance of rags and bones, and yet bring the gorged money-bags to an ultimate condition of utter shrivelledness? Who but Law, insatiate, insatiable—conniving at its own iniquities, sometimes by sly statutes drawn by itself, full of loop-holes and snuggeries and safety-valves, provided for bursting out more iniquitously than ever in a fresh place?

Exactly one month had elapsed from the demise of our dear brother departed, whom you wot of; and on an autumnal morning, there sat in a private room of an exceedingly private hotel, in Jermyn Street, a young gentleman, attired in deep and decorous black, who, a month since, was wont to accept his bills of exchange with the name of Charles Falcon, but who was now entitled to sign him-

self Baddington; and was, in truth, a peer of the realm, and a pillar of the state.

He was a mild-looking young man, of the approved dragoon pattern, as stereographed by Mr. John Leech, tall, broad-shouldered, bulky-limbed, small-headed, bushy-whiskered, full-mustachioed, insolent-looking. His black clothes did not make him half mournful enough; for the dandified cut of the West-end tailor predominated over the sable hue of the garments themselves, and gave him more of the air of a Beau Fielding suddenly dipped into an ink vat. He was a man whom women might have thought very handsome, looking at his stature and hirsute face; he was one whom observant men must have thought very ill-looking, when they took account, his small, gray, cruel eyes, large, panting nostrils, and mouth with the corners dropping down.

Lord Baddington, be it said, once for all, was a Fool. He was so ignorant—despite the assiduous castigation he had received from his pastors and masters at school, and the jeers and taunts he had undergone from his com-

rades at the university and in barracks—he was so ignorant that he could scarcely spell, and was haunted by an uneasy notion that the Straits of Gibraltar were an island in the South Sea. He had no observation, no wit, no humour, and no thought. His manners consisted in being slangy to his equals and overbearing to his inferiors—superiors he could scarcely have; for as the heir to a peerage, though a beggarly one, he had been toadied from his cradle. In the society of virtuous women he was dumb as a stockfish. With actresses and denizens of the *demi-monde*, he was insolent and coarse. He was one of fifty thousand “swells”—would that I could find a word more expressive and less vulgar—as ignorant, as coarse, and as foolish as he; but, like the majority of his brethren, he possessed all the arts, and graces, and allurements of a “swell” *de par le monde*. He could hunt, drive, fish, row, wrestle, smoke the largest and strongest cigars, fence, stare milliners’ girls out of countenance, insult civilians, bully servants, persuade himself into

the conviction that he could crush intellectual men with that supreme disdain which with the Fool passes for intellect — you know what the fool in the Proverbs said in his own heart — and get into debt with an imperturbable equanimity which instilled confidence into the most sceptical of tailors. He could not remember the date of the battle of Waterloo; but he knew the names of all the winners of the Derby, and the latest state of the betting for ten years back; he would have been puzzled to work out a sum in short division; but he was wonderful in the calculation of the odds at hazard, and at *écarté*, and unlimited loo, few men could beat him.

Fool as he was, he knew, to use a trite and common colloquialism, “which side his bread was buttered.” He was a Rogue. For one of the most miserable fallacies of axiomatic philosophy is that which assumes that the world is divided into two great classes, “fools and rogues.” There are *four* such classes. The rogue-fool—that is merciless Charles the Fifth, who casts three empires away to make watches

and then bleats for his imperial toys again. The fool-rogue—that is James the Second of England, followed closely in the footsteps of Bloody Mary, and nearly driving his subjects to chop his half Tom-fool, half Duke of Alva's head off, and yet the best meaning man in the world. There is the perfect fool—that is Edward the Second; there is the perfect rogue—that is Edward Agar.

Lord Baddington was a rogue-fool. His folly needed leading-strings, and he made them out of roguery. He would be a seducer because it was a wet day, and the garrison town was dull. He would abandon the woman he had wronged, because Maggles, of the Seventh, had done it; and it was rather the thing than otherwise to do. He would borrow money from a friend, and not repay it, because it was more convenient than to borrow it from a bill discounter, who would exact interest, make him take payment half in cash and half in pictures, sherry, camel-bits, ivory frigates, and paving stones, and would probably sue when the bill was dishonoured. Such

was Lord Viscount Baddington, the new. A credit to his order, *n'est ce pas?*

At least there had been this about the old bad dead man, that he was refined in his vices, polished in his corruption, and humourous in his cynicism. We groan about whited sepulchres, and bugs with gilded wings, and painted children of dirt; but let us be consistent. We must either pull down Gehenna altogether, plough over its wicked site, and sow it with salt, *or we must whiten the sepulchres*, and and make them look genteel and decent. Open cesspools and yawning charnel-houses won't do in the same brave thoroughfares where we have Exeter Hall, and the meeting of the "Sepoys' Friend Abolition of Capital Punishment Society."

