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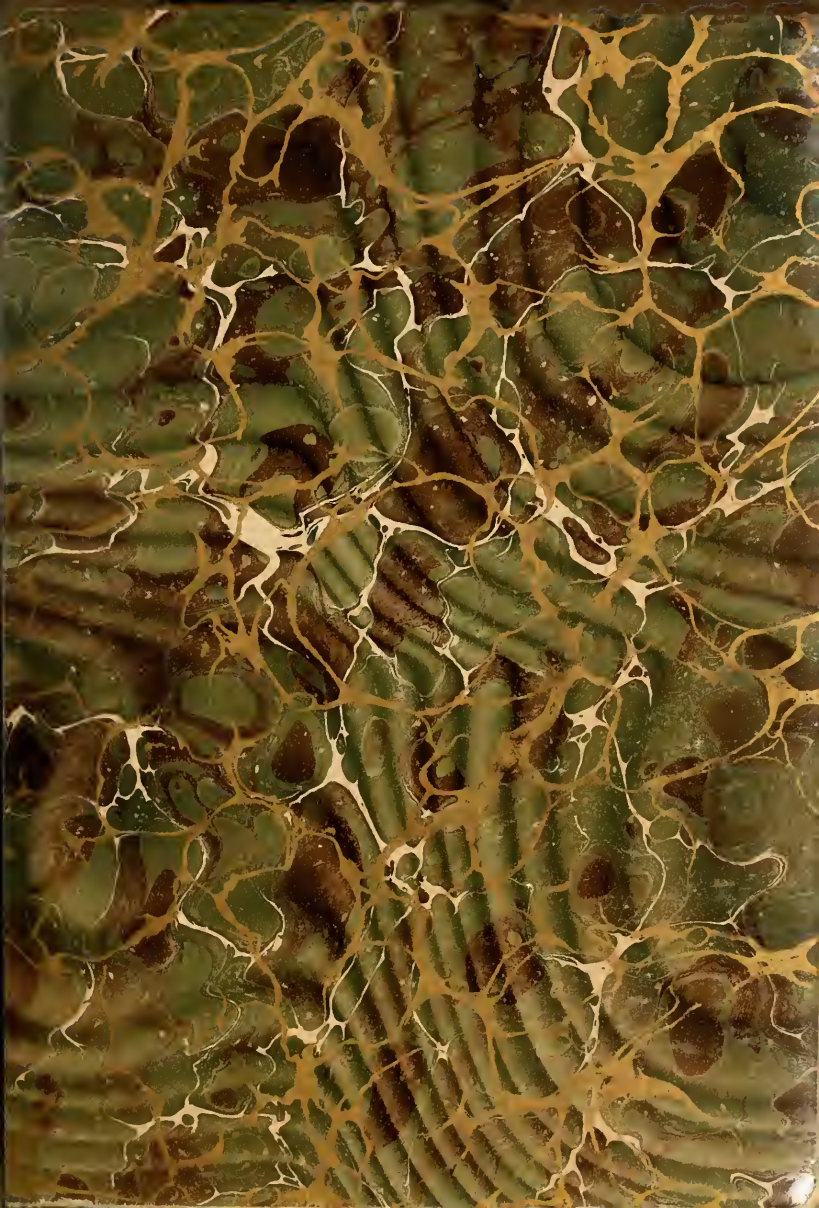


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THE GARSTANGS OF GARSTANG GRANGE

BY
T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE GARSTANGS
OF GARSTANG GRANGE.

BY
Thomas
ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1870.

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B O O K IV.



THE GIRLHOOD OF JENEFY GARSTANG.

THE
GARSTANGS OF GARSTANG GRANGE.

CHAPTER I.

The Earl's Return to his Home.

THE Earl of Linaere had left London on the morning of the day after that on which he had visited his kinsman in the Temple, and travelling all the following night, reached home about daybreak on the next morning, the fourth from that of his departure for town.

All the way down, his mind had been full of newly-born schemes for the establishment of the daughter whose value and importance to him he had so recently been taught to recognize. And he felt as eager to see her, under this her new aspect and character, as if the love, which it now seemed to him that he felt for her, had not been the growth of four-and-twenty hours only.

He reached the Park at an earlier hour than it was likely that she should be up and dressed. What her habits were in this respect he really did not at all know; so little in common had their lives been passed. So he told Atkins that he would go out for a stroll round the farmyard, and bade him tell the Lady

Juliette's maid that he wished to see her mistress when he should return to breakfast.

Atkins thought that the journey to London had done his master a world of good. The Earl looked quite another man, as he told the butler, in the matter of cheerfulness, and holding of himself up like, to what he had been before he started on his journey. He seemed ten, ay twenty years younger, and spoke as if he had some life in him yet.

No discovery had as yet been made of the Lady Juliette's absence from the house. For it was a frequent practice with her to employ herself with books or with her pen, till a late hour of the night; and she would, on such occasions, shut herself into her own rooms, and tell her maid that she need not sit up for her. She had thus ensured for herself the probability that her flight would not be discovered for some hours; and the time had not yet come when it was the usual practice of her maid to go to her bedside in the morning.

That hour came, however, before the Earl returned to breakfast; and when he did so, the servants were in surprised and somewhat uneasy, but not yet seriously alarmed debate among themselves as to the possible explanation of the extraordinary fact of her absence. Jane Barnwell, a cousin of the steward, who had been by him recommended as the Lady Juliette's own maid, went immediately, on discovering that her mistress was not in her room, with a scared face to Mr. Abel Atkins.

"Mr. Atkins, my lady is not in her room! I have not seen her since she told me to go to bed last night!——"

"Well, like enough she was tempted by the beauti-

ful morning, and has gone to take an early walk. She'll be back to breakfast, and then you must send her to the Earl directly. He seemed quite in a hurry-like to see her."

"But bless your soul, Mr. Atkins, her bed have not been slept in! What ever can be the meaning of it?" returned Jane, looking more and more frightened.

"Her bed not slept in? That's queer certainly!" returned the old man, looking hard at his fellow-servant. "Did she ever do such a thing before? Did you ever know her, I mean, to sit up all night?"

"Never, since first I set eyes on her. Never! Lord ha' mercy! Here comes the Earl. What ever are we to say to him? Stay, Mr. Atkins, don't you say nothing to him for a bit. Maybe she will come in, in a minute or two. Let's wait a bit!" and Jane flitted away to run hither and thither through the house in the hope of finding her mistress, as the Earl came up the steps of the portico in front of the main entrance to the house, with a lighter and more assured step than he had been seen to walk with since the death of his son.

"Come in!" muttered old Atkins to himself; "yes, I suppose she'll come in! But I think it is just as well the Earl should have an opportunity of asking her ladyship what errand has taken her out at this time in the morning."

"Let the Lady Juliette come to me in the breakfast-room," said the Earl, as he entered the front hall, in which the above colloquy had taken place; "and if, as I suppose, she has not breakfasted, tell her I should be glad if she would breakfast with me."

"I told Jane, my lord, that you wished to see her

ladyship as soon as you came in; but—Lady Juliette was not in her room—I suppose she must have gone out, my lord, for a walk; and——”

“For a walk at this hour! Is she in the habit of taking walks at this time in the morning? It is very odd that her maid should not know where she is!”

“And, my lord,” continued old Atkins uneasily, and watching his master out of the corner of his eye, while seeming to be looking down to the ground, “what seems to me to be more odd still, begging your lordship’s pardon,—only it seemed to me right that your lordship should be told such a circumstance at once,—Jane says that her ladyship’s bed have not been slept in at all last night.”

“Good God, Atkins! what is the meaning of it? The bed not slept in! and they don’t know where she is!” said the Earl, amazed and angry, but as yet free from any idea of alarm; “send Jane to me directly!” he added, and with that passed on into the breakfast-room.

In a minute or two Jane made her appearance, looking scared and frightened, and out of breath with rushing upstairs and downstairs over the house.

“What is this that Atkins tells me, that the Lady Juliette did not sleep in her bed last night? And when did you last see her ladyship, pray?” said the Earl, looking sternly at the trembling girl.

“Not since last night, if you please, my lord, about seven o’clock. Her ladyship had dined early, and had tea brought into her own sitting-room, about that time,” said poor Jane, getting every minute more and more frightened.

"But was it not your duty to attend her ladyship when she went to bed?" asked the Earl.

"Certainly it were, my lord; but her ladyship, as soon as her tea was served, told me she should not want me any more that night,—and not to disturb her, please your lordship!"

"Not to disturb her! Did she ever do the like before, pray?" asked the Earl, who was gradually beginning to feel a little uneasy, despite his own self-assurances that there could be nothing amiss.

"Oh yes, many's the time, my lord. Often when her ladyship was minded to sit up late with her books, or a-writing, or such like, my lord, she would tell me to go to bed and not sit up for her."

"Go to bed, and not sit up for her! But this was at seven o'clock, you say? Did she ever before dismiss you for the night at so early an hour?" asked the Earl.

"N—no, my lord; I can't say as ever she did, to the best of my recollection, not so early in the evening. But she seemed to be sitting down to her books when I took her ladyship her tea, the same as I have seen her do many a time, please your lordship."

"And her bed has not been slept in. Did you ever know *that* to happen before?" said the Earl, who had by this time risen from his seat at the breakfast-table, and was walking up and down the room,—but still more in displeasure than alarm.

"Never—please your lordship. I never knew her ladyship to sit up all night," said Jane, ruefully.

"Was she ever in the habit of going out into the Park at this time in the morning?" asked the Earl again.

"No, my lord, I never knew her do such a thing before!" returned the girl.

"And, good Heavens, it is now more than half-past nine o'clock! It is most extraordinary! I don't understand it at all! Send Atkins to me directly," said the Earl, stopping short in his walk up and down the room, and drumming with the ends of his fingers on the chimney-piece.

Jane, glad to escape, vanished from the breakfast-room, and ran to do as she was bid; going next again to her mistress's room, as if she had hoped to find her in some overlooked corner of it.

"I can make nothing out of what that girl says," said the Earl in an irritated manner, as soon as Atkins entered the room; "have *you* any idea or suspicion where the Lady Juliette can be, Atkins?—Speak out!" he added, looking searchingly into the old servant's face.

"Not I, your lordship. I never heard tell of such a thing. I have been a thinking and a thinking; and I can't make nothing out on't."

"Let men be sent out round the Park: let some one run down to Bloxam's lodge, and tell him to draw—no, pooh! not that—tell him to have a thorough search made; and——"

"Please my lord," said a footman, hastening into the room, and looking terribly scared; "here's Dr. Bartram to wait upon your lordship, and wishful for to speak with your lordship."

"Good God, what is it! What do you look like that for, you blockhead?" said the Earl, turning pale himself from the infection of the man's face, as he spoke.

"There is nothing amiss, as I knows of, my lord," said the man, with his hand still on the door-handle; "only—please your lordship—I thought that Dr. Bartram seemed—seemed——"

"Seemed what, man? Why can't you speak out what you mean?" said the Earl, who was becoming every moment more seriously alarmed.

"Seemed as if he had got som'at to say as wasn't pleasant, begging your pardon, my lord," replied the man thus urged.

"What do you stand there for, you blockhead? Why don't you tell him to come in, in God's name; and let me hear what he has to say? Does he know anything about my daughter?"

The servant made no attempt to answer the last question, too glad to escape; and in the next minute returned, showing in Dr. Bartram.

And truly the face and manner of the old apothecary abundantly justified the remark that the footman had made upon them.

"Now, Bartram! Speak out, man. What is it, in God's name, that you have to say? The Lady Juliette is missing from her room. Do you bring us any tidings of her?"

Bartram cast a glance at the old valet, who still lingered in the room, which very plainly said that he would prefer speaking to the Earl alone.

"Leave us, Atkins," said the Earl sharply; "and now, sir, I will beg you to say aught you may have to say to me as briefly as possible."

But the old practitioner seemed to be utterly incapable of doing as he was ordered. He came forward from the door, with his broad-brimmed, low-crowned

hat held in both hands before him, bowing low again and again his venerable-looking silver-haired empty old head, and literally shaking in his silver-buckled shoes.

"Heavens and earth, Bartram! Can't you speak? What is it you have to tell me? Do you or do you not know anything of my daughter?" said the Earl in angry impatience.

"Your lordship," said Bartram, his teeth absolutely chattering as he spoke, "I have come because I deemed it my duty to do so. Nothing but the duty I owe to your lordship, and your lordship's family, could have induced me to bring here the tidings I have come this day to tell."

Old Bartram was a humbug, and Lord Linacre more or less knew him to be so. But it was very evident that the old man was acting no part now. His emotion and his terror were too evidently genuine.

"Is it of my daughter, that you come to speak, Dr. Bartram?" asked the Earl, becoming deadly pale, and by dint of putting a strong restraint upon himself, speaking in a quieter manner than he had previously used.

"It is, my lord. Would to God it were not!" said Bartram, speaking in a manner which guaranteed beyond all possibility of mistake the perfect sincerity of his words.

The Earl passed his hand across his brow, and sat himself down in an arm-chair.

"Now, sir," he said, looking straight into the eyes of the other old man opposite to him; "tell me what I have to hear; and I beseech you tell it quickly."

"Last night, my lord, I was in attendance on the Lady Juliette——"

"In attendance, man! Why, her bed has not been slept in. Where did you attend her?"

Bartram opened his mouth to speak,—but the words would not come. His tongue seemed to cleave to his mouth.

"Where did you see my daughter last night? Dr. Bartram, I insist on an immediate reply."

"At—Garstang—Grange,—my lord," said Bartram, uttering the words as if they had been a spell to raise the Evil One.

And in truth the effect they produced seemed hardly a less sinister one.

"What!—what!—What do you say? You saw my daughter, the Lady Juliette Linacre, in the house at Garstang Grange?" screamed the Earl in the extremity of astonishment and displeasure.

"I—I was called thither professionally, my lord! I could not do otherwise than go?" whined the poor old man, shaking his head piteously.

"Called to attend the Lady Juliette Linacre professionally at Garstang Grange!" exclaimed the angry old man again; "what is the meaning of it? I insist on a full explanation!"

"My lord, the presence of the Lady Juliette in that house is as inexplicable to me as to your lordship! I know nothing save the facts which came under my notice as a medical practitioner,—nothing whatever, my lord, I assure you!" replied poor Bartram, with deprecatory earnestness.

"But, at least, you can tell me why you were sum-

moned to attend her! What ailed her that your services were required by her, pray?"

"Oh, my lord! it is very terrible,—very dreadful for a man in my position to have to reply to such a question to your lordship"—replied poor Bartram, who, in truth, would have forfeited no small amount of his year's earnings to have been able to escape the task before him.

"Good God in heaven, Dr. Bartram, what do you mean? Speak at once, and speak plainly, I command you," said the Earl, becoming very pale, and with a quivering lip.

"My lord," replied the old man, rising from his chair, and going up close to the Earl, as if not daring to utter what he had to say otherwise than in a whisper, and with a feeling not unmingled with genuine compassion for the great man whom he was about to hurl down from a position so much above his own to a depth of misery so far below any that he had ever been called on to fathom,—“My lord, I was called to attend the Lady Juliette in her confinement.”