CHAP. XXXIII.

A HAPPY FAMILY.

LORD BADDINGTON was not alone at breakfast. There had been admitted to the privacy of his Lordship's repast two gentlemen — one a washed-out, weak-eyed, scrofulous little young man, the son of a bishop, who had originally been designed for the church, in which his right reverend father held, of course, the patronage of several livings of great corpulence, but who, failing to show any vocation for the Church of England as by law established, even to the extent of being able to construe any four consecutive lines of any Greek play, a familiar acquaintance with the vivacious and highly moral comedies of Aris-

tophanes being of course indispensable to the education of a pastor of the Christian church, had been pitch-forked into the Foot Guards, where, in leading to the deadly parade and the imminent field-day grizzly Grenadiers of about twice his stature, he gave the liveliest satisfaction to his commanding officers, and to the country at large. His name was Tiffin; he was a lieutenant and captain, and his father was bishop of Bombay. His Lordship's other friend was a fiery old major on half-pay, by name Gambroon — the more fiery, perhaps, as an uncongenial fortune had never once given him an opportunity of distinguishing himself in the tented field. He had served all over the world in different garrisons; and his trophies consisted in a vast store of pickled mangoes and curry-powder, dried reindeer tongues, beaver skins, and an inflamed countenance, the result of innumerable nights at mess of the wettest possible description. Being such an old boy, he was of course a member of the Junior United Service Club, where he bullied the waiters fearfully, and let the

steward know the full meaning of the articles of war and the Queen's regulations. He had never been married, and till within a very short period had lived on his pay; but an aunt had lately left him a legacy of four thousand pounds, in order to spite a niece of hers whom she hated, which sum he had at once discreetly sunk in an annuity in order to spite a niece of his whom *he* hated. Lastly, hovering about the three, and pervading the breakfast-table generally, was Lord Baddington's own man Coops, who had been a trooper in the regiment in which his Lordship had condescended to serve; but manifesting a notable incapacity for acquiring the commonest rudiments of drill, had, after suffering all the anguish of the knout of the rough-rider's long whip in the riding-school, been promoted to the post of Lord Baddington's body servant.

“Stone walls,” it hath been sententiously and poetically observed, “do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.”

“Hearts quiet and contented take
That for a hermitage.”

On the other hand, it must be confessed that broiled ham, devilled kidneys, cold chickens, anchovy toast, potted tongue, kippered salmon, brawn, *pieds de cochon truffés*, poached eggs, Russian caviar, Dundee marmalade, Yarmouth bloaters, *pâté de foie gras*, assisted by Twining's tea, Decastes's coffee, and, maybe, a bottle of Beaune and a flask of curaçoa, although the concomitants of as capital a breakfast as the most exclusive of London private hotels can furnish forth, do not always make up the full measure of human felicity. There are times when the rich viands pall upon the palate and the salt loses its savour, and when our mind being somewhat ill at ease, if not diseased, we feel inclined to throw not only physic, but breakfast, to the dogs, and to have none of it.

The fire-eating Major did ample justice to every viand and condiment on the table, from the broiled ham to the curaçoa, and when his martial countenance from good cheer assumed rather the hue of purple than of crimson, be-took himself to smoking cigars of prodigious size and of a fiery flavour with great gusto.

The bishop's little son had been up the whole of the previous night on a knocker-hunting expedition — (you must remember, reader, that this was in the days of the great Marquis, when such robbery had not degenerated into mere snobbery) — and the pursuit of lions' heads and Egyptian brasses, combined with a verbal altercation with a cabman in the Haymarket, and a personal encounter with a sweep in Whetstone Park, in both of which tournaments Lieutenant Tiffin had had the worst of it, had slightly fatigued that youth, and rendered him for the nonce more partial to the consumption of soda water and sherry than of the more solid delicacies of the table. He, too, was smoking a cigar as large and as fiery as the Major's; yet it is a fact that Lieutenant Tiffin, not nine months previously, when a private pupil with the Rev. J. Broomback, vicar of Twigmore-in-the-Willows, Berks, had been noted for an immoderate partiality for the saccharine, though indigestible, cates, known as alecampane and Boneyparte's ribs.

And Lord Baddington, he, too, was smoking,

but in a moody, desultory manner, and after partaking of no breakfast at all. Now he would gnaw the end of his regalia, now throw it to smoulder on a plate, now resume it, nervously twisting it between his fingers. It was plain to see the Noble Lord had something the matter with him.

“And so the little dancer gave you the slip, eh, Charley?” said Mr. Tiffin; we will not attempt to imitate his lisp, which was of the most pantomimically euphuistic description. They had apparently resumed a conversation which had been suffered to languish for some minutes.

“Always do give you the slip,” the Major remarked, looking up from the “Morning Herald” — people read the “Morning Herald” in those days — with which he had chosen to diversify the cigar and the curaçoa. “Begum of Bhawalpore gave me the slip in the year '18. Ten lacs and not a tooth in her head. Married a half-caste, who sold hair-brushes and pomatum in the bazaar. He's coming over here to buy a seat in Parliament.” Libellous

Major! as if seats in Parliament could be bought!

“Y—yes,” said Lord Baddington, in a tone of languid vexation, in reply to the Lieutenant’s query; “the confounded little filly bolted. As if I meant her any harm.”

“As if anybody ever meant anybody any harm,” the parenthetical Major, who appeared desirous of emulating the Chorus in a Greek Tragedy, again remarked from behind his “Morning Herald.” “I never meant any harm to Mrs. O’Veal, the widow of the town-councillor of Cork, and yet she brought an action against me for breach, and recovered two hundred and fifty damages.”

“But how the doose,” interposed the episcopal-guardsman, “did she manage to get away? I thought you had her hard and fast?”

“Ay! hard and fast indeed, in a lodging at Pentonville, or some horrible place of that sort out in the suburbs, by some waterworks and an hospital, and that sort of thing. Coops took the place for me. Coops you may go.” (This was addressed to the body-servant, who

bowed and withdrew immediately, although I am afraid that he only put the width of a door and the compass of a keyhole between himself and his master). "I left my fellow to mount guard there all the night; and I believe—he's an ingenious scoundrel—that he made love to the landlady, and had tea with rum in it. At any rate I looked down the next morning, to open the siege in a regular manner; when, would you believe it, she turned upon me like a young tigress, talked a lot of nonsense about my having promised to marry her and make her a lady, and at last told me to begone, and never come near her more, quite in the three-novel thingummy style that one gets from the circulating library in country quarters."

"And what did you do?"

"Do, why take hold of her round the waist to be sure, and tell her what a confounded obstinate little fool she was."

"And what did she do then?" asked Tiffin.

"Knife you, I'll be bound!" quoth the Chorus Major. "They always knife you, these Spaniards and Portuguese. Was knifed

myself when I went out to Portugal in Mr. Canning's time, and didn't fight. Brown-faced gipsy, who would have been the loveliest creature in the world, if she hadn't eaten so much garlic."

"She didn't do anything of the sort," said Lord Baddington; "but, by Jove, she pulled out as neat a little pocket-pistol as ever you saw in your life, and clapping it so close to me that I felt the cold steel ring on my forehead, swore she would blow my brains out if I dared to lay hands on her again. I think I could have twisted it out of her hand easily if I had once grappled with her; but she was as agile as a lizard, ran away from me into a corner of the room, keeping me in check with the pistol. Then she rang the bell and began squealing for the landlady, and she came up, and there was a doose of a row."

"Just like 'em, always kicking up a row," the sage of the Junior United Service perpended. "Always lick you with their squalling and screaming. I never knew but one fellow who wouldn't give in to a noisy woman, and

that was the Dutch consul at St. Thomas, in the year '20. He had a clerk that played the violoncello capitally, and he used to fiddle away his loudest, while the consul thrashed his wife with a boot. He fiddled her completely down at last, and she was as quiet as a lamb afterwards, poor woman."

"I wish you wouldn't break in with your confounded colonial stories, Gambroon," interrupted Lord Baddington, with a weary yawn. "Well, as I was saying, the landlady came up."

"And what did she do?"

"Took part against me, burn her! said I was an atrocious villain, and a lot of stuff of that sort. Called Manuelita a pretty lamh, and an innocent creature, and a dooce more. Said I ought to be ashamed of myself."

"You ought to have been ashamed of yourself. It's always best to be ashamed of yourself, and ask leave to come again," the incorrigible Major broke in. "They're devils to forgive are women, and that's how you get the better of them at last."

“She even,” Lord Baddington continued, and not deigning to notice the interruption, “threatened to call for the police. Imagine such confounded insolence. Call the police to me!”

“And how did it end?” Lieutenant Tiffin asked.

“If you won’t be so confoundedly impatient,” was the polite rejoinder, “I’ll tell you. The landlady’s sister came up, and her husband’s grandmother too, for anything I know. At all events, there came up such a lot of them, and they all squalled and squabbled together at me; and the very children—there were a lot of them too—began to scream and roar; and, to tell the truth, I was doosed glad to cut out of the house, jump into the trap, and tool back to the club as fast as I could.

“You went back again.”