The Earl's lips became livid; his lower jaw dropped; his distended eyes gazed into vacancy, seeing nothing; and in that state and attitude he remained so long and so stonily fixed, that Bartram almost feared that the blow had killed him. But suddenly he started, and springing to his feet, as a man twenty years his junior might have done, he clutched the Doctor by the collar of his coat, and said in a hoarse whisper, shaking him to and fro, partly with passion, and partly by the unsteadiness of his own standing,—

“Man, tell it me all! Are you sure of what you

have said? If you have spoken untruly, or without due grounds——”

He could proceed no further; the vanity of the hope which had for a moment deceived him, rushed back over his mind with deadly clearness; and he fell back into his chair with a long quivering moan, which seemed to recognize the futility of all further attempt to assume any semblance of dignity of manner, or any of the bearing, or feeling, or words which were proper to the social status from which he felt that he was hurled down. All was over! Nay; no such phrase as that could suffice to represent the effect of the blow which had fallen on him. He had felt that sense of dead hopelessness—of utter blankness and desolation when his son had died. And he had thought that he was then tasting the most bitter drop in the cup of human destiny. The present misery showed him how wrongly and ignorantly he had failed to fathom the possibilities that fate might have in store for him. This blow was far worse. That was misfortune. This was disgrace! He had never been wholly crushed till now. He had before been sorely stricken. But those sorrows had been chastisements, under the weight of which he had been supported by the sympathy and compassion of his fellow-men. What compassion could be felt for *this* affliction that did not bring degradation with it? How could he meet the pity in men's eyes without writhing under the horrible and utterly intolerable humiliation!

He remained for several minutes still in his chair with his eyes closed, and showing only by the strong heaving of his chest that the blow that had been dealt him had not absolutely killed him. Bartram became

alarmed, and moved a step towards the bell to summon assistance. But he had scarcely moved when the Earl, with raised hand, imperatively bade him not to leave his side.

For some minutes more he still remained perfectly still, but breathing heavily in his chair; and then when at last he sat upright and opened his eyes, Bartram saw in him a changed man. As the old apothecary said afterwards, it seemed as if a dozen years had passed in those terrible minutes, which had to him seemed almost hours, while he stood by the stricken man's chair, not daring to move. For awhile the Earl, after he had opened his eyes, gazed fixedly, but with uncertain expression, into the face of old Bartram, as if seeking to gather up the thread of the discourse that had been passing between them, when suddenly a great blow had fallen on his head and had stunned him.

"You were telling me, sir——" he said at last, "you were telling me——" and then he fell back into his chair again with a feeble helpless wail.

"Oh, my lord, my lord!——" began Bartram; but he was at once interrupted.

"My lord! my lord!" cried the old peer, with all the bitterness of a broken heart, "what do you stand there for mocking me with pretences of respect, when you know in your heart that you are looking down on me as a miserable and disgraced old man. Would it not be an insult to you to ask you to change places with the Earl of Linaere? Our years are much the same. My hair is as white as yours. And you will walk out from here among your friends, and men will say cheerily, 'How is your daughter, Bartram?' And you will meet their eyes and be happy, and feel proud

of your child; while I—oh, God! oh, God! that it should have come to this. Oh, God! be merciful, and take me from the misery which is too great for me to bear.”

There was again a pause. Bartram would have given much to have been able to call some one to relieve him from his position. But he did not dare to make a second attempt.

Presently the Earl sat up straight in his chair again, and resting his two hands on the arms of it, said in a firmer voice:—

“You were summoned, you say, to——that house?”

“Yes, my lord, I was summoned thither, for the purpose I told your lordship.”

“By whom were you summoned?” asked the Earl, with his eyes fixed on Bartram’s face.

“By the son of old Garstang; the brother of the man who——”

“Who was hanged,” said the Earl, savagely, supplying the words which the Doctor had hesitated to utter. “The brother of the felon who was hanged came to you, you say, and told you——?”

“He told me that the Lady Juliette was at the Grange and very ill. He said no word—most improperly and unpardonably—as to the nature of her illness. I hesitated much in doubt as to what your lordship’s wishes might be under such extraordinary circumstances; but——”

“You went thither, and found——” said the Earl, waving away with an impatient movement of his hand the Doctor’s explanations of his own conduct in the matter.

"I found the Lady Juliette in bed; and perceived at once that—that—that——"

"Speak plainly, sir, and shortly, if you please," said the Earl, with a firm voice, but with quivering lip.

"I perceived, my lord, that the Lady Juliette was in labour.—But, oh, my lord! my lord!" cried the old man, as if anxious to bring the dreadful duty that had been imposed upon him to a close, "my lord, there is yet worse behind——"

"There is not, man; there is not worse behind; there cannot be! Now I defy you! What next have you to tell me?"

"The unhappy lady did not survive her confinement, my lord. She expired at an early hour this morning," replied Bartram, with desperate concision.

"Better so, sir,—better so! It is *not* worse; it is better," said the Earl, fiercely; "and—for the rest——? Why don't you tell me the sequel of your tale, man?" he said, with nervous irritation.

"As I have said, my lord, the unhappy lady sunk, and——"

"But the upshot, man! the child! Was a child born? Does it live? Is there living print of the amours of the convicted felon, who was hanged in Silchester Gaol, with Juliette, last descendant in the right line of the Earls of Linaere?" said the unhappy man, thrusting thus to the hilt into his own bosom the dagger that was piercing him.

"My lord, a female child was born, healthy, and likely to live. Beyond that fact, I have no information. I heard no word said respecting the father of the child."

“Why, who else——! Fool!—idiot that I was to suffer that wretch to come near either of my children! And he has destroyed them both—both—both,—and me.”

And again the old man's head fell on his breast, and he remained awhile silent. Then rousing himself, he said,

“I presume that's all you have to tell, Bartram. I need not detain you longer.”

“I venture to hope, my lord,——” began the apothecary, in a deprecatory tone; but the peer interrupted him with a wave of his hand.

“You have done what it was your duty to do, Bartram! I have no complaint to make of you—that you failed to save—your patient's life, perhaps. I find no fault with that. It is better, sir, as it is. I have to thank you for coming to me this morning. May I ask you to send my man to me, as you go out?”

And so Dr. Bartram escaped from what he assured all Billmouth was the worst half-hour it had ever been his lot to pass.

CHAPTER II.

Notice to Quit.

FROM that hour forth the Earl of Linacre was an entirely changed man. He shut himself up, and absolutely refused to see anybody. Old Abel Atkins told even the servants that they would do well to avoid, as far as might be, meeting their master about the house. And it was not difficult to do so, for, during many weeks, he never moved, save from his bedroom to his study, and from his study to his bedroom. Then he began to ramble out into the park a little; and orders were given that the gates were to be kept closed, and that nobody was to be allowed to traverse the park.

On the morning of the day subsequent to that on which the conversation, given in the last chapter, had passed between the Earl and Dr. Bartram, Mr. Barnwell, the steward, had been sent for; and had received from his master, who kept his eyes studiously averted from him while speaking to him, the order to "cause the body of her, who was my daughter, to be buried in the church-yard; and to take order that no gravestone or memorial of any kind was erected to mark the spot where the body might be laid."

Mr. Barnwell was about to leave the room, merely bowing lowly in reply to the commands he had received, when he was recalled.

"Stay, Barnwell. There is one thing more which it is necessary should be said. It cannot be that those

people should continue to hold the Bishopscroft farm. I abstained from removing them from it, when—when I, perhaps, ought to have done so, because I was unwilling to act in such a matter from motives of resentment. But—now! . . . It would not be decent that they should remain as tenants on the estate. What are the terms of their tenancy?”

“They hold simply from year to year, my lord. They have been there time out of mind; and no such a thing as a lease was ever thought of, as far as I know. They can be removed by six months’ notice at any time.”

“Very good; then let the notice be served!” said the Earl, with a bow of his head which was intended to dismiss the steward.

“And I am sure, my lord, though they *have* been on the land from father to son for such a time, there’s not a man in the country but’ll say that——”

“That is enough, Barnwell! You may tell me when they are off the land.”

And Mr. Barnwell, who had reasons of his own for being well pleased to have the letting of the Bishopscroft farm, let alone the getting rid of people, whose removal would be rejoiced in by all the country-side, retired well pleased with his instructions.

And this was the last occasion, for several years at least, on which the Earl was heard to speak of, or allude in any way, either to the family at the Grange or to the children, the miserable story of whose deaths was connected with them.

One letter went out from the park addressed to Messrs. Wentworth and Jennings, the Earl’s solicitors; and one was received by the Earl from those gen-

tleman. Another which came a week or two later from Mr. Bentham Linaere was not so fortunate; having been returned by the Earl unopened. And with that all communication between the broken-down old man and the outer world ceased. He positively refused to see any one; and never went beyond his own park gates.

People said that the terrible blow that had fallen on him would surely kill him; and that they should be having Mr. Bentham Linaere down among them before a year was out. But grief seems rarely to kill those who would welcome death. The year rolled round; but the Earl did not die; nor did Mr. Bentham Linaere make his appearance. And other years went by, and the old Earl still lived on. And the Billmouth people ceased to busy themselves with continually speculating on him and his sorrows. Other topics of local interest supervened; and the events which have been related, as well as the actors in them, were, if not altogether forgotten, pushed back in people's minds from that foremost place which they had for some months occupied to the exclusion of almost every other subject, and reserved for occasional reminiscence among the gossips of the place.

The servants at the Park, whenever they were asked respecting the Earl, declared that it was a wonder that he lived on, as he did; but that they could see no reason why he should not live a dozen more years as well as he lived the last year. For since the great and sudden change that never-to-be-forgotten day had made in him, he did not seem to be the least changed in any respect. He was bent double, they said; and had grown to be negligent of his per-

son. Among other things he had never shaved since that day; but wore a long flowing white beard. No approach to a smile had ever been seen on his features; and he spoke as few words as possible to anybody,—rarely any to man or woman, save to old Atkins. But he eat fairly well, and with the utmost regularity;—as indeed his whole life was conducted with the most automaton-like and invariable sameness. How any human being could live such a life, the gossips of the servants' hall could not for their parts imagine. But it was certain that his lordship did not appear any worse at the end of the year than he had at the beginning of it.

At Garstang Grange there was change. But it was of a different kind from the change at the Park.

Mr. Barnwell had lost no time in executing the commission that had been entrusted to him. On the following morning, about the time when he knew that Wilfred Garstang would have returned to the house for dinner, the steward knocked at the door of the Grange, and desired to speak with Mr. Garstang. Wilfred, who had seen him from the window of the stone kitchen, and who had very little doubt about the nature of his errand, went out immediately; and was at the door almost as soon as old Ralph, who had gone to answer the visitor's knock.

"You were asking for my father, Mr. Barnwell," he said, with a grave inclination of his head. "My father is, I grieve to say, not in a condition to attend to business. But if you will have the goodness to step into this room with me,"—showing him, as he spoke, into the same room into which he had taken his sister-in-law on that terrible night,—“I shall be

happy to hear anything you may wish to say to my father, and will take care that it shall be duly attended to."

"That will do perfectly well, Mr. Garstang. My business is soon said. And I don't know that being long about it will render it any the pleasanter. The long and the short of it is, that the Earl intends to let the Bishopscroft farm to another party, and I am instructed to serve your father with the necessary six months' notice."

"Perfectly correct, Mr. Barnwell. The Garstangs have held the Bishopscroft land as tenants, under the Earls of Linaere, for three centuries and more; and it requires six months' notice to turn them out of their holding," said Wilfred, without betraying the smallest sign of any emotion.

"Well, you know, Mr. Garstang, as to the three centuries, why that's neither here nor there. You are yearly tenants all the same if you had held the farm since Adam; and six months' notice is what the law requires. You will accept the service on behalf of your father?" said Barnwell.

"Certainly, Mr. Barnwell. I have already said that it is all perfectly correct. We have no lease, and it is our own fault if we have embarked capital on the faith of a peer's honour," returned Wilfred, still speaking with perfect calmness, and even with an entire absence of any feeling of any sort.

"As for that, Mr. Garstang, it is no part of my business to speak on any such subject. The Earl is well known enough in the county,—ay, and beyond that,—as a fair and liberal landlord; and I don't think that you will find it a very easy matter to persuade

anybody the contrary. Why you *don't* suppose, after all that has come and gone between your family and the Earl, that you was a going to remain tenants on his land;—not if so be as you had held the farm before the flood! I should think not! And I am bold to say, you will not find a man in North Sillshire who will think otherwise!” remarked Mr. Barnwell in a tone that was evidently intended to be offensive.

“As for that, Mr. Barnwell, it is no part of your business to speak on any such subject,” replied Wilfred, repeating the steward’s own words in a tone and with a look in his eyes that made Mr. Barnwell feel very uncomfortable, recalling to his mind, as that look did, the fact that he was in the house of a parcel of mad people. “Do your master’s bidding, sir, without daring to make any further observations. Serve your notice, and begone!” added Wilfred, pointing to the door, and scowling menacingly.

“All right, Mr. Garstang; all right, sir!” said the steward, evidently cowed, but venturing to look viciously at Wilfred, as soon as he had got fairly between him and the door of the room. “But this is not out of my business to say, anyway;” he added, as he stood on the threshold holding the door open in his hand: “you want the law and nothing but the law; and, mark my words, you shall have it! If so be there’s a stick, or a straw, or the value of a barrow of manure less on the land than there should be, when you give it up;—don’t you expect no mercy!”

“Mercy! from the Earl of Linacre? I, Wilfred Garstang, expect mercy from the Earl of Linacre? No, I certainly shall not expect that,” said Wilfred with a bitter sneer.

"This here matter will have to be settled between you and me, Mr. Wilfred Garstang. The Earl don't meddle with such things, as I should have thought you might have known. And when the settling day comes, you may wish, sir, maybe, that you had known how to keep a civil tongue in your head in speaking to one as could buy you and all of your name out of house and name any day of the week. I wish you a good morning, sir. The law, and nothing but the law? All right, sir!"

And so saying, Mr. Barnwell shut the room-door behind him, let himself out at the front-door, and made the best of his way down the steep path to the town, vowing to himself, that if the sharpest practice could avail to catch the Garstangs at a disadvantage in the matter of giving up possession of the farm, he would be revenged for the mortification he had suffered at the hands of a "proud beggar, who before that day twelvemonth came round would have much ado to find a crust of bread to put in his mouth."

Wilfred remained standing, as he had stood during his interview with the steward, till he heard the front-door close with a bang behind the angry man. Then he sat down heavily on the little sofa, on which he had placed his sister-in-law on her arrival at the Grange, and leaned his elbows on the table and his head upon his hands. Barnwell had hardly exaggerated the matter, when he said exultingly to himself that before the twelvemonth was out, these Garstangs would have much ado to find bread. The sentence of expulsion from the Bishopscroft farm was simply a sentence of ruin, and if not of starvation, of a degree of poverty that was almost next akin to it. The tidings of the

sentence that had gone out against him brought with it, however, no shock on the occasion of Mr. Barnwell's visit. For Wilfred had fully expected it. He had expected it after the death of his brother. And since the death, under such circumstances, of the Lady Juliette under his father's roof, he had felt that it could not be that the relationship of landlord and tenant should continue to exist between him and the Earl of Linaere.

In all probability, as it seemed to Wilfred, these matters might be entirely different, if he were to make known to the Earl and to the world the fact of the marriage between the Lady Juliette and his brother. Doubtless such a marriage would have been, would still be, very grievously offensive to the Earl. Doubtless his anger, and his grief, at hearing of such a thing, would have been terrible;—*would have been* before he had learned how much worse things might possibly happen to him, and to his ancient race. Now such tidings would come to him in the shape of a most welcome, of an immense, relief. What price would he not gladly pay for the wiping out of the hideous blot, which not only ended the proud roll of his ancestry, which he so lovingly worshipped, but ended it in disgrace and shame unspeakable. Yes! There was little doubt that the Bishopscroft farm might be held,—ay, held in fee simple; if that was to be the price of the information which should wipe away the disgrace beneath which the Earl was writhing in a lifelong agony.

But would Wilfred Garstang buy that, or aught else the Earl could give, at such a price? The price was in his hand. Would he pay it? No, not if he and his were eating their last crust! No, not though such means were the only resource between them and death

by famine. No, that proud old man, who had helped to hunt to death his innocent brother, for the unhappy chance into which his own son had led him,—who had gloated over his condemnation, and over the never-to-be-healed agony of his family; that proud and evil man should pay his penalty. He should suffer as he had caused others to suffer;—should live each day that remained to him in misery, and die, when death came, broken-hearted.

And then as Wilfred Garstang sat there, with the lower part of his face in his hands, while his dark eyes gleamed out, as if they had the object of his vengeance there in the flesh before him; as he fed his hatred with the thought that the Earl's misery was truly the payment of his, Wilfred Garstang's, wrongs,—that it was his hand that inflicted it, as it was in his power to cause it to cease;—as these thoughts passed through his mind, it seemed to him that a yet further satisfaction was needed to make the banquet of his vengeance complete. The Earl was suffering bitter misery; but there was something wanting to the true moral of the retribution if he were never to know,—if he were to die without knowing that this misery had been purposely inflicted on him in punishment for the wrong done to George Garstang, and that it had been inflicted by the hand of him, the law-murdered man's brother.

If he were to tell the Earl that he held in his hands the perfect proof that his daughter had been duly and regularly married, and that the child she had left behind her was the legitimate descendant of all the line of Linaere,—the Earl would entreat!—that would be very sweet. Would there be any chance that entreaty, tears—an old man's tears—and importunity might pre-

vail, and conquer him, Wilfred, to the over-persuading of him to give up the desired proofs? Wilfred smiled grimly to himself as the idea presented itself to him. But of course the Earl would threaten also. Might there not be legal means to compel him to produce the proof. None that he could not baffle. He had but to hide the coffer containing the important papers sufficiently well. But still there might be other means, he thought, of discovering the truth. Jack Brackenbury was no longer alive. And, as far as Wilfred knew, no human being lived who was aware of the fact of the marriage save himself. Yet he was not sure that, if the Earl knew the truth, there might not be some possibility of getting at satisfactory proof of it in some way. But besides, and more than all this, there was the consideration that one element of agony and shame would be removed from the Earl's punishment, if he were made aware that his daughter had not been guilty as he now supposed her to have been. True, infinite sorrow and distress would still remain. But Wilfred felt that he could not afford to lose any one of the various pangs that were to make up the feast of his vengeance.

No! he could not let the Earl know *now*, that his daughter had not in truth been the thing he thought her. He could not make the old man aware that it was his, Wilfred Garstang's, hand that had hurled the thunderbolt that had blasted him; and that he, Wilfred Garstang, his enemy, had the power to withdraw the sorrow,—the power, but not the will, because of the Earl's conduct at the time of George Garstang's death.

No, he could not have the great pleasure of announcing himself to the Earl as his executioner,—yet.

Not yet. But when all the days that remained to him should have been passed in hopeless misery, and the agony of high pride disgraced,—when the escape of the old man from his wretchedness should be so near at hand that no comfort to future hours should be derived by him from a knowledge of the truth, and no possibility of forced discovery from any means he could adopt,—*then* he should know whose hand had smitten him—in that hour surely it would be an extra pang to the sufferer, as it would be an exquisite pleasure to him, the executioner, to say to the dying man, “*I have judged you to live a wretched life and die a miserable death, in retribution for your joy over George Garstang’s fate. By wronging our name, you have blasted your own! I have awarded you this anguish; and I now sentence you further to die with the knowledge that your own race will die with you, disgraced, because you did wrong to me and mine?*”

Wilfred Garstang was none the less determined, as he gloated over these thoughts and images, to keep the promises made to his brother, and to his sister-in-law, as to ultimately righting their child, his niece; but never, never should the Earl know any such purpose. He should die in the thought that his sin against the Garstangs had finally condemned his race to extinction.

And the current of the unhappy man’s gloomy thoughts turned to the more immediate future of himself and his family. How were four,—nay five persons to live off the produce of the Garstang lands, small, sterile and unkindly as they were. Five persons, for there was now his brother’s child in addition to his father and mother, his sister and himself. His first

thought was that it would be better to say nothing for the present, either to his father or his mother, on the subject of the Bishopscroft farm. There were six months yet to run; and who could say whether within that time his father, or his mother, or not impossibly both of them, might be removed from the evil to come! He felt well assured that his father could not live long. Surely it would be well to spare him the bitterness of this last blow, if so it might be.

But to Patience it would be necessary to tell the truth; necessary, and desirable on many accounts. Wilfred was not afraid of the effect that this news might have on his sister. There was a stern and self-relying,—or as Patience herself would have said not without truth, a God-relying—energy of endurance about her, which made evils of the kind now to be met and struggled with not the sort of evils that were most trying to her. Wilfred wished also for her counsel on the subject of sundry doubts respecting matters on which he deemed her judgment to be good. If it were in anywise possible to live off the lands of Garstang, it could only be achieved by the active and helpful co-operation of Patience. He determined that that night, when his parents should have gone to their beds, he would call his sister to counsel. And having thus determined, he went out to return to his labour, gloomy and sad-looking as ever, but not more gloomy and sad-looking than was his wont.

CHAPTER III.

Brother and Sister.

THAT evening, when the melancholy supper at the Grange had come to a conclusion, and Patience was about to follow her father and mother from the room, Wilfred said—they were nearly the first words he had spoken since they had sat down to supper—

“Don’t go just yet, Patience. I want to speak to you. If you have no special call upon your time just now, I wish you would give me half an hour.”

“I *have* a special call, Wilfred. Do you not know that I have? Do you not know that at this hour every evening I always seek the Lord?” said Patience, with her usual dry rigidity.

“Before you go to your bed, Patience, I know. But what I have to say to you to-night is matter which it is your duty to hear; and it will furnish you with further matter to lay before the Lord!” said Wilfred, using a phrase which was culled from the language of Patience, rather than from his own habitual tongue, and speaking not without a certain flavour of satire in his tone, which was not, however, sufficiently marked to afford his sister a justification for resenting it.

“I am ready, brother. It is hardly likely that you should purpose to seek with me the pastime of idle talk,” returned Patience, reseating herself in the chair from which she had risen.

“After dinner to-day, before I had left the house,

while you were upstairs, Mr. Barnwell the steward came here, asking for my father. I requested him to speak his business to me."

"Ay? I can guess, I doubt not, what the nature of his errand was. I have been expecting such a visit for some time past. He came to give you notice that we must quit the Bishopscroft farm," said Patience, with hard calmness.

"That was the purpose of his visit, sister. I cannot say that I either was surprised by it. I had imagined that it was hardly likely that, under all the circumstances, we should be allowed to remain as the Earl's tenants. I can almost say that I could hardly wish to do so," said Wilfred, calmly.

"Would that no Earl, or Earl's sons or daughters, had ever been heard of among us. Saving always that also was God's will," said Patience, with a deep sigh and with upturned eyes. "When must we quit the occupation of the land, brother?"

"We have six months before us. It is not permitted to the landlord to resume his land without a six months' notice to that effect," replied Wilfred.

"Six months!" said Patience, thoughtfully. "Is that enough, brother, to give time for taking from the land that which is our own—for gathering in of that which we have sown?"

"For the gathering what we have sown the time is sufficient. But it is not sufficient for us to receive the value of the labour and money that has been expended by us upon the land. Nevertheless, as we hold no lease, such is the law, and were the law to bear harder on us than it does, you may be very sure that the utmost severity that the harshest construction

of it could be made to justify, and the most malevolent spite that it would in any way countenance, would be the measure meted out to us. But of that it is needless to speak. It is all duly registered," said Wilfred, as an evil gleam of concentrated hatred shone in his eyes.

"Of a surety the Lord will requite it unto the oppressor," returned Patience, with upturned eyes and a bitter look about the mouth, which might have indicated to an observant bystander the curiously different modes of expression in which passions, substantially the same, manifest themselves in different individuals.

"In six months, therefore, from the present time," resumed Wilfred, "our means of living will be reduced to that which can be obtained from our own land. Are you at all aware, Patience, of the sort of living which that unaided resource will furnish to us?"

"I know well, brother, that much the largest portion of our means have come from the profits of the Bishopscroft farm. I know that we could only live from our own land, which is poor, in a very different manner from that in which we have lived hitherto," said Patience, quite calmly.

"At least two-thirds of our livelihood came from Bishopscroft. We shall be miserably poor, my sister. But still it is something to live on our own land, and to be beholden to no man for anything," said Wilfred, looking searchingly into his sister's eyes.

"Truly is it a good thing to depend on none save the Lord," said Patience; "and for my own sake, brother, I fear not. That which is needful for us will be given unto us. That which is not needful we can

live without," said Patience, in her hard, dry, un-emphasized tones.

"It is bravely said, my sister. But for our father and mother—it is difficult for them to change their habits at their time of life."

"We must strive that to them the change shall be as little as possible. But the blow to the spirit will doubtless be a heavy one—especially to my father," rejoined Patience.

"Therefore it has seemed best to me to determine that nothing shall be said to them of this matter, at least for the next six months. Who knows what may happen before six months have run out?"

"Ay, truly it may be, that the Lord in his mercy may take away our father from the wrath to come," said Patience, gravely bowing her head in acquiescence with her brother's decision.

"It is not improbable," said Wilfred; "and those who love him best would most pray for it. And now, sister, I need not detain you longer. To you it was fitting that this news should be told at once; and I am truly glad that we are of one mind respecting it."

And so the brother and sister separated for the night. But on the following evening, at the same hour, Patience, of her own accord, returned to the subject as soon as the retirement of the old people left her and her brother alone together.

"When I came to lay before the Lord, brother, the matter on which we were speaking yesterday evening," began Patience, "it was borne in upon my mind that the same labour, and the same skill, and the same capital, which brought profit when expended on the

Bishopcroft farm, would equally bring its due return when expended on other land. Why should we not become the tenants of some other farm, even if it were a less desirable one?"

It was Wilfred's habit never purposely or needlessly to offend Patience in the matter of her religious feelings and practices, however little sympathy he might feel with her on such subjects. But he could not forbear from a grim smile at the exceeding practicalness of the result of his sister's religious meditations, or abstain from a tone of bitter irony in his reply.

"Truly the suggestion of the Spirit would not have been a bad one, sister," he said, "if it had only been practicable. But I must say that I wonder it was not borne in upon your mind, that there is not an owner of an acre in North Sillshire who would let it to a Garstang. And, unless such a farm could be found in the immediate neighbourhood, it would not avail us, for it must be farmed in conjunction with our own land. Doubtless, Garstang Grange and the lands that remain to it might be sold for a sum which, without any labour at all, would bring in more than can be wrung from the soil,—for more than one of the large landowners around would be glad to have it, and to finish the work of thrusting out from the face of the soil an older family than their own. And if Garstang were sold, we might find a farm in some part of England,—perhaps. But I presume that you would not wish that such a step should be taken?"

"Nay, not that. I would not that at any cost of poverty, brother. Let Garstang be Garstang of Garstang to the end," said Patience, with a look of more worldly emotion in her face than was usual with her.

“Ay, there spoke one of the old blood! So say I, sister. Let Garstang be Garstang of Garstang to the end, be that end what it may! But in that case, as I said, any farm to be taken by us must be found here. And surely you can tell what sort of answer I should get to any application for land in North Sillshire. No, put *that* dream out of your head once and for all,” said Wilfred, with lips wreathed into an expression of intense bitterness.

“So be it, Wilfred. The old fields, on which so many generations of our race have been born and died, will give us a crust still. But there is still one other matter that I wanted to speak to you about. We spoke of our parents last night, but we said nothing of another,—a source of expense which will become considerably greater before it can become less,” said Patience.

“You allude to our niece, Jenefy Garstang, the daughter of our brother,—his and her mother’s sole heiress,” said Wilfred, in a manner that seemed as if he was rehearsing these qualifications more for his own satisfaction, than addressing himself to his hearer. “Well, Patience, I had not forgotten the existence of the Lady Jenefy Garstang.”

Wilfred’s mother, Jenefy the elder, had been desirous that the infant should be christened by some other name—by her mother’s—or any other save one of those that had, for so many generations, belonged to their own family, and been associated with its misfortunes. But Wilfred had obstinately insisted on giving the child the old Garstang name.

“What do you mean by the Lady Jenefy Gar-

stang, brother? I do not understand you," said Patience, staring at her brother.

"That and no other is the proper designation of the child,—or, rather, I imagine, I should say, will be so as soon as the Earl shall die, if he have no male heir. For that infant will inherit not only the whole property of the Linaeres, but the title of Baroness Linaere. This she will inherit from her mother. From her father she will inherit this house and land, and the name of Garstang."

"Brother," cried Patience, looking at him with amazement and dismay rather than any other expression in her face, "what can you mean?"

"Exactly what I say, Patience. Is not that infant the legitimate child of my brother and of his wife the Lady Juliette Linaere?"

"But is not a cousin of the Earl the heir to his estate now that he has no son living?"

"Not so; it seems Lady Juliette was his heir; her child is now his heir both as to the estates and as to the title; that is, not to the title of the earldom, but to the title of the barony, which is older by far than the earldom. You see my information is exact, neither the Earl nor his cousin, whose name is Mr. Bentham Linaere, would suppose that he was the heir, if they knew that the child of the Lady Juliette was born in wedlock. This, as you know, I have the means of proving, when the time shall come that I deem the fitting time for doing so. All that now belongs to that proud Earl will one day belong to the child of our brother. It is a special peculiarity, it seems, in the Linaere family, that females in the direct line of descent inherit to the exclusion of collateral males."

“And how did you come to know all this, brother?” said Patience, still under the influence of her extreme astonishment. “Did—did he know of these strange facts?”

“He!—our brother? No, Patience. He had not the remotest idea that he could ever be a penny the richer in consequence of his marriage with the Earl's daughter. He was thinking of no such matter as that when he married, poor fellow. Nor had she any idea of the truth; which indeed, as long as Lord Saltash lived, was a very unimportant one. You ask where I learnt all this? From Mr. Sligo the lawyer at Silchester.”

“You did not tell him that George and the Lady Juliette were married?”

“Tell him! no, indeed, that would have spoiled all. I tell no living soul that truth till the fitting time shall come. Neither, Patience, will you do so; knowing well, as you do, that even if you should do so, such an assertion must pass for idle talk till I see fit to produce the proofs.”

“But the great fortune that awaits this child, brother, will in no degree make the immediate expense of bringing her up and educating her the less difficult to meet,” said Patience; “rather, indeed, it makes it more onerous and more difficult, since you will probably think it needful that the child should be in some degree more expensively educated than if no such future were before her.”

“I do not see that any teaching can be needed for her, that would not befit the heiress of the Garstangs of Garstang Grange,” said Wilfred with a dark look. “I should in any case wish that my brother's child

should be brought up as befits the sole remaining scion of *our* house. And I was going to tell you how it has seemed to me that the necessary expenses of this child may be best met. When the Bishopcroft farm is given up, the capital which was necessary to stock it and to work it will be set free. The farm is, as it always has been, well stocked. The live stock on it are valuable. So also will the crops be, and the produce in the rick-yard. I have calculated that the sum to be received from the sale of these things cannot amount to less than two thousand pounds. Now, this sum put out to interest would certainly make our position at home a much better one than it will be. But I think that we shall best be doing our duty, Patience, to our family and to him who has been taken from us, by dedicating this money to the bringing-up of his child. It will be amply sufficient, but not too much for the purpose."

"It is a very large sum, brother," said Patience; "and though I would grudge nothing that should go to the fitting bringing-up of our niece in the fear of the Lord, and to a Christian life, I should deem it not only a waste of substance, but, far worse, a tempting of the Lord, to bestow money on teaching the child any of the tricks of heathenry which the world calls accomplishments."

"It will be time to talk of those matters, when the child shall have acquired the tricks of reading and writing," said Wilfred gravely. "I will, please God, do my duty by my brother and by his child to the best of my lights and judgment. And I mean to devote the two thousand pounds, which I hope to realize from the sale of the Bishopcroft stock, to her education. I know

well enough, Patience," he added in a kinder tone, and with a kinder look in his eyes, "that you speak from no feeling of grudging the money for such a purpose, even though our lot may be made the harder by it. We shall be very poor, my sister, and that has never been hitherto among the sorrows which we have had to endure."