“To be sure, next day; but, like an ass, I never sent Coops to keep guard at night. I drove down at twelve o’clock with an amethyst bracelet, that I thought would subdue my lady—”

“Right, right, always give ’em bracelets. Jewellery always masters ’em.” This from the Gambroon quarter.

“With an amethyst bracelet; and when I got to the door, I found the bird flown. Bolted, by Jove!”

“And where is she now?”

“The devil knows; I don’t. The old catamaran who kept the house wouldn’t give me the slightest information. Said it served me right, and that she was glad that the dear little thing had got out of my clutches. I had been stupid enough, or rather Coops had, to pay the rent in advance, so I hadn’t even the satisfaction of telling her to whistle for her money. My clutches, indeed! If ever she does get into my clutches—”

He paused, and swallowed a glass of water. The vapid face lighted up for a moment, but it was with a reflection as from the fire of the bottomless pit. So might you lift up the inanimate cap-peak mask, that convicts wear in penitentiaries, and show, for an instant, flaring beneath, the ravenous, callous, brutal face of him who hates society.

Just then there came a discreet tap at the door.

It was Mr. Coops, who, on a plated salver, brought a three-cornered note written on pink paper.

“Humph!” Lord Baddington exclaimed, taking the missive from his valet, “my dear grand-aunt’s writing. What can she want with me, I wonder? Not to give me any of that twenty thousand pounds, I’ll be bound. Twenty thousand pounds! She has not a right to twenty thousand pence. *I* ought to have had the money.”

So he mused, half aloud, as he lazily scanned the contents of the note. The contents were brief; but they seemed important, for he rose at once, and said that the Dowager wanted him, and that he must go to her immediately.

Were either of “you two fellows” going his way? He would give either of them a lift. Yes; Major Gambroon was going Piccadillywards, and would accept the proffered lift. As for Tiffin, who very likely would have liked a seat in the Baddington cabriolet,

he had lost his chance, as he had not spoken first, and strolled away to pass the remainder of the morning in the Burlington Arcade, where he made large purchases in perfumery, and stared all the pretty girls he could meet out of countenance.

Delicately, gracefully balanced on its springs, with the highest stepping, most mettlesome horses, and the smallest and nattiest of top-booted tigers hanging on by the straps behind; glistening, glittering with paint and varnish, and bright leather and patent harness, went Lord Baddington's cab from Jermyn Street to May Fair; his Lordship driving, like an accomplished whip, as he was; the Major by his side, looking martial and aristocratic, with a high black stock, a white moustache, a shiny hat, and a buckskin waistcoat. They passed a troop of the Royal Horse Guards Blue, on their way to the barracks in the Regent's Park. They passed Tiffin's papa, the Bombay Bishop (home on sick leave), looking ineffably right reverend in a shovel hat and apron, and on a demure cob. They passed a post-office

letter-carrying boy, on a vile "screw," with only three available legs, but that seemed, nevertheless, to go as swiftly as a Melton Mowbray hunter. They passed the great Duke of Wellington, in his blue frock and white neckcloth, with the rubicund groom riding behind, whom you remember so well, if not in the flesh, at least in his canvas counterfeit presentment in Landseer's "Waterloo" picture. This hero they saluted, and were in turn saluted by him, by the upraising of the digits of those immortal buckskin gloves. They met and passed omnibuses, donkey-carts, mourning-coaches, wedding chariots, nursery-maids with their young flocks, hastening to the park; men with coffins on their backs, grenadiers, loving couples, policemen, Jew clothesmen, dandies, and pot-boys carrying out the beer; and the poor people, as they looked at the superb equipage (unpaid for) with the Viscount's coronet on the panel, and saw the gallant gentleman who was driving, thought, half in admiration and half in envy, of what a great man and what a happy fellow he must be.

“Gam,” said the unconscious object of these thoughts.

“Yes, Viscount!” He was a wary man, Gam; and though he called the new-made Peer “Baddington” usually, he humoured him sometimes by the mention of his title. But he never my-lorded him.

“How the doose am I to get my living?”

“Aren’t you a lord?”

“But I haven’t got any money,” the young man answered, with great simplicity; “and I owe a lot. I’m afraid my tick’s getting shaky, too.”

“Enlist.”

“You mean sell my commission. Yes; I suppose I shall have to do that; but what’ll that be—a couple of thousand or so: three, perhaps. But I want so much a year; an income, don’t you understand.”

“Get the Ministry to make you something, somewhere abroad.”