"It would have been lost among them. It is as nothing when spoken of in connection with them. Would the hand of the Lord be less heavy on us, brother, if our table were daily spread with the feast of Dives? Would the lot He has laid on us to bear be made heavier by a featherweight, if our fare were reduced to bread and water?" said Patience, with a look of stern hard endurance in her pale and rigid features.

"It is true," replied Wilfred shortly. "We understand each other, Patience. Our main thought, our main duty henceforward, will centre in this child. Is it not a wonderful thing, so wonderful as to—almost to—justify the notion, that the doom which had gone forth against our house has been at length satisfied—the penalty paid; and that in this child a new race of Garstangs may be founded, on whom the curse shall not rest? Is it not, I say, a wonderful thing that in this house there should be born an heiress to all the land of Linaere: that in her the land will return to those who, if old stories tell true, once possessed them, before the Norman name of Linaere had ever been heard of in the country? Is it not very wonderful?"

"The hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass," said Patience, not insensible to the feeling which had been manifested in the last words of her brother.

"Of course, Patience, it will be well not to speak to others of that which we have decided to keep the knowledge of from our parents," said Wilfred.

"To whom should I speak of it, brother!" returned his sister.

"Not that it will not be known—probably is known already—to all the country-side that the Garstangs are to be no more the tenants of Bishopscroft!" rejoined Wilfred.

"It matters not! It will not be spoken of in this house," said Patience.

"And all the world is for us within these walls. Good night, sister!" said Wilfred, turning away as he spoke, to look out from the uncurtained window over the starlit sea.

"Good-night, brother!"

And thus ended a conference in which the future mode and conditions of life at the Grange were established between the two members of the family, on whom alone the whole conduct of it at that time depended.

CHAPTER IV.

The News reaches Mr. Linaere.

OF course Messrs. Wendworth and Jennings, or rather the senior partner in the firm, Mr. Wendworth, in whose hands the management of the Linaere affairs had always been, and who was the personal acquaintance of the Earl, had deemed it his duty to communicate to Mr. Bentham Linaere the tidings, which the one letter written to him by the Earl, after Lady Juliette's

death, had made him acquainted with. Before doing so, however, Mr. Wentworth had judged it expedient to run down to Billmouth for a day himself.

The Earl's letter had been as brief as possible, and was altogether written in a manner which had made the solicitor feel it to be his duty to ascertain, far more accurately than could be gathered from it, what the real nature of the catastrophe had been, and in what condition of mind and body the Earl himself now was. Mr. Wentworth did not judge it to be expedient under the circumstances to drive directly to the Park; but alighted at the "Linacre Arms" in the little town. He walked thence to the Park; and asked in the first place for Mr. Atkins. The account the old servant gave him of the Earl's condition was a deplorable one. The reader already knows pretty well what it must have been. Atkins felt quite sure that his master would refuse to see the lawyer. And the latter fully agreed that it was better to say nothing to him of his—Mr. Wentworth's—visit to Billmouth. From Atkins, too, he heard at length all the sad story of the Lady Juliette's flight and its sequel.

"It's the disgrace, sir, as is killing the Earl!" said the old servant. "He has been a unhappy man, Mr. Wentworth, this many a long year, and you know, sir, that he have had reason enough;—a unhappier man, Mr. Wentworth, than ever a labourer that works on the estate," continued Mr. Atkins with a sad solemnity befitting the recognition of such an awfully mysterious dispensation of Providence. "Not that I should go for to admit any such thing, as you may suppose, sir, to anybody but yourself, who may be said to be one of ourselves like," said the ancient valet, meaning to be

pleasant and complimentary; "it would not become me for to do it! But it's a truth, Mr. Wentworth, as sure as you stand there. An unhappy man the Earl have been. But the deaths of his sons, bad enough as that was, did not knock him down as this last business have a done! It's the disgrace, sir, as is a killing of him; and won't be long about it in my opinion."

"Has he seen anybody since the Lady Juliette's death?" asked the lawyer.

"Not a living soul, sir, nor won't, barring the servants; and even them he likes to see as little of as possible. I don't think he has spoke a word to any human being but me since that dreadful day, except once he sent for Mr. Barnwell."

"The steward? What did he send for Mr. Barnwell for?"

"Just to give orders, as short as possible, for the burial of the unfortunate lady, telling him special, Mr. Wentworth, that not so much as a word of any sort was to be put over her grave in the churchyard; and then to tell him that them Garstangs was to be turned out of the Bishopscroft farm."

"Ah! he ordered that they should be served with notice to quit?" said the lawyer.

"Naterally, sir. He could not do no less. Why, all the county would have cried out against it, if they had remained on his lordship's land," said Mr. Atkins.

"Of course—of course. It was glad to hear that he was enough himself to think of such a necessary step. What sort of people *are* these Garstangs. I have heard strange stories about them, if I remember right,

before now. Garstang of Garstang Grange, they call themselves, don't they."

"Yes, sir; and so they are, for that matter. But they are a queer lot, and a bad lot, Mr. Wentworth."

And then old Abel Atkins went on to tell, in the true spirit of a partisan, all the evil things which were said of the tabooed family at the Grange; and to recount all the history of the fatal intimacy of the late Lord Saltash with George Garstang, and to deduce in clear sequence all the miserable and terrible consequences which had followed from it.

Before leaving Billmouth Mr. Wentworth found means to make further inquiries respecting the Garstangs, in two or three quarters. And everywhere the account he had received from Mr. Atkins had been abundantly confirmed. He was told how fatally the unfortunate young lord had been led into the fray, in which he had met his death, by his ill-conditioned companion; and he listened to much moralizing on the awfully deplorable results of the footing on which that infamous profligate had been most unhappily allowed to insinuate himself into the house at the Park.

Terrible indeed, and most singularly fatal, appeared to the lawyer, the chance which had thus brought about the destruction of both the brother and the sister by the means of the scoundrel who had happily, at least so far, paid his own life as the forfeit of his crimes.

It was on his return from this journey that Mr. Wentworth thought it his duty to write to Mr. Bentham Linacre. Now it did, indeed, appear that he was the heir to the title and estates; and that, in all human

probability, his accession to them would not be long delayed.

"The account I had from the Earl's body servant," wrote Mr. Wentworth, "was most deplorable. It was such that even I judged that it was better not to ask to see him. He has, I am assured, seen no one since the catastrophe; and it is easy to imagine how terrible an effect a misfortune so everyway deplorable must have had on his mind." The letter then went on to detail the various particulars which had come to the knowledge of the writer. "Should you wish any farther details of such information," it concluded, "as I was able to pick up in the neighbourhood, or any particulars respecting the property, I shall have much pleasure in talking the matter over with you either at your chambers, or here, as may be most convenient to you."

Bentham Linaere was sitting at his desk in his chambers at the Temple, working hard at the task of indexing a body of Reports, which he had undertaken for a publisher, when Mr. Wentworth's letter was handed to him.

He threw himself back in his chair, when he had read it, and remained for a few minutes lost in thought. Then taking the letter up he read it again.

"A misfortune so everyway deplorable," he said, quoting from the solicitor's letter; "how can a man write in such a style? Even I judged it was better not to ask to see him. What insufferable asses people make of themselves. Poor old man! poor old man! Ay! he must suffer terribly. To a man of his temper too. And that pretty girl! What a tragedy. Poor little thing. What an innocent little thing she seemed

too. Well, nobody can succeed to anything without the death of somebody else to make way for them. But it can rarely occur to a man to step into a fortune and a title on the stepping-stone of such a tragedy as this. I say, Farnaby!" he called out, going to the door and opening it; "just come over here, there's a good fellow; I have a bit of news to tell you."

"A bit of news! Clogget and Boston have decided on their new edition of the Statutes, and you are to do the editing," cried Farnaby, coming into the room with a pen in his hand. "Two to one that's your news; and I wish you joy of it."

"Two to one! Your bet is lost, Farnaby. Read that," said Linacre, speaking and looking gravely, tossing him the solicitor's letter. Farnaby read, and his face grew serious and even sad as he did so.

"Well, Linacre, I must wish you joy, I suppose. I do wish you joy, old fellow, and rejoice in your high fortunes. But it is a sad tragedy, is it not? Do you remember that day that that poor old man came here, and we were joking afterwards about who was to be the happy husband of the hapless girl, who now lies in her nameless grave without a word of memorial to distinguish it from those around it? Do you remember? What a wretch that man must have been,—that Garstang! And richly he must have deserved his fate,—at all events for the evil he has caused to that unhappy house, if not for the crime for which he was executed."

"I thought at the time that the conviction was a just one," said Linacre; "it appeared to me that according to every principle of law, that man was to all intents and purposes a murderer."

"I did not feel so sure about that at the time," said Farnaby; "but whether he was hung legally or not, or whether or no he deserved hanging, anyway his fate must have made that of your unfortunate cousin the more terrible."

"No doubt. Just fancy her position,—her father coming home, and—such a discovery impending!" said Linaere.

"It makes my heart ache to think of it," returned Farnaby; "and she fled from her father's house to those people at the Grange. Well, perhaps her death was the best thing that could have happened to her, unhappy girl. But to die among such people! What does this Mr. Wentworth mean, I wonder, when he talks about having heard strange things of them. Did you ever hear anything of them, Linaere, when you have been in that part of the country?"

"Oh yes! I have often heard people speak of them, —nonsense mainly. They live in a dreary-looking old house on the top of a cliff, and have lived there, father and son, since the world began. And they speak to nobody and nobody speaks to them; and they are said to be all mad, more or less,—and to be under the ban of some special curse and ill fortune, or some such trash. They are unsociable folk, and don't go to the farmers' market dinner. That I take to be about the whole truth of the matter. They are certainly held as unfit to be associated with by the agricultural mind of Billmouth,—a fact which, as far as it goes, seems to me to be rather in their favour," said Linaere, with his usual causticity.

"And these mysterious people are tenants on the Earl's estate?" asked Farnaby.

“Yes, and the oldest tenants on it!” replied Linaere; “they have held the farm they occupy for nobody knows how many years.”

“And now they are to be turned out. One can hardly blame the Earl under the circumstances. It could hardly be otherwise. They have no lease I suppose?” said Farnaby, whose mind seemed to have been led to dwell on the subject, more than it might have been expected to do, by the odd things that had been told him about these people.

“I don’t know anything about it; but I suppose not. I take it you would not find a tenant on all the estate with a lease. They are dreadfully behind-hand down there, and as stupid as their own bullocks. And as for what you say about it being natural that they should be turned out of their holding, don’t you perceive, Farnaby, that the relationship of landlord and tenant ought to be of a nature not liable to be affected by such circumstances and considerations? Don’t you see that all those notions of a connection of a personal nature between the letter and the hirer of land are palpable remnants of ideas belonging to feudal tenure; ideas altogether hostile to the true principles of political economy? Don’t you see that——”

“Don’t be so wasteful, Linaere! You are throwing away the materials of a capital article for the ‘Precursor;’ I think that were I in the Earl’s place, I should not have chosen to keep these Garstangs for my tenants, let political economy say what it might on the subject.”

“That is so like you, Farnaby!—so unfair—so uncandid. Any evasion to avoid defeat in an argument, which you see imminent! If you can’t put me down

by fair argument,—if you can, I am ready for you,—why not say so, like an honest man, instead of running away under cover of a false issue?”

“But I can’t put you down, Linaere; and I should be curious to see the man who could. And you know I always run away on any issue, or on none;—sometimes by the issue of the room-door! When a man hits out against a feather-bed, he must be content with the exercise it gives his own muscles. He must not expect the poor pummelled thing to hit back again.”

“That would be all very well, if you were a fool, Farnaby; but we happen to know that you have no such excuse.”

“Let us make believe that I am, for once and away,” returned Farnaby, with the most imperturbable good humour. “I was going to ask you whether you would think of running down and paying the Earl a visit.”

“Of course I thought of that directly. In any ordinary case it would be the most proper and the natural thing to do. Were the Earl a different man, I would try it, and strive to be of some comfort to him. But it would not do. It would be of no use. There would not be the smallest chance that he would see me. He won’t see anybody. And I am about the last person whom he would tolerate the sight of.”

“Perhaps you are right; I suppose you will see this Mr. Wentworth?”

“There is no need to be in any hurry about it. After all the Earl is not such an old man; not a man of such an age as that, being hale and hearty, we

should fancy that his life must be near its end. He may live for many a year yet."

"True! but—I don't think that the state into which he is described as having fallen is calculated to contribute to a long life. A man of his years stricken down, as he has been, is very often mortally stricken," returned Farnaby.

"Sometimes sorrow will kill, no doubt. More frequently, probably, it has no power to do so," said Linacre; "at all events I shall do wisely neither to wish that the poor old man's days may be shortened, nor to count in any way on shortly succeeding to his inheritance."

"I am sure that neither your good feeling nor your prudence would allow you to do either, Linacre. It *may* be that the Earl will live many years yet; and should he do so, as time goes on you may perhaps be able to lessen the feeling that keeps you at a distance from him. And, meantime, we must hope that Clogget and Boston will stick to the new edition of the Statutes."

"Yes; the news you fancied I had got would have been more valuable than that which I did receive, as far as present bread and cheese goes. At all events my scribblements are all in the way of my profession,—*vel quasi*;—but as for you, how can you expect the attorneys to come near a man who writes 'The Loves of the Benchers?'" said Linacre.

"And accordingly I don't expect them to come near me," said Farnaby.

"Ah, that fellowship has been the spoiling of a good lawyer! Let law go as it may, you know that

there is always a dinner for you under the portrait of our pious founder," returned Linaere.

"Yes, but—but—but——. Well, I will leave you to your work, and go to my play. Good-by. I will look in again before going out."

And with that Farnaby lounged across the staircase to his own chambers.

Walter Farnaby was the only man in the world with whom Bentham Linaere was on terms of intimacy. It was an old college friendship. The two young men had lived in sets of rooms on the same staircase at Cambridge; they had kept their terms at the Temple contemporaneously; they had been called at the same time; and now they were, as has been seen, occupying opposite sets of chambers in the Inner Temple.

People who knew both the men were always marvelling at the friendship between them. And it was an odd one. Similarly strange alliances, however, are not infrequently to be met with. But none the less do people consider them to be unaccountable whenever they present themselves to observation. For the rule of "like to like,"—the old "*simile simili gaudet*" of the schoolmen—expresses the general notion and experience of the world in such matters. But the rule, if true at all, is liable to very large exceptions. The "*eadem velle atque eadem nolle*," is perhaps as often a cause of dissension as of mutual attraction. Men and women often seek in their companionship with their fellow-creatures the complement rather than the counterpart of their own natures. Especially, and ranking high among all the various causes, feelings, and motives that attract human beings towards each other, is the recognition of good qualities, which for

some reason or other the world in general has failed to discover and to recognize.

If I am a disagreeable pragmatist fellow, but conscious of being always influenced by the highest integrity, the man who values me for this virtue, and for the sake of it forgives or tolerates the ill qualities, which the world around me in general do not forgive, will probably be very dear to me. If I have fine intellectual powers, so obscured and nullified by failings of mind or of temper that the generality of my contemporaries give me no credit for them, the one man who has found out that, despite the drawbacks, I have some real worth in me, will have earned a measure of gratitude from me that will not readily be forgotten.

And of this nature was the tie that bound Bentham Linacre to Walter Farnaby.

But what bound Farnaby to Linacre?

The different feelings that went to the production of the tie are not quite so readily described, but it is not difficult to understand the nature of them.

The chemist who has discovered a new substance is apt to assign a more important function to it, in the economy of the universe, than his scientific fellows who have not discovered it. A traveller who has penetrated into some hitherto unnoticed valley is wont to extol the beauties of it above all those of the valleys that all the world know and admire.

Bentham Linacre's high sense of honour and perfect integrity of mind were the unknown metal which Farnaby had discovered. His logical clearness of mind, sound understanding, and extensive reading were the unnoticed valleys that Farnaby had lighted on. The world would not pay much attention to the

metal presented to their notice, in combination with so large a proportion of disagreeable dross. They would not go out of their way to seek the beauties of a valley the entrance to which was so disagreeable. But all the more—as those who know men would be inclined *a priori* to expect—did Farnaby uphold and stand by the value of his own discoveries.

Then, again, the qualities of Farnaby's mind and temper were such as to neutralize, in a great measure, the roughnesses, and disagreeables, and impracticabilities of his friend, and to make them less intolerable to him than to most men. There was no intellectual self-assertion in him, to be wounded by the offensive self-assertion of Linaere. He was not only a good-natured, but an essentially good-humoured, man. That is, he had not only the kindness of feeling which is the product of the intellectual and spiritual part of a man's nature, but the easy-going imperturbable geniality which is born of eupepsia, and a thoroughly harmonious working together, and favourable combination of all the parts and portions of a man's organization—a quality less valuable, when subjectively considered, than benevolent feeling, and which may exist totally apart from it; but, objectively considered, even of more importance to those with whom we live, because of more incessant and omnipresent operation. There are thoroughly worthless men whose good humour makes them—unfortunately—exceedingly pleasant companions. And there are thoroughly good-natured men the intrinsic worth of whose good quality does not prevent them—unfortunately, again—from being especially disagreeable.

Walter Farnaby was an universally popular man,

both with men and with women. Perhaps an exception should be made to the sweeping nature of this assertion, with regard to the attorneys. Or at least, if he were as much beloved by them as by all others, they did not manifest their affection by entrusting the affairs of their clients to him. They would have liked him, as everybody else did, if he had not been a barrister.

Something has already been said of his personal appearance—his ever-laughing light blue eye, and curling abundance of sun-gilded auburn hair and beard. It was said too, I think, that he was tall. But to give a right notion of the look of him, and the general character of his outward man, it should be added that, without the least approach to fatness, he was large as well as tall—large of limb, of hand, of foot, and of shoulder; a loose-looking man, too, though in his case without any awkwardness or want of grace of movement—rather the reverse. There are some men—markedly handsome and well-formed men—who look as if they were not loose, but tight—tightly screwed together, with limited power of movement in their joints; whose garments look as if they were made of some stiff material especially capable of retaining their shape and form; men who look as if their clothes kept them in the particular form of outline in which they are seen, and as if the shape of them would be different if all the clothes were removed.

The outward appearance of Walter Farnaby was exactly the reverse of all this. His clothes always seemed to be made of some soft material, which took its shape and outline from the body it covered, rather than imposed it on the latter. They always hung

rather loosely on him, and allowed facilities for all the redundant movement of limb that was wont to characterize him.

Linaere was as tall a man as Farnaby, but he was much more slightly built. He was a good-looking man, too, as to feature, but he was an angular man—not specially ill made, but giving one the impression that most of what was beneath his skin must be bone. He was a very precise man in his dress, and affected—not to an ungentlemanlike excess—jewellery, of which his friend never wore any specimen. Both men were characterized in their bearing by abundance of movement. But the character of their motions were so contrasted as to seem a tolerably fair expression of the internal differences of the two men. Farnaby swung and rolled in his movements; Linaere started and jerked. The one might have suggested the idea of a large ship, with all her canvas spread to the laughing sunshine, rolling easily and joyously to the motion of the waves; the movements of the other might have reminded one of those of a mannikin set up to exhibit the powers of electricity.

There was one circumstance that might have operated to prevent any friendship between these two men. And it was creditable to both of them that it had not availed to do so. Throughout their contemporaneous university course, Farnaby had, on every occasion of competition, succeeded, at the expense of Linaere. The two lads had been competitors for a scholarship when they had first come up, and Farnaby got it. Again and again, during their college career, the same thing had occurred. And at last Farnaby had been elected to a fellowship, to the exclusion of

his friend. It was not that Farnaby was the superior man—though his talents were of the brighter, readier, more available kind—but Farnaby was one of those men who seem born to be successful; and Linacre one of those who seem as surely doomed to be the reverse.

Now it seemed as if Fortune—as far as she was concerned—intended to make up to Bentham Linacre for all former slights and ill-usage at the hands of the world. But still it might be a long time before he should be called to the enjoyment of the good things in store for him, or rather the good things that seemed to be in store in him. And in the meantime he had to work at indexing, and editing, and article writing, as best he might, while his friend toyed with the muses, under the safe shelter of his fellowship.

Only that, as Farnaby said, when speaking of the happiness of such a provision, there was a “but—but—but!” And Walter Farnaby was a man specially calculated to appreciate, at their full value, the “buts” which are attached to the holding of a fellowship.

CHAPTER V.

Miss Patience in Trouble.

THE six months which had to elapse before the Garstangs could be turned out of the Bishopscroft farm rolled away; and at the end of them old Wilfred Garstang was still alive. But he had in the space of them fallen so much further into utter imbecility, that there could be no further question as to the propriety of telling him or not telling him any such matter. He

rarely left his bed; and his wife, the fretful and miserable old woman, who had once been that Jenefy whose extraordinary beauty had tempted him to disregard the warning that had in so especial a manner been given to his race, and who had danced by his side through the reckless enjoyment of the first years of their married life so joyously,—the old wife, faithful in his winter as in his spring, almost as rarely left his bedside. It was not probable that either of them would last much longer. And it was quite out of the question to trouble their last hours with the story of a misfortune, from the main part of the consequences of which it might yet be hoped that they would escape.

Nor did the ultimate giving up of the farm involve any of those opportunities for making Wilfred rue the hour in which he had spoken roughly to the great Mr. Barnwell, which the steward had hoped to find. All was in perfect order. The Bishopcroft farm, which for generations past had been always farmed by its tenants, as if the land had been as much their own as the acres belonging to the Grange, was handed over to the landlord in entirely unexceptionable condition. There were neither dilapidations nor any, the smallest, hook on which the smartest of attorneys could hang a pretence for a claim. And the stock sold for a sum a trifle larger than that on which Wilfred had counted.

And the two thousand pounds were duly set apart for the exclusive purpose to which Wilfred had destined them. The as yet nameless heiress, whose life was to be of such importance to many people, had remained during these months in the charge of a married daughter of old Ralph and Margy, who lived as gate-keeper

at the lodge at the principal entrance to Artingale Castle. Sir George Artingale, the owner, had been an absentee for many years, and the place of gate-keeper was pretty nearly a sinecure in those days. The gate-keeper's wife, the daughter of Ralph and Margy, the life-long servants at the Grange, opportunely enough lost her own infant just at the right time to enable her to take charge of the little orphan from the Grange. She was a well-conditioned healthy woman; and the child thrived; better probably than it might have done at the breast of its own delicate and sorrow-laden mother.

Every Sunday evening Wilfred used to walk the distance to the lodge-keeper's cottage,—between three and four miles,—to satisfy himself that the child was doing well. He would have fain persuaded Patience to accompany him on these weekly excursions, offering to meet her objection as to the desecration of the Lord's day, by changing the day of his visit to the Saturday. But Patience could not bring herself to venture to such an extent as this into the outer world. She said too, truly enough, that she was absolutely devoid of all knowledge which could help her to form an opinion as to the child's wellbeing, and that she should be no use at all. Wilfred, therefore, made his weekly pilgrimage alone.

In the course of that winter old Wilfried Garstang died; and Jenefy his wife survived him less than a month. She seemed to fall into a state of complete lethargy when her husband died, and breathed her last from sheer lack of energy or will to live.

It was, in every way, for the best that they should thus go to their rest. Their removal made more

difference than might be at first supposed in the details of so very rigidly economical a household as that at the Grange had perforce become.

There were now only Wilfred and Patience, and the two old servants to be provided for. And the brother and sister were both utterly indifferent as to hardships of the sort that poverty imposed upon them. Nevertheless, the struggle was a hard one—but it was a successful one; and the outward show of decency in the eyes of the hostilely watching world was unbrokenly maintained. But the death-like dulness and silent monotony of the house were more terrible than ever. Both brother and sister worked very hard, and, probably, found in their incessant toil the only palliative to the life they led that could have made it in any way tolerable. The expenses necessary for the little Jenefy made no addition in the family budget: nor did the pressing poverty of the brother and sister cause the needs of the little orphan to be in any degree stinted,—for all that was needed for that sacred purpose came from the two thousand pounds.

And thus four years passed away. And the Garstangs, and their story, and their peculiarities almost passed out of the minds of the people of Billmouth. They were never seen,—*they*, being now only the solitary brother and sister,—they never went down into the town; and the Earl, whose misfortunes could not be remembered without recalling those of the family at the Grange, being never, by any chance, seen and scarcely ever heard of, had almost as entirely passed out of the public mind. Grief had not killed him. And Mr. Abel Atkins, and the people immediately around him, had left off believing that it must needs

soon do so. For there seemed to be no change in him from day to day. Every day a thin and much bent old man, with flowing silver locks, walked twice from the house to the Park-gate, and back again. Every day he eat his solitary bit of dinner; every day he went to bed at the same hour; and every morning at the same hour he arose to do, with monotonously exact regularity, the same that he had done the day before. It was impossible that old Atkins, though the habits of a long life tended to make his existence very nearly a counterpart in his own sphere of that of his master, could be condemned to the same utter seclusion as the Earl. But he was not given to gossip. And when it did occasionally happen that he would indulge in a little quiet confidential chat in the parlour of the "Linacre Arms," with some two or three of the older tradesmen of the town, the above was the account he gave of the Earl's mode of life.

Time seemed to have fallen asleep and to have forgotten to move, and life to have become stationary and stagnant, both at the Park and at the Grange. Wilfred Garstang's black hair was turning to grey, and his tall slender figure began to stoop a little. But in Patience it was hardly possible to detect the least sign of change. The life they led was essentially a hard one. There was much and constant labour, and very small return for it. But the old Garstang acres did continue to supply a sufficiency of food to the brother and sister, and to the two old servants of the house. Doubtless, it would have gone much worse with Wilfred, and possibly also with Patience, had it not been for the new source of interest, of thought, and of hope, which

had come into their dreary lives with the young life that was progressing at the gatekeeper's lodge.

The brother and sister rarely spoke much to each other on this subject, save to ask and communicate information as to the immediate material wellbeing of the child. Between any people so circumstanced, save the Garstang brother and sister, it could hardly have been but there would have been, during the long dreary hours in that dreary house, much and frequent talk of hopes, and plans, and future prospects in reference to the child, who had such a fate in store for it. But though thoughts on such subjects were doubtless very frequently busy in the mind of Wilfred, and probably to a less degree in that of Patience also, there were feelings at work within them which prevented any communication of such thoughts to each other.

Conscience, it may well be believed, contributed to this result. Wilfred could not but have felt that he was acting very blameably, and that the passions which actuated him in his determination to keep the fact of his brother's marriage and the legitimacy of his niece a secret, were evil. No doubt he said again and again to himself all that he had said to Patience on this subject, in the one sole conversation that had ever passed between them in reference to it. No doubt he strove to represent himself to his own mind as the stern awarder of a decree in accordance with the demands of absolute justice. No doubt he told himself again and again that nobody was or should be injured by the postponement of the discovery of the truth save the Earl, who, to his vindictive mind, so richly merited the punishment he was inflicting on him. Great injury was also inflicted on Mr. Bentham Linacre, as it might

have been easy to point out to Wilfred Garstang, had there been any one in a position to have done so. But to this gentleman, whom Wilfred had never seen, and scarcely had ever heard of, he never gave, in all probability, so much as one passing thought. Nevertheless, Wilfred Garstang was not one of those men in whom conscience sleeps easily and comfortably. He was a thoughtful and especially an inward-looking man. And doubtless, argue the matter as he might with himself, he was not at ease on the subject.

And he knew that Patience did not agree with him in this matter. Not that she also was not animated by feelings of very bitter resentment and hatred against the Earl. She fully shared her brother's sentiments in this respect; and was at no loss to clothe the expressions of her hatred in those phrases culled from the abundant store of biblical denunciation, the application of which seems to a large class of persons to sanctify a state of heart which they would recognize to be evil, if its feelings were expressed in the ordinary language of vindictive and resentful men of the world. It was very gratifying to Patience that the Earl should suffer sorrow and pain. But her stronger and more constantly active conscience would not have permitted her to bring about that rightful retribution of suffering by means which she felt to be in themselves wrong. She would have abstained from taking any active step, however much it might have been in her power to do so, to relieve the object of her hatred from suffering which, in her phraseology, the hand of the Lord had inflicted on him. But she could not justify to herself the intentional concealment of facts, which so many obligations and duties made it imperative on her to disclose.

She was content to remain passive in the matter, considering truly enough that the power to act was wholly in her brother's hands. But Wilfred knew accurately enough her feelings on the subject; and the knowledge operated to prevent any talk between the lonely brother and sister as to their niece's future.

And there was yet another difference of feeling between them which contributed to the same result. Patience did not look forward to the fact that her niece, the sole scion of the Garstang race, was destined to be promoted to a sphere of life so much above that in which the lot of all the former generations of Garstangs had been cast, with the same feelings of satisfaction that her brother did. He fed his imagination with the thought that the old yeoman race should at length oust the invading noble from the soil, and recover all that tradition said had once been theirs. It was a victory of Garstang over Linacre, which was very sweet to him. He pictured to himself the razing of the grand house at the Park, and the Grange remaining as the homestead and head of all that fine territory. He saw Garstang standing in its triumphantly recovered position before all that county world in whose ears the name had so long been that of a pariah race.

Patience would have preferred that Garstang should have remained as it had been. She looked upon all higher worldly grandeurs as snares and temptations of the Evil one. She hated the great and the rich, who did not ever any of them go to Bethlehem Chapel in Water Lane, or any other such place of worship, with a true and genuine hatred, which had no touch of envy in it. She really thought, and doubted not, that her

lot and her condition was infinitely preferable to theirs. She in very truth held herself to be one of a peculiar and highly privileged people. Would her niece be likely to become such, if she was to become even as the mighty ones of the earth?

Thus it came to pass that very rarely was any word said between Wilfred and his sister touching the future destinies of the little Jenefy.

The little one now was four years old; and had thriven well beneath the care of her foster-mother in the cottage at Artingale lodge-gate;—well to the utmost extent that any one could desire for her in matters physical; and not altogether ill in matters moral and mental. That is to say, she was a good, docile, and gentle-tempered little girl, and had made a fair amount of progress in the mysteries of A for an Apple, and B for a Buttercup. A healthier, or prettier, or a livelier child could not have been found.

And in all these four years Patience had never seen the child. It was not that she had no desire to do so; far from it. But the effort of going forth among strange people was too disagreeable to her. And with every year that passed the disinclination to face the eyes of strangers became more and more insuperable by the stern pale recluse.

But at length it had been settled that the child should be brought on a visit to the Grange. So great an effort would not probably have been made then, had it not been that for the future a greater distance was to separate the child from her aunt. Wilfred, from whose silent thoughts his little niece was rarely for many hours absent, had determined that she should be removed to the care of persons more capable of super-

intending the education of the child than the people at the lodge. It was intended that she should be taken to Silchester for some years. And if Patience therefore did not see little Jenefy now, she might never see her again, and certainly would not have an opportunity for doing so for several years. It had been settled, therefore, that Margery at the lodge,—Mammy Margery, as the child called her, with a perfect comprehension that she was not her real mother,—should bring her over to the Grange.

The visitors were expected to arrive one Saturday afternoon in June, in such time that Margery might take tea with her mother, while Miss Patience made acquaintance with her niece; and that there should then be plenty of time to return in the cool of the summer evening.