“But all the fellows say I am such a fool,” was the ingenuous reply of the noble youth; “and I know myself that I’m not good at

speechifying or writing, or that sort of thing. 'Pon my soul, I'm in a doose of mess, Gam. There's my mother and sisters — and the girls are getting old maids fast, I declare — living, positively, on the charity of my brother-in-law Guy. He's as rich as a Jew; but he won't lend me any money, the covetous hunks. He says that I spend it all on dice, and drink, and actresses. It's all very well to abuse dice; but I should like to know what I should do without the bones at Crockey's, and whist at the club. Why, whist must be worth five hundred a-year, at least, to you, Major."

"More or less; but I never play for much."

"But one can't be always playing cards," the lordly philosopher resumed. "I want rents and estates, and lands that can't be mortgaged, and tenants that aint bankrupt. I think I shall change my lawyers. Those fellows in Lincoln's Inn Fields have made a fortune out of me; and yet *they* say I owe them a lot of money too. By Jove, I seem to owe everybody a lot of money. I wish my grand-uncle Baddington had kept his peerage to himself."

They had come to Lady Baddington's fairy mansion in Curzon Street. The diminutive tiger was at the horses' head. The Peer jumped down, followed by the Major, and, shaking that warrior's hand, was about to knock, when his attention was arrested by the stentorian tones of one of those peripatetic industrials who perambulate aristocratic back streets, proclaiming news, sometimes veracious, but more frequently of the apocryphal nature known as "cocks." He was a very ragged fellow, this street Cicero, but his lungs were of leather; and thus ran his tale, continuous, if ever a tale were such:—

"Hegstrawordinerry noose, hunparaliled and himpetuous hescape from Noogate yesterday mornin' at a quarter-past sevin 'avin' took advantage of the plumbers and glaziers which was a whitewashinin' the yard hover against the sessions-'ouse lowerin' hissself by a rope and runnin' along four houses, which the leads of one was found by the pieman, has stated in hevidence before the Lord Mayor and Court of Alderman."

“Listen,” said Lord Baddington; “what a voice the rascal has.”

“Ah!” returned the Major, “I think I read something of what he is spouting about in the *Herald* this morning. I forget, though, the name of the fellow who made his escape.”

“Purchase the hegstrawordinerry hescape,” the “death and fire-hunter” went on, after taking a fresh breath, “of John Pollyblank the sellibrated forger hand suspected hincendiary bein’ also haccused of hother crimes. Purchase the hegscape of John Pollyblank, only hekalled since the days of Jack Sheppard and the old Pretender which got out of the Tower of London while the gate was hopened for the purpis of bringin’ in soft soap to wash the lions bein’ in wimmen’s clothes and concealed in a warmin’ pan. Purchase the hescape of John Pollyblank hall the perticklers and honly a ’apeny.”

“Pollyblank, Pollyblank?” the young gentleman repeated; “I think there was a conjuror of that name when I was in Liverpool.

I wonder how he managed to get into Newgate."

"I wonder how he managed to get out of it," rejoined the Major; "but see, there's a policeman moving our orator on. I won't detain you any longer, Viscount. Good morning."

So the Major shouldered his bamboo cane, and strode manfully on towards Half-moon Street; and Lord Baddington, knocking at the door of the fairy mansion, was speedily and obsequiously admitted thereinto.

CHAP. XXXIV.

AUNT AND NEPHEW.

NOT in the same fantastically magnificent boudoir in which she had received Philip Leslie, but in the dining-room of the Curzon Street mansion, G n vienne, Viscountess Baddington—I can scarcely call her Dowager, for as yet no lady had a right to wrest her coronet from her, leaving her only the titular appellation and the weeds of widowhood—received her grandnephew. Lunch was served, the rich viands and wine admirably suggesting the funeral baked meats, which coldly furnished forth the marriage table of her who had been so lately a bride.

She was dressed, of course, in deep black,

and the splendour of her golden hair was imprisoned under the starched lawn and gauze gyves of a widow's cap. But she was still every inch an empress, scornful, beautiful, imperious as she always was, always had been — save in the mean chemist's shop in Drury Lane, where the man who called himself Tinctop had had the impertinence to address her by the vulgar cognomen of "Polly."

This woman, cold as was her proud and sarcastic beauty, was born to cast sunshine in shady places; and now she glorified her funeral garments, and the dismal crape might have been imperial purple, so gorgeous sat she among its folds. There are some women whose beauty cannot be enhanced by dress, but to whom dress is a part of their very beauty; the dress and the woman being wedded to one another.