Wilfréd had as usual gone out to his labour after the mid-day meal; and Patience would have betaken herself to her usual occupations, but for the event she was anticipating. Had she been about to receive a distinguished party of the "rank and fashion of the neighbourhood," she could hardly have felt more nervous and disturbed from the ordinary ice-bound tranquillity of her life. She had dressed herself in her Sunday gown, had caused everything to be put severely in its place in the stone-kitchen,—thereby making the room appear more dismally dreary and unhomelike than it always did,—and had a dozen times walked from her chair to the window, to see if she could catch sight of the expected guests.

And after some half-hour of this nervous waiting they made their appearance at the top of the zigzag path that climbed the cliff. Miss Patience sat down in

state in her chair in the stone-kitchen; old Margy ran out to meet her daughter, and in the next minute came into the presence of her mistress leading the little girl.

"Here she be, Miss; and a more winsomer little lady I never wish to set eyes on; that I *will* say for her. There, my dear, go to your aunt. That lady is your aunt, my dear; go and speak to her."

And so, seeing the child off on her journey across the stone floor of the large room from the door towards the chair in which Miss Patience was sitting, old Margy retreated to have a talk with her daughter in her own dominions.

Miss Patience sat grim and upright as an Egyptian idol in her chair, as the child somewhat hesitatingly travelled across the floor; not because she was minded at all otherwise than to receive her little niece with all kindness, but from sheer nervousness, and not knowing what to say to her.

When she had arrived within about a couple of yards of her aunt's chair, the little one made a full stop, and putting her little hands behind her back, and stretching out her face towards Miss Patience, said, "Id 'ou aunt Pathenth?"

"Yes, my dear, I am your aunt Patience; I am very glad to see you," said Patience, in her usual cold grave tones, and bowing her head to her little visitor as gravely as if she had been receiving an archbishop.

"'Ou don't 'ook very g'ad," said the child, after attentively eyeing her for awhile.

"But I *am* glad to see you, little Jenefy. People and things very often are different from what they look

to be, little Jenefy," said Miss Patience, much relieved by the early opportunity of inculcating such a truth.

"Why don't 'ou 'augh?" asked the child, after a minute of further meditation.

"Laugh, my dear!" returned Patience, much astonished; "people ought not to laugh when there is nothing to laugh at."

"I 'augh when I am g'ad," expostulated the child; "but 'ou 'ook as if 'ou was going to t'y," she added, still gazing earnestly in the grim melancholy face before her. *Don't t'y, aunt Patience, tare tilled a tat,*" she said with a grave air of expostulation to Miss Patience, who seemed much disconcerted by the adage.

"Who told you that, my dear?" she said, bending a little forwards towards the child.

"Mammy Margery always says dat when I t'y," replied she gravely.

"I won't cry now, little Jenefy," said Patience, with a softness of manner which was unusual to her; for the child's words had touched a cord in her heart that awakened the memory of days when she had not always looked as if she were going to cry.

"Dat's a dood dirl," said Jenefy, nodding her head approvingly.

"Won't you come to me?" said Patience, holding out her hand, and almost betrayed into the ghost of a pale smile, despite herself; for during all this colloquy the little one had remained standing where she had first come to a standstill some three or four yards from her aunt's chair.

Little Jenefy had very evidently in her composition a share of the bold frank spirit of her father. For, at this invitation, nothing daunted by the forbidding

grinness of the figure before her, so different from aught that she had ever before seen, she marched boldly up to her aunt's knee, and placed her little chubby hand in the dry, thin, long hard hand that was held out to her.

"Do you know whose house this is, little Jenefy?" asked Miss Patience, desirous of ascertaining whether the child had in any way picked up any knowledge as to her own parentage.

"I don't know. Let me 'ide upon 'our bat, aunt Pathenth."

"Gracious goodness, child, ride upon my back!" cried Miss Patience, in the extremity of dismay.

"'Es, 'ide pitabat!" replied the little one, preparing to climb up on the chair, for the purpose of mounting.

"But, my dear, I don't know—I never did such a thing—I don't know how it is done!" said Miss Patience, in painful alarm.

"I show 'ou, aunt Pathenth. I al'ays 'ide pitabat on mammy Margery," said the child, now standing on the chair, in dangerous propinquity to her aunt, whose measure she seemed to have already taken, so far as to assure herself that nothing was to be feared from the pale, grave, sad-looking woman. Evidently enough all the fear was on the other side.

"'Ou tome here. Turn 'ound," said the child. Miss Patience mechanically obeyed, with a vague notion that such was the fate of aunts; and in the next instant little Jenefy's arms were thrown tightly around the long thin neck, and her fat little hands clasped in front of the spinster's throat.

"Now den. Put 'ou hand under my feet. Dat's de way. Now, dee up. Do on, aunt Pathenth."

And Miss Patience, thus urged, was stalking across the wide stone floor, with rueful face, and with her wonted rigidly upright attitude and funereal step, when the door opened, and Wilfred, who had come in from the field somewhat earlier than usual, because of his niece's visit to the Grange, entered the room.

It was very rarely that a smile was to be seen on Wilfred Garstang's face. But it was impossible not to suffer the saddest features to relax themselves at the sight of Miss Patience and her oppressor.

"So the little tyrant has made herself absolute mistress already," he said, shaking his head, with an expression partly amused, partly touched with sadness at the tale of long seclusion from all that makes the lives of other women, that was told by the infinite incongruity between his sister's ways, and habits, and look, and her present occupation.

"How could I help it, Wilfred?" said she, ruefully. "The child would take no denial; and it seems that such is her accustomed sport. She affirms that she rides thus on the back of Margery."

"To I do. But Margery does much better than 'ou, aunt Pathenth. Dee up, do," added the little romp, in a tone of despairing expostulation at the dulness of her steed.

"I think I can find you a better amusement than that, Jenefy," said Wilfred, taking the child from his sister's back. "Get the Scripture picture-book," he added, speaking to his sister, "and we will show the little one some beautiful pictures, such as she has never seen before."

The promise thus held out seemed to make abundant amends for the sudden cutting short of the ride, which it was impossible to deny had turned out rather a failure. The picture-book was produced, and Miss Patience found herself very much more in her element in explaining the prints, and relating the narratives which they illustrated, than she had been in playing at pickaback. Only that, as the little one required the same story to be repeated several times over, and vehemently resented the slightest verbal alteration in the mode of telling it, it was necessary for Miss Patience to call up her utmost powers of accuracy.

And when at last the tea in the back kitchen had been brought to a conclusion, and Margery appeared at the door of the front kitchen to resume her charge, and start on her walk home, Miss Patience felt more wearied and worn out than she had ever done by the hardest day's work.

"Truly, brother, the care of a child must be a charge wearying to the mind no less than to the body. I have rarely felt so tired as I am."

"And the wage to be paid to those who are fitted to undertake the trust, and discharge it faithfully, must not, therefore, be paid grudgingly."

"And you think that you have found such a person? It must be a hard life," said Miss Patience.

"I hope so. And I have not grudged to pay handsomely from the fund set apart for such purposes. You agree with me, Patience, that the time seems to have come when it is desirable that the child should be removed to other care?" asked Wilfred.

"Truly, brother, I think so. If only her soul can

be as well cared for as her body seems to have been hitherto. If only she be sent to God-fearing people."

"I believe the person who is to receive her to be such," said Wilfred. And then the conversation dropped, and the brother and sister separated.

CHAPTER VI.

Eva Senhouse.

WHEN his niece's progress in life had forced upon Wilfred Garstang the conviction that the time had come when it was expedient that she should be provided with other care than could be given her at the Artingale lodge-gate, he had been very much at a loss how even to set about finding what he had need of. For very obvious reasons, it was hardly possible that any desirable home should be found for the child in the immediate neighbourhood. Who would be willing to receive into their home the child of a Garstang, and the child of such a mother born under such circumstances? And how was he, living the life he lived, and standing as he and his did in the estimation of his neighbours, to obtain any clue even to the discovery of such a person as he required?

He was thinking sadly of all these things, of his utter friendlessness, and of the isolation in which he lived, of the unmerited obloquy which rested on the child's father, when it occurred to him that there was one man who had certainly believed his brother to have been morally innocent of the crime of murder, and who was sufficiently far off to be beyond the influence of the social feelings and opinions of Billmouth

and its neighbourhood. This was Mr. Sligo, the Silchester attorney, who had defended George, and who had evidently taken a strong and friendly interest in the case.

To Mr. Sligo, accordingly, Wilfred had determined to apply in his need; and he had taken a journey to Silchester for the purpose of doing so. And it had so happened that Mr. Sligo had been able to help him.

There was a Mr. Henningtree at Silchester, an architect, employed by the Chapter on some extensive and important restorations, which it had been decided to execute in the Cathedral. He was a Silchester man, born and bred; but he had given in sundry ways such proofs of ability, and had taken such a standing in his profession, that it was thought that he might have taken quite a leading place in it if he would have established himself in London. This, however, Mr. Henningtree would not do. He had that special and clinging love for his native city and county which is not seldom met with in such men, especially in the capitals of our most distant counties. And the great work which had been entrusted to him by the Chapter, which was to him in every way a labour of love, no doubt contributed to confirm him in his determination to live and die, and to be known, if he was to achieve fame, as Henningtree of Silchester. Besides, he must have pushed his way in London;—and Henningtree was not a pushing man. It was a thing to which he was specially averse. Now, in Silchester, he had no pushing to do. He was known, and highly valued by everybody in his native city; and his place in the society, as well as in his own profession, was made. But there was another circumstance which no doubt

assisted, if not to induce, at least to make it easy for Mr. Henningtree to follow the bent of his inclination in this matter. He had married, a little before the time at which our narrative has arrived, a Silchester lady, who had brought him a pretty little fortune.

Miriam Henningtree had been the only child of a canon of the Cathedral of Silchester, who had, for many years, been a widower. And it was not till her father's death, when she was some five or six and twenty years old, that she had promised to become Mr. Henningtree's wife. The Silchester people, favourably disposed as they were to the young architect, said that Miriam Blackridge had married beneath herself;—that she might have done much better, &c. But Miriam Blackridge was not of that opinion, and she retained her own view of the matter undeviatingly. Besides the other good gifts which have been mentioned, she was a highly cultivated woman, with artistic tastes, and a habit of thinking out for herself the grounds of her own opinions. So her friends said naturally and truly enough that Miriam Blackridge was a very peculiar person—quite an original. It is to be supposed that Cyril Henningtree liked originals,—for he wooed and won Miriam; and they appeared, as all Silchester admitted when the nine days' wonder of the marriage had worn it self out, to suit each other perfectly.

Now in the house of the widowed Canon Blackridge, up to the time of his death, and a little longer,—up to the time of Miriam's marriage that it to say,—there had lived for the last fourteen years a maiden lady in the character, first, of governess, and, lately, of companion to that young lady. Miriam's education, which all the world admitted to have been not only most suc-

cessful, but to have embraced many subjects that did not, at all events in those days, enter into the female *curriculum*, had been entirely the work of this lady. Her name was Eva Senhouse.

Now when Canon Blackridge died, and Miriam Blackridge became Mrs. Henningtree, the occupation of Eva Senhouse was gone. And it came to be a rather puzzling question, in which all the Silchester Society were kind enough more or less to interest themselves, as society in small country towns will do, what was to become of her. Some little provision she had saved from the proceeds of her fourteen years of employment in the Canon's house. But it was very little. Mr. Henningtree would have willingly offered her a home in his house. But it was very repugnant to Eva Senhouse to permit herself to become a burthen to people who did not really in anyway want her services, as she well knew. She was no longer a young woman; and felt disinclined to enter a new course of servitude in the house of a stranger.

Now old Slow,—which, in the Silshire dialect, meant Samuel Slowcome, gent., the senior partner in the firm of Slowcome and Sligo,—old Slow had been for many years the intimate friend of Canon Blackridge. It was not every attorney-at-law that a Canon of Silchester Cathedral would have admitted to his intimacy upon the sort of footing that old Slow was admitted to the tables and drawing-rooms not only of Canon Blackridge, but of many others of the dignitaries who gave the tone to the rather exclusive society of the old cathedral city. But there are attorneys and attorneys. And such men as old Slow were not uncommonly to be met with in provincial cities even in the days when

the demarcations which divided the different grades of professional society were much more strictly observed than they are now-a-days. They were men well known and highly respected throughout the whole county, and who seemed to be in some sort identified with the county;—men of a turn for bookish learning of that sort which mainly dealt with points of antiquarian lore, and all that frontier land in which the subjects interesting to the legal and the clerical professions meet and run into each other;—men who knew all the affairs of the Chapter, as well as they knew those of the great proprietors of the county;—men who would be buried in the Cathedral when they died, and who often dined with the Bishop as long as they lived,—whose habitual costume approached nearly to the clerical type, and whose minds were well furnished with all the most respectable clerical prejudices.

Thus the intimacy between old Slow and the learned Canon Blackridge had been by no means a strange thing. And it had very naturally followed from it, that Miss Senhouse had become intimate with the ladies of the well-to-do attorney's family: the motherly and highly respected Mrs. Slowcome, and the three handsome and accomplished Miss Slowcomes, for whose smiles minor canons sighed in vain, and who would, doubtless, be all of them some day married to the best bits of ecclesiastical preferment in the county.

Old Slow and his good wife, therefore, were among those who most especially interested themselves in the question as to the mode of life to be adopted by Miss Senhouse, when she was thrown in the manner that has been explained on her own resources. And it had

been decided by these and other friends that the best thing under the circumstances would be, that Miss Senhouse should take a small and inexpensive cottage, and should endeavour to find some young lady, whom she might receive and educate, in return for such a payment as would suffice, when joined to what little she had of her own, to make both ends meet, and do a little more. And in the meantime, until such a young lady in search of a home and an education should be found, Eva Senhouse was to remain the guest of good Mrs. Slowcome.

And this was the position of matters, when Wilfred Garstang had applied to Mr. Sligo, asking him whether he could give him any assistance in the difficult task of finding a fitting and desirable asylum for little Jenefy. At first it had not struck Mr. Sligo that the child in want of a home would be a suitable inmate for his partner's protégé. In fact the idea had been to find, not a child, but a young lady of more advanced years than our little Jenefy. But when his melancholy and sad-mannered visitor went on to mention that it was his purpose to give this only scion of his race an education in all respects as good as that which money could procure;—when he mentioned that a sum of two thousand pounds had been set apart by the family for this purpose; and, finally, when he stated that his object would be to leave the child wholly, and for many years, in the care of the person to whom she should be entrusted, when once he should be satisfactorily assured of the fittingness and trustworthiness of such person, then it suddenly came into Mr. Sligo's mind that a good portion of this Garstang two thousand pounds might go to the making-up of the income

needed by Miss Senhouse. And, therefore, he told Wilfred that he knew of a person who would be exactly what he needed. The lady in question, he said, had not, he believed, contemplated taking charge of so young a child, and it would be necessary to consult her upon this subject, before anything could be said upon the point. But if Mr. Garstang could be fortunate enough to induce her to undertake the care of the child and the subsequent education of the young lady, he might congratulate himself upon having provided a bringing-up for his niece that any lady in the land might be glad to obtain for her daughter.