So sat she before the table, her little hands, quite devoid of any jeweller's ware now, save her wedding-ring and keeper, and her hands themselves demurely crossed when the footman announced Lord Baddington. She rose

with a grave curtsey, but without any smile or other token of welcome, when her grand-nephew entered the room, and advanced, if the truth is to be told, in a somewhat blundering manner towards her. For Charles Viscount Baddington, though long an inhabitant of that loose world in which the female population are not averse to champagne, cigarette-smoking, and the occasional assumption of male attire, and whose boudoirs are theatrical green rooms, *cabinets particuliers* at Richard's, or the *Maison Dorée* at Paris, or private rooms at the Greenwich "Trafalgar," and the Richmond "Star and Garter," was very ill at his ease in the presence of ladies who, by their bearing, did not seem to care about hearing the probable eventualities of the Doncaster St. Leger, or the last anecdote from the *chronique scandaleuse* of the day. Beyond his own sisters, whom he very seldom saw, and to whom he very scarcely ever spoke, it is probable that this Peer of the realm did not number half a dozen young ladies of unblemished character among his relatives.

He called them "modest women," blushed, stammered, and bit his fingers when in their society, devoutly wishing that he were well out of it, and that he were spending the evening with Fan, who could swear in French; or Lou, who could drink Maraschino; or Emny, the *coryphée*; or Liz, who drove the piebald ponies, and rode the skittish mare, played billiards, had ruined a duke, and who could not write her own name. Oh, thou young British man, what a franker, better, honester, finer, livelier man thou would'st be, if thou would'st snub thy sisters less, if thou would'st "go in" for the society of "modest women" a little more, and for "life" not quite so much; up and down, down and up, that dreadful Haymarket; train to Richmond, boat to Greenwich, brougham to Chiswick, furtive trip to Paris. Is a life of all-round collars, champagne, lobsters, pink bonnets, vaudevilles, crinoline, latch-keys, worth one day in the society of a good girl? For he who tells me that he finds it irksome, or namby-pamby, or a bore, to sit, and talk, and live with

pure and virtuous women, is either *mendax* or a fool. Their innocence, their weakness, their charming candour and loving trustfulness, their little angers, and imperfections, and jealousies, and harmless scandal-magging, even, are so many emanations of joy and tenderness to him who has been tempest-tossed for years in the Great Black Sea of London worldliness, and he who is a-weary, a-weary, and would fain lay his head somewhere in peace before he dies. And I, who have seen fair young form after form droop and die, and have had to say of sister after sister, *mortua est! eheu! mortua est!* and now sit sisterless and celibate, like a fly in the heart of an apple, look with a kind of silent and melancholy rage upon men who have sisters and set no store by them, and who are perversely insensible to the heaven-blessed, and healing, and softening influence that the love of a dear sister might have upon the roughest, most world-worn, most case-hardened man.

But all the time that I have been prosing, Lord Baddington has been saying absurd things about the weather—he may have in-

roduced the crops, too, for aught I know—to which his grand-aunt—*his* grand-aunt, had turned, if not a deaf, at least a very inattentive ear. Perhaps, though, if her grand-nephew had known that a shabby little man had called her “Polly,” he would not have been quite so abashed in her presence. He was much more at home with divinities who might answer to the name of Polly without impropriety.

She cut him short at last, and rather abruptly.

“You received my note, my Lord.”

He had received it.

“I want to speak to you on a matter of business.”

He was delighted, he was sure (“shaw,” he said) to receive her Ladyship’s commands. In fact, he was doosed—that is, he meant—here he stopped, conscious of having used an expletive, and of having, so to speak, made a mess of it.

“Will you have some lunch?” the noble widow asked, suppressing a smile.

He had just lunched—that is, breakfasted—thank you. Would take a glass of Madeira. He helped himself as he spoke, hoping, perhaps, that the wine might act like the bees on the infant Plato's lips, and give him eloquence.

“As you won't have any lunch,” his fair entertainer continued, “we may as well proceed to business at once.”

As she spoke, she rose, and traversing the room with that majestic step of hers, went to the door and quietly and calmly locked it.

This was rather an alarming proceeding, but not so alarming as that which followed it, which was simply to open a casket, and to take from it a small pocket-pistol, which she deliberately laid on the damask table-cloth within Lord Baddington's sight, but out of his reach.

“Do you know that pistol?” she asked, composedly.

“Upon my word,” Lord Baddington began. “The woman's going mad,” he thought.

“Do you know it?—I ask you again. Upon my word, if you don't answer me, I'll send its

contents into your body. See it's capped and loaded."

He knew the pistol well enough; it was Manuelita's, and the one with which she had threatened him in the lodging-house at Pentonville. He told Lady Baddington very sullenly and awkwardly, that he had seen the pistol before.

"Where?"

"Really, madam," the young nobleman said, haughtily, "I don't see what right you have to ask me the question, or to pry into my personal affairs. As for your firing off that pistol, why it's just like what the people do at the play, and you'd better not.

She smiled scornfully, took up the pistol, and threw it on to a sofa behind her. Then, in her clear, arrow-like voice, she said:

"Lord Baddington, you are a villain."

It was aristocrat to aristocrat, pride to pride, disdain to disdain. He tried to look her down, but failed miserably in the attempt, and then looked very much like a hound who stands in imminent peril of a double thonging.

“I say, Lord Viscount Baddington, that you are a villain.”

But the Lord Viscount was dumb. He was thinking a good deal, though; and if the door had not been locked and the pistol cocked, and he a nobleman and a gentleman and his interlocutor a lady, young and beautiful, I am afraid it is not improbable that he would have knocked her down.

“A designing, atrocious, cold-blooded villain! I will tell you why—for luring a poor, confiding, innocent, inexperienced girl away from her home. For deluding her with your false promises, and dazzling her with your handsome, gaby, wolf-in-sheep’s-clothing face. You cowardly *roué*, what have you done with Manuelita?”

“I’ve done nothing at all with her, Madam,” the peer cried out in great heat. “I don’t know how the doose you came to know anything about her; but all I know is that she turned me up, and gave me the slip, and—and—I don’t know what right you have to speak to me in this way. I don’t owe you any money.”

“Would you like to owe me some?”

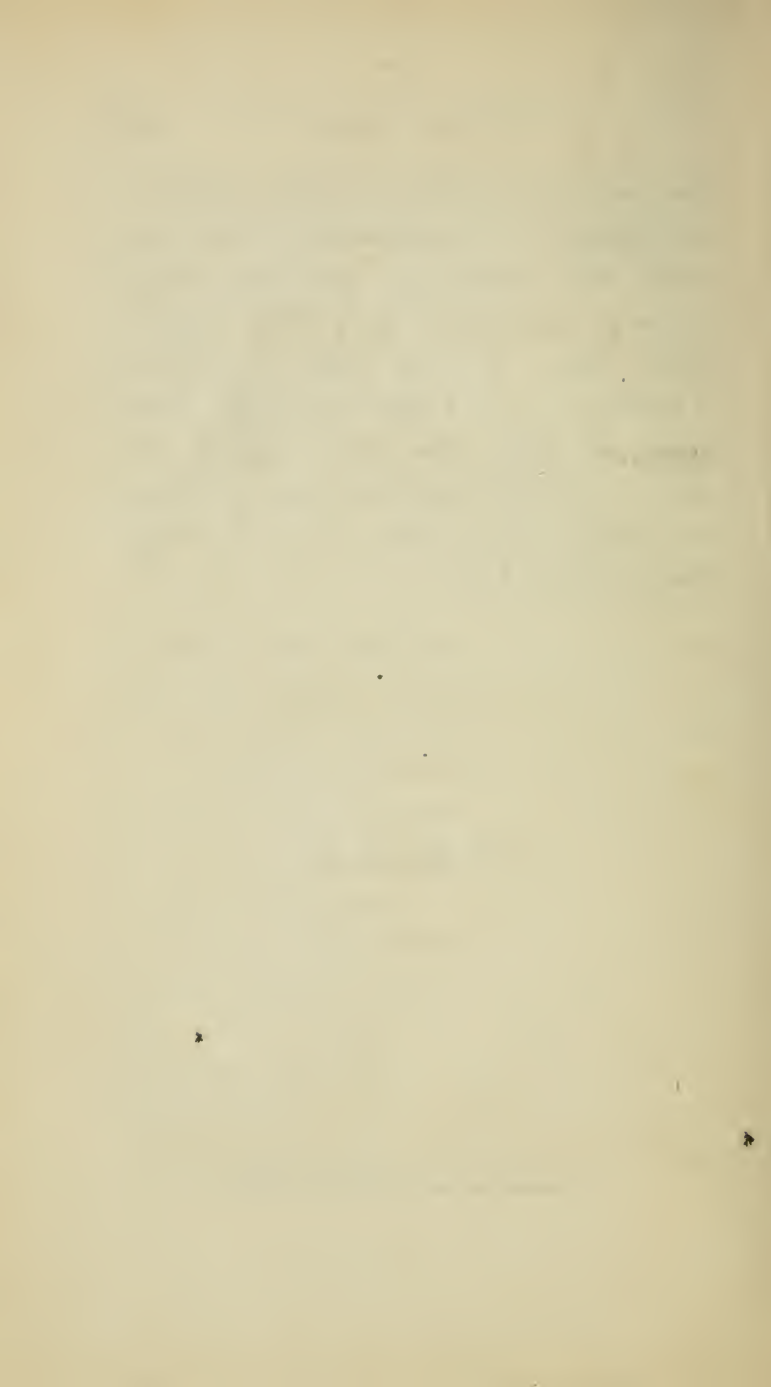
“That depends,” Lord Baddington replied, looking up into his questioner’s face with a very puzzled and perturbed air.