The upshot of the matter was that Miss Senhouse accepted Mr. Garstang's offer. So far from objecting to the tender years of the child to be entrusted to her, though she confessed that she would not have liked to take a child of four years old who was to be taken from her a few years later; yet on the understanding that she was to have the entire education of the child, she preferred to begin her work from the foundation; and that it should be entirely her own. All the peculiar circumstances of the child's birth and parentage,—except Wilfred's cherished secret of the legitimacy of her birth,—were confidentially communicated to her, and the extreme desirability of educating the child wholly away from her home and the influences of it were shown to her. And, in return for the devotion of Miss Senhouse to the exclusive care of the childhood and subsequent education of his niece during the next twelve years, Wilfred was willing to pay twelve hundred pounds. The yearly sum of an hundred pounds was extravagantly large to pay for a child of four years old. But it might be small for the care

which would be required during the latter years of the term; and Wilfred was desirous of giving this pledge that the child should be left with Miss Senhouse during the whole of the period proposed. He offered to do more. He was perfectly willing, he said, and should prefer to pay over into the hands of Messrs. Slowcome and Sligo the entire sum of twelve hundred pounds at once, so that anything which could be added to the annual sum of an hundred pounds, from the interest on the undrawn portion of the capital, might also go to Miss Senhouse, and that she might have the perfect assurance that the arrangement would not be broken off earlier than the time contemplated. Messrs. Slowcome and Sligo, of course, were to undertake, in due form, to restore any portion of the sum that might be proportioned to any part of the unexpired term of twelve years, in case, from any unforeseen circumstance, Miss Senhouse should fail to perform her part of the contract.

Such then was the arrangement which Wilfred had made; and it was to Eva Senhouse that the little Jenefy was now to be sent, and her future destinies entrusted.

Those who had known Miriam Blackridge, and who knew Miriam Henningtree well, would have been disposed to back the boast Mr. Sligo had made to Wilfred Garstang, that he might congratulate himself on having secured for the guardian and instructress of his niece one whom any lady in the land might esteem herself happy to have for her own daughter. Eva Senhouse had made Miriam Blackridge what she was, and Miriam was on all hands allowed to be a most perfectly bred and accomplished lady, and a very specially charming woman.

Nevertheless it did not perhaps quite follow that an equally satisfactory result might be relied on to follow in every other case. Miss Senhouse and her pupil, Mrs. Henningtree, were both unquestionably exceptional women; both somewhat "original" in their turn of mind and their manner. There was a sort of old-world flavour about Eva Senhouse which was not without a certain charm; a something which suggested that Mrs. Hutchinson and other such ladies of that time, when highly cultivated women were not altogether so rare as our generation is apt to imagine that they were, must have been much of the same sort. Without neglecting what are generally called accomplishments,—especially without neglecting music,—there was a greater degree of what perhaps may be called solidity about the education which Miss Senhouse had given to Miriam Henningtree, and which she would doubtless set herself to give to Jenefy Garstang.

It could not be said by the lightest-hearted of her contemporaries that there was the slightest tinge of pedantry in Miriam Henningtree. No one's sympathy with all feminine interests was more lively; no one's appreciation of all specially womanly joys, sorrows, and occupations, was heartier; no one's light laugh was readier than Miriam Henningtree's. But she had many sources of interest that her contemporaries of her own sex could, for the most part, but very imperfectly share. Would the education which had in her case produced this somewhat rare combination be equally successful when tried on different material? The little Jenefy had already shown that she inherited a larger share of the lively boldness, and fearless high spirits which characterized her father's temperament, than of her mother's

sensitive and retiring timidity. Would the rather old-fashioned staidness of Miss Senhouse's notions, and the rather grave style of her conception of female education be rebelled against and rejected by this lively and high-spirited temperament; or would it be thereby successfully and desirably modified? It would have been a safe bet that, in the hands of a woman of narrow intelligence, the former result would have infallibly occurred. But Eva Senhouse was a woman not only of much knowledge, but of a large and genial intelligence; and there was room to hope for better things.

It might be interesting to trace the influences of such a mind and such intellectual habits on the material subjected to it, in such a child as Jenefy Garstang. But as the general result only of the process is what is needed, for the due setting forth of the completion of this narrative, the time and space that would be needed for describing the progress of the experiment cannot be so extended. Thus much of good promise was, at all events, speedily realized. The instructress and the pupil became very shortly strongly attached to each other. The monthly letters which Miss Senhouse wrote to Mr. Garstang left no doubt on this head. Patience thought either that a very salutary and stern repressive system must have been resorted to, or that Miss Senhouse must be addicted to the sport of "pickaback." No mention of any such pastime was made in the letters however. Miss Senhouse contented herself with reporting very satisfactorily as to her little pupil's health and physical progress, and stating that she had every reason to be satisfied with her in all ways.

CHAPTER VII.

Jenefy in her new Home.

IN making these arrangements with Miss Senhouse one difficulty had, however, arisen. What was, or what was to be, the name of her young pupil? She had no right, under the circumstances of her birth, to the name of Garstang—so far, at least, as the circumstances were known to everybody, save only Wilfred and his sister. And besides, if the child had any proper right to that name, or if her uncle and aunt were willing that she should bear it, without having any legal right to it, still Miss Senhouse felt very strongly, and Mr. Sligo, into whose hands the conduct of the negotiation fell, represented very strongly to Wilfred, that it was for every reason inexpedient for the child to be known by a name which was not properly her own, when a few years before that name had become connected in the mind of every man, woman, and child in Silchester with the tragedy of George Garstang's fate.

But, on the other hand, it was almost equally undesirable that the child should be known by her mother's name. Linaere was too prominent and too well-known a name in Sillshire for it to have been expedient that the child should, by bearing it, attract such attention as would, in Silchester, surely be the result of doing so. Under these circumstances, it was proposed by Mr. Sligo, and, after some little consideration, assented to by Miss Senhouse, that little

Jenefy should be called by her name, and pass as a niece of her own. Miss Senhouse had been a Londoner before becoming an inmate of the family of Canon Blackridge, and there was nobody in the Silshire world to know whether she had any such niece or not, or to interest themselves in any way in the matter. So it was arranged that, for the present, the little Jenefy should be known by the name of Senhouse to such portion of the society of Silchester as should become aware of her existence.

For some years, as it may be supposed, such individuals were few. And of those few, the greater part, consisting mainly of the family of Mrs. Slowcome and Mr. and Mrs. Henningtree, were doubtless acquainted with the real facts of the case. Before half a dozen years had passed, however, little Miss Senhouse began to be known to a somewhat larger circle. She was often invited to drink tea and pass the evening with the Slowcome children—not, of course, *the* Misses Slowcome, a phrase which was understood to comprise only the three elder marriageable daughters of the house. Next to these very conspicuous ornaments of the very best society in Silchester, came on the abounding branches of the Slowcome family-tree, three boys, of whom one was at Silchester College, Oxon, and two were at school. And then came two little girls, nearly of the same age as little Jenefy. And these were the children with whom the latter was often invited to pass the evening. Still oftener, however, the little girl was to be found—sometimes with, and sometimes without, her protectress—in the house of Mrs. Henningtree. And, strange as it may seem, the child's happiest hours were those so spent.

The Misses Slowcome—the Misses Slowcome—pronounced Jenefy to be a queer little thing, an old-fashioned little thing, a strange child, and then so unfortunately plain, you know! It is not probable that the young ladies had been admitted to the secret of the child's parentage. And as they were wont to consider Miss Senhouse herself a very peculiar and rather enigmatical personage, they may have been prepared to find it quite natural that a niece of hers should be not altogether like other children. Nevertheless it seemed as if the elder Misses Slowcome had, in some unaccountable way or other, been impressed with the idea that there was some mystery of some sort attaching to the little Jenefy. It was the will of their parents that kindness should be shown to Miss Jenefy Senhouse, and *the Misses Slowcome were* kind to her accordingly. But there was always in their manner to the child a certain flavour of curious observation, as if they were engaged in studying the ways and habits of some being of a different kind and race from their own.

Of a different kind from the Slowcome children the little Jenefy decidedly was; and it could not be denied that when the handsome Misses Slowcome said that the child was "so uncommonly plain, you know," the majority of the persons to whom they said so entirely agreed with them. It is very commonly said that little girls have to pass through a period of ugliness, when they are about the age that Jenefy Senhouse had reached, at the time now spoken of,—from ten years upwards for the next two or three years. But it is not so with all children. The two little Slowcome girls, who were as nearly as possible Jenefy's contemporaries, were as pretty as little Cupids, plump and rosy, with

laughing light blue eyes, abundant flaxen curls, rosebud mouths, round dimpling cheeks, and pretty little plump round hands and feet. Whereas the little Jenefy had none of these beauties. She was tall, and lanky, and gawky, and looked as if she had an undue tendency to run all to leg and arm; both of them thin and scraggy. Her hair was abundant and silky in quality, but it was very dark, and had no natural curl in it. And the long straight bands of it falling down her pale long cheeks, gave an extra air of gipsy-like looking forlornness to her appearance. She had huge dark eyes, in which mostly there was, instead of laughter, a strange wistful look, as of perpetual inquiry,—a look that good Mrs. Slowcome declared made her feel quite uncomfortable at times! Then her mouth was large rather than otherwise; and her hands and feet were the same. At least they were decidedly long for her age, though slender, with long fingers, and highly arched insteps; which, though good gifts in their way, did nothing at that time of the child's life to modify or improve the general effect of awkward ungainly lankiness.

Nevertheless, old Colonel Havering, the commanding officer of the cavalry depôt at Silchester, who had seen with an observant eye many a succeeding crop of little girls grow into womanhood, remarked to a brother officer, with whom he was returning one evening from the Slowcomes, and who had been speaking of the beauty of the Slowcome girls, and the Slowcome children, that in another five or six years the little Slowcomes would be pretty dairy-maids, and in twenty more fat blowsy matrons without a trace of good looks, whereas that queer-looking dark girl would, in five or six years, be lovely enough to turn any man's head,

and twenty years later would still be a magnificent woman.

All the three children—the two Slowcomes and little Jenefy—were, as children go, very good little girls. But the difference between the two races was as marked in the moral as in the physical characteristics of them. The little Slowcomes were sometimes naughty, and mostly good. But Jenefy's goodness was not their goodness, nor her naughtiness their naughtiness. Little Jane and Carry Slowcome were understood to be good when they were contented, happy, not crying;—and naughty when the reverse was the case. But with Jenefy it seemed to be just the reverse. If ever her elders had to tax her with naughtiness, and call her to order, it was when a sudden access of extravagantly high spirits would occasionally run away with her. And Miss Senhouse would shake her head, at such times, and endeavour to calm down the exuberant wildness of her pupil's spirits. But the child was never fretful or peevish or discontented; only in her quiet moods, which were most frequent with her, she was apt to be overquiet, and her little playfellows used to say sullen. But Mrs. Slowcome had the sense to discover speedily that the child had no sullenness in her; only thoughtfulness beyond her years,—a sort of maner which, the good lady would say to her husband, she would not for the world see in her own children;—it looked, she thought, very much like not being intended to remain long in this world.

But Miss Senhouse had no such fears. The child was decidedly healthy and strong. At walking, running, or playing she could tire out the little Slowcome girls any day. Nor, as that lady knew very well, was her

pupil unhappy in her gravest moments. And well instructed as she had been, by Mr. Slowcome and Mr. Sligo, in all the history and peculiarities of the race from which the child had sprung on the father's side, she deemed the quiet happiness of the child the most favourable symptom that could be wished. There were occasional outbreaks of the father's wild high spirits; but there was not the melancholy that should have gone to make up the unhappy completeness of the Garstang idiosyncrasy. The union from which the child had sprung, however much to be deplored on other grounds, seemed at least to have been a fortunate one, in that it gave hope that the old Garstang temperament had been so far corrected by the new blood, as not to have transmitted its worst characteristics to yet another generation.

The childhood of little Jenefy was then far from an unhappy one. But perhaps the happiest hours of it, especially at a time a little subsequent to that of which I have been speaking, were spent beneath the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Henningtree. And those hours were many,—increasingly so, as the child began to grow into the young girl. It was natural that Miss Senhouse should see a great deal of her former pupil; and thus the child Jenefy had come from a very early period of her life in Silchester to feel herself at home in the Henningtrees' house. Mrs. Henningtree had no child; and she became much interested in, perhaps it might be said much attached to, the pupil of her former governess. On the other hand the child took a very decided liking for Miriam.

There was a brisk, ever busy activity both of body and mind about Mrs. Henningtree, that seemed to act

with a corrective virtue on a certain too great tendency to reverie and silent thoughtfulness that characterized Jenefy. And the activity of Miriam Henningtree's mind was of a strongly marked objective character. There was no tendency in her to introspection. Her mind seemed to have no time for anything of the sort. Everything around her, everything in art, or in literature, had an interest for her; and she habitually threw her whole mind into the interest of the moment; and that with an almost breathless eagerness and intensity that seemed to know neither pause nor intermission. It would have been impossible to find a companionship that was more likely to be salutary to the quick and sympathetic, but somewhat too introspectively inclined temperament of Jenefy.

The four years that elapsed from the tenth to the fourteenth year of her age were probably the most important to Jenefy Senhouse,—to call her as she was called by her Silchester friends,—in regard to the formation of her mind and character. And the statement involves the fact that she was an exceptionally forward child. Of the generality of young girls the same may be said perhaps of the period between their twelfth and their sixteenth year. But, in the case of Jenefy, not only was she naturally precocious, but all the circumstances of her life had tended to foster and increase the tendency. The way to keep a child childish is to allow it to live with children. But Jenefy had, with the exception of occasional evenings during which she always felt more or less out of her element, lived in the company and in the society of grown-up persons,—mainly of old Miss Senhouse and young Mrs. Henningtree. "It is a good and useful discipline,"

says Locke, "to treat children with a little wholesome neglect." But this discipline, however desirable it may have been, had never fallen to her lot. She had from four years old upwards been the constant object of the undivided care of Miss Senhouse, and of a considerable portion of the attention of Mrs. Henningtree. Possibly Locke would not have recommended the discipline of wholesome neglect for all children; and scarcely, perhaps, for a child deprived of the society of other children. It is at all events difficult to suppose that for the peculiar temperament of our Jenefy, the system would have produced results as satisfactory as those which were attained from the constant companionship of two such women as Eva Senhouse and Miriam Henningtree.

Nevertheless that result was to make her in various respects a peculiar girl. Mainly it added to the natural precocity of her character. At fourteen Jenefy was older than her years, and the development of her person seemed to keep pace with that of her mind. At that age she was a tall, slender girl, still perhaps somewhat too lengthily in all the outlines of her figure for perfect symmetry, though hardly so for perfect gracefulness; and with a face that was already giving unmistakable promise of great beauty. Most other girls of her age would probably have called her "old-fashioned" in her ways and manners. There was a kind of grave sedateness, mixed with quiet decision and self-possession, which did not seem altogether girlish. Not that she was always grave. On the contrary, she was still subject to those occasional outbursts of high spirits, which had often in her earlier years rather alarmed her governess. These fits seemed

always to impel her to strong physical activity, which was, doubtless, the best and safest outlet and vent for them.

"What I should like best," she said on one such occasion to Miss Senhouse, "would be to dance down the entire length of the High Street, from the Castle-gate to the Bridge!"

But as such a feat would have produced a stronger impression in Silchester than was desirable, Jenefy had contented herself with taking her skipping-rope, and exercising herself with it, till she was ready to drop with fatigue. Then she went to bed, and got up the next morning the gentle, docile, and grave little maiden of her ordinary habitude.

But it was especially in her ordinary subjects of interest and conversation that other girls would have found her different from themselves. She took the liveliest interest in all the questions connected with the great work of restoration that was going on at the Cathedral, and would talk of styles, and periods, of clerestories and transepts, and ogives and gargoyles with the interest, and in a large degree with the knowledge, of an architectural antiquary. This was the result of habitual intimacy with the Henningtrees. She would discuss foregrounds and middle distances, and local colouring, and criticize the workmanship of any picture she saw. This was a specialty of Miriam's, or rather one of her many specialties. She would talk of calyx and petal, and genus and species, and knew the special habitat of every wild-flower in the lanes round Silchester. This was a hobby of Miss Senhouse. Above all, she was a lover of music, and was rapidly becoming a very competent musician. And this part of her

education she had gathered in almost equal proportions from Cyril Hemmingtree himself, from his wife, and from Miss Senhouse.