“Then just remain perfectly quiet while I talk to you,” his grand-aunt went on, “and I will tell you how you may possibly become my debtor, but you must listen to all I say, and not interrupt. Come and sit near me.”

She was born, this inexplicable woman, to command all men, and to make them obey her against their will, their reason, and their inclination. Lord Baddington sat down by her side, as he was bidden; and, doing so, some thoughts such as these raced through his mind:—“How beautiful, how fascinating she is; and yet what a tigress, what a venomous serpent; I don’t wonder, now, that she hooked my uncle so easily, and got the house and the twenty thousand pounds from him.” He may not so much have thought this, as have been unconsciously impressed with some kindred feeling bearing thereupon; but he kept gazing in Lady Baddington’s beautiful

face, with an expression in which amazement was mingled with admiration, and fear with both. She triumphing. She, whose delight it was to break strong men's wills across her little finger, as that man in Raphael's "Marriage of the Virgin" breaks the branch across his knee. She, who trampled upon, scorned, derided everything, and was afraid of nothing and no man—out of a doctor's shop in Drury Lane.

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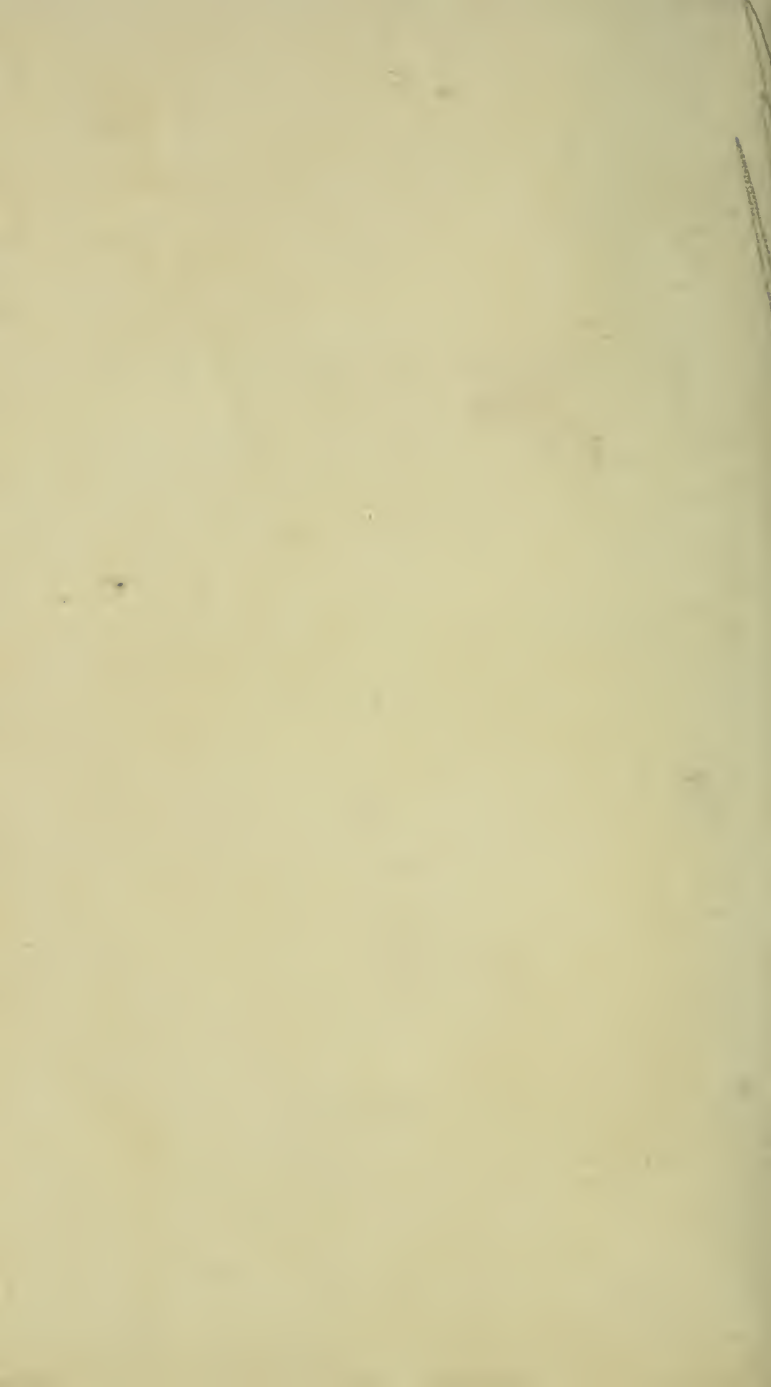
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