“And an intolerably conceited pedant all this unusual knowledge must have made her,” it may perhaps be said.

Not the least in the world. It is not the knowledge, however out of the way or abstruse, which ever produces, or can produce conceit or pedantry; but the knowledge that the possession of it is unusual; that others of our compeers and equals have it not. And Jenefy had no idea whatsoever that her studies and pursuits were in any degree peculiar; still less that there was any special merit or credit of any kind to be gained from the cultivation of them. She had found such subjects the topics of thought, and interest, and conversation among those with whom she lived, and had adopted them as naturally as she had learned the art of speech from those around her.

Such as she was at fourteen years of age, both Miss Senhouse and Mrs. Hemmingtree had grown to feel that it would be a sad day for them when the time should arrive at which the little orphan—according to the arrangement that had been originally made—was to be taken away from them. Both these women had grown to love her with a very warm affection. There were still two years to run before the term that had been settled should have expired. Two years to the child whose whole life had comprised only fourteen seems almost an infinite expanse, to the further side of which the imagination reacheth not. To the older it is but a brief span; and both Miss Senhouse and her quondam

pupil were looking forward with sorrow to the approaching end of the twelve years.

The former was beginning also to think with some uneasiness of the approaching time, when it would become necessary to make Jenefy acquainted with the real facts of her history and parentage. Such a necessity and such a difficulty is always the *per contra* of the advantage gained in similar cases by the concealment of such facts. The good that was intended to be gained in the present instance had been obtained, and now the time was at hand when the payment for it would have to be made. And Eva Senhouse was by no means happy as to the effect which the discovery might have on the mind and character of her pupil. It was while matters were still in this position, and a few months after Jenefy had passed her fifteenth birthday, that a circumstance occurred, simple enough in its nature, that was not without influence on her future life.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Visitor at Silchester.

CYRIL HENNINGTREE's father had been a clergyman holding a very small preferment on the southern coast of Sillshire, the sadly insufficient income of which he had added to by the usual resource of clergyman so situated—the taking of pupils. As a teacher and preparer of young men for the university he had been remarkably successful, and Walter Farnaby had been one of his most valued and beloved pupils. Cyril Henningtree, the son, was a year or two older than

Farnaby, and the two young lads had become fast friends, and had not allowed themselves to lose sight of each other in after life, although Farnaby had gone to the university while Henningtree was pursuing his professional education elsewhere. During one long vacation they had made a short tour on the continent together, and a little later, when Farnaby had established himself in chambers in the Temple, Henningtree had always been provided with an improvised bed in "the clerk's room," whenever any call of business or pleasure had brought him to London. The young barrister had never yet visited his friend at Silchester, but when Henningtree married, a promise had been exacted and given that such a visit should be certainly paid at an early day.

Nevertheless, for one reason or another, the promised visit was deferred. Henningtree had taken his wife to London. And though the old quarters in his friend's chambers were no longer available as a lodging, Miriam had been taken to the Temple chambers, to be shown how her husband had been used to sponge (as he said) on his friend in his bachelor days, and to see (as Farnaby said) what sort of a breakfast a forlorn and miserable bachelor could set before her in his own uncivilized den. And they had gone the round of the exhibitions together, and Farnaby had discovered that his old friend had married a very charming woman, who was worthy of him in every way, and he and Miriam had become great friends, and she had cordially seconded her husband's pressing invitation that Farnaby should come and see them at Silchester; and Farnaby, on returning to his chambers, after seeing his friends off by the Silchester "Telegraph," suffered an

access of melancholy and discontent which was by no means usual with him.

Still year after year had gone by, and the visit to Silchester had never been paid; the main difficulty in the way being, in all probability, the rather chronic condition of impecuniosity in which, despite his fellowship (which after all was, if a provision, a very slender one), Farnaby was wont to find himself. Latterly, however, matters in this respect had been in some small degree improving with him. Still the attorneys held aloof as much as ever from the author of the "Loves of the Benchers." They had no confidence in a man "who penned a stanza" when she should have been studying a brief. Farnaby, however, had pursued his own road; and the Muses, touched by such disinterested worship, had at length condescended to add some small modicum of pudding to the praise which had previously been his sole guerdon. Assuredly in these latter centuries of our planet's history there is no more *grata persona*, as the dispenser of the Muses' favours to mortals, than a publisher. And a publisher it was who did for Farnaby what no attorney would do. He had persuaded the gentleman in question to put out a volume of poems for him, and the result had been extremely satisfactory to all parties. If Walter Farnaby could not quite be said to have waked one morning and found himself famous, still those whose dictum upon such points infallibly accomplishes their prophecy, said that he would assuredly make his mark and be heard of by the world again. In a word, the new volume of poems and the new poet were talked of to such an extent that a new edition was required of the latter, and that the former was in request in all the drawing-rooms

before the little book had been launched a month. And then it was that Farnaby, instead of remaining in London to enjoy his triumph and receive the honours due to the lion of the season, packed up his portmanteau, put into it a copy of the volume of poems, and booked a place on the box of the mail for Silchester.

"Why, where's your bay-leaf? where's your laurel crown?" cried little Mrs. Henningtree, coming forward with both hands held out to greet him, as Henningtree, who had been to the coach-office to meet their expected guest, brought him into the house. "I expected a poet, and you come with a wide-awake felt hat like the most unpoetical of mortals."

"Well, you know, I could not very well wear the bays on the box of the mail, my dear lady," said Farnaby, taking both the hands held out to him; "we never put them on till we dress for dinner."

"Ah, quite in accordance with the best authority. Still, as a victor returning from the contest——"

"You think that the old Silchester mail should have been considered as a sort of triumphal car?" rejoined Farnaby.

"Let the car be as triumphal as it may, five-and-twenty hours on the box of it must make a man ready for a modicum of somewhat more substantial fare than that of the Muses, I should think," said Mr. Henningtree. "Let us give him some food first, and then we will talk of laurel crowns, and new editions, and other such high matters pertaining to the Parnassus of Paternoster Row. Come and wash your hands while Miriam gets the tea ready. I am delighted with your volume, Walter, really charmed with it! And you know I should not say so if I meant one iota less," added Mr.

Henningtree, as he took his guest out of the room to the chamber prepared for him.

And then they supped, and having done so, declared that it was a shame to keep the traveller from his bed. And then, protesting every half hour that they must really go to bed, they sat far into the night, talking as people only do talk when meeting after long absence.

The next day was mainly spent in walking over the old city and visiting the Cathedral and the works in progress there under Henningtree's superintendence. And there was free exchange of poetical and architectural criticism.

"Henningtree, I think you are about the most enviable fellow I know," said Farnaby, when, as they were leaving the Cathedral, Henningtree, who had remained behind a minute or two to give some directions to a foreman of the works, rejoined him at the door of the church. "You have work to do, and plenty of it; and it is work you delight in more than most men delight in their play, even at the best of it. You live in the spot of all earth which you most prefer to live in, you are surrounded by the respect and affection of all the world you move in, and you have a competence sufficient for all your wants."

"Sufficient for all my wants, indeed! Much you know about it. I want a magnificently bound copy of all Piranesi's works, that I saw in a shop when I was last in town! I want to tell the Chapter that I will stand the new stained-glass window needed in the north transept, which they demur to the expense of! It would take an hour to tell you all the things I want. Nevertheless, I *am* a very happy man, Farnaby. I

should be a brute not to acknowledge it, and to feel it;—a *very* happy man, and a very fortunate one! But I don't see why I should seem enviable to you. I should say that you were a fortunate and a happy man, my friend. I am sure most of your acquaintance would fancy you so. Think what many of those we know would give to achieve the triumph you have just achieved."

"You don't take me for a grumbler, old fellow? I never was that, and am not likely to take to that line now. I, too, am a fortunate man; and I suppose I should say, taking all together, that I am a happy one;—all the happier, by a long chalk, that none of my happiness depends upon what you are pleased to call the triumph I have achieved. I was just as happy before. But you see—— Henningtree, my tale of lustres is running up. If I were still five-and-twenty, it would be all very well. But what have I done, or what am I likely to do towards——"

"But why do you want to go towards anything? Why can you not be perfectly contented with a position that so many would give their ears to attain? You have enough. Your fellowship is a stand-by that puts you——"

"Ah, my fellowship!—always my fellowship! But suppose I have seen a copy of Piranesi's works! Suppose I want something that I can't get! Suppose I want some fellowship of a somewhat different kind from that which Silchester College, Oxon, affords me!"

"Oho, my friend!" exclaimed Henningtree, putting his hand on Farnaby's shoulder. "Now I think I

understand the diagnosis of the case. Have you seen your particularly fine copy of Piranesi's works?"

"No—no special copy. But I know that when I was summing up just now all the various causes of happiness, that make you, as I said, the most fortunate fellow I have ever met with, I left out the main blessing of all,—the *placens uxor*. Tell the truth now, Henningtree. Would all the rest suffice to make you a happy, or even a contented man, without that one crowning blessing? Would not all the present be flat, stale, and unprofitable, and all the future outlook bleak and unspeakably dreary without that? Would there be any pleasure in bringing home the most splendid copy of Piranesi that ever was seen, if there were no wife at home to show it to?"

Farnaby had spoken the latter sentences that had fallen from him in a more serious tone than that in which the conversation had been previously carried on, and Henningtree at once became serious.

"It is every word true," he said. "And when all that has been said, a small portion of the truth only has been said. But I don't remember that it all seemed to me to be so, till—till I knew her, who became my wife."

"You were a younger man than I am, Henningtree, when you married. And, of course, every year makes the matter more difficult."

"But, Farnaby, why should there be any difficulty at all? You seem to make very little of your recent success; but, to me, it seems to make just all the difference. It opens a career to you. It would seem that you were not destined to earn a living by practice

at the bar. But now there are other chances before you."

"But not such as a man ought to ask a wife to share with him. They are too much of the nature of chances!" returned Farnaby.

"I don't quite see it in that light;—especially if you were to marry a woman with something to help to keep the pot boiling," said Henningtree.

"Marry a woman with a fortune? Is it likely that any such would choose a poor poet for her mate? Why there is starvation in the very sound of it!" rejoined Farnaby.

"Pooh, pooh! And as for what a woman would choose—believe me, Walter, for every half-dozen of men, who are guided, I don't say improperly, by such consideration, there is not one woman who is. There are plenty who are; but they are not such as would suit you under any circumstances. Girls have mostly other things than L.S.D. in their heads, when the thought of marriage is presented to them," said Henningtree warmly.

"Yes, no doubt, girls! Girls may think but little of ways and means. It is the duty of others to think of such matters for them. But what have I to do with girls? At my time of life I should never dream of asking any girl—one who has any reasonable title to the name—to love me."

This notion Henningtree combated also; opining, and very sincerely, that Walter Farnaby, at the ripe age of some five or six and thirty years, need by no means despair of finding a wife of any age he might choose to prefer to love him. Farnaby very emphatically declared that he could conceive no greater

folly in a man, than the attempt not only to make May and December mate, but even May and August. "Spring is Spring; and Autumn is Autumn," he said. "A man's wife," he continued, increasing in earnestness as he spoke,—“a man's wife should be near enough his own age to like the same pleasures that he likes, to take interest in the same pursuits, and to see life and its questions and its pros and cons with the same eyes. And how can that be if there is a difference of a score of years or so between them. No, Cyril, if I ever *were* to find the courage to ask a woman,—such a woman as I could love, and who would be all in all to me,—it would not be a girl, or one who had been a girl any time for the last ten years, that I should think of, you may depend on that!”

Thus talking the two friends reached the architect's house in time for the early dinner; and after that, while Henningtree returned again to the Cathedral, Mrs. Henningtree took Farnaby to see a favourite bit of landscape, which she had often sketched.

“That was the first sketch I ever made with Eva Senhouse,” said Mrs. Henningtree, looking at the charming combination made by a water-mill on the Sill, with its wheel and weir, and a tree-shadowed farm-house on a knoll on the opposite side of the stream, with the bridge at the bottom of the High Street in the middle distance, and the Cathedral towers farther off. “How well I remember the despair those weatherstains on the woodwork above the water-wheel cost me. Of all nature's artistic doings her decay colouring, as one may call it, is about the most difficult to catch the trick of!”

"And who is Eva Senhouse, Mrs. Henningtree?" asked Farnaby.

"Ah! not so interesting a person in your eyes, I am afraid, as from the tone of your question you seem to anticipate. Eva Senhouse was my governess, and my companion, and my friend for many years; for all my life, I may say. Everything I know I learned from her; and she is, I think, upon the whole, the best and wisest and dearest creature I ever knew."

"Not an interesting person, you say! Good heavens, who can be interesting then?" said Farnaby.

"Not so interesting to you, I said, as some others might be. To me she is very interesting. But it does happen somehow, that old ladies are generally less interesting to young men than young ones," rejoined Mrs. Henningtree.

"I am not a young man, Mrs. Henningtree. And you have made me very curious to see your Eva Senhouse," replied Farnaby.

"Well, you will in all probability be gratified at tea this evening."

"She is still living in Silchester then?" asked Farnaby.

"Yes, to my great comfort and delight. She lives very near to us; and shortly after my marriage she undertook the education of a child, then only four years old, who has lived with her ever since. You will probably see her too this evening," said Mrs. Henningtree.

"What, the child? In this case, at all events, I should think the elder lady promises to be the more interesting of the two," said Farnaby.

"Well, for once, perhaps, yes. But little Jenefy

is an interesting child. She also is a great favourite of mine. I think her a remarkably clever girl," returned Mrs. Henningtree.

"How old is she?—the pupil I mean—you know," asked Farnaby.

"About fourteen; but she is a forward child, and might pass for a couple of years older. She is an interesting little personage in her way too, is Jenefy Senhouse, and not at all like the ordinary run of school-girls. I shall be curious to hear what you think of her."

And at tea-time that evening Miss Senhouse and her pupil made their appearance; and Walter Farnaby was duly introduced to both of them; and the first thing that he saw was, that "little" Jenefy was considerably taller than little Mrs. Henningtree. And then Jenefy and Mr. Henningtree went off together to the architect's study, to look at certain drawings for the restoration of the canopied tomb of a thirteenth-century Bishop of Silchester, which was one of the ornaments of the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral; and Mrs. Henningtree, and Miss Senhouse and Farnaby, were left to talk and make acquaintance with each other in the drawing-room; and then it came to pass that, after a few minutes, Farnaby got up from his chair by the side of "the best, and wisest, and dearest creature" Mrs. Henningtree ever knew, and was seized by a desire to go and look at the drawings for the restoration of the ancient Bishop's tomb. And then, after tea, they had some music. Miss Senhouse played some pieces of Beethoven's in a masterly manner; and Mrs. Henningtree and Jenefy sang together. And then Henningtree joined them in some glees; and Farnaby was pressed into the service to

give the assistance of his bass. And then they were all astonished when it was found to be as late as eleven o'clock. And "the tray," with wine and biscuits, and sandwiches, was rung for; and while they were standing around it, partaking of those refreshments, Farnaby, standing by Jenefy's side by the table, found himself in some unaccountable manner in the midst of a discussion with her on the construction of the Spenserian stanza; and discovered that one of his favourite passages of the "Fairy Queen" was so well known to "little Jenefy" that she could repeat the whole of it by heart.

"But, good heavens!" said Farnaby, after the visitors were gone, and the inmates of the house were standing with their bed-candlesticks in their hands, "you never told me what a transcendently beautiful creature I was going to see. She is superb!"

"Well, I have the strongest possible affection for Eva; but I should not say exactly that of her," returned Mrs. Henningtree, with a malicious laugh in her mischievous eye.

"Miss Senhouse! Pooh! You know what I mean well enough. You must know very well that that pupil of hers is magnificently beautiful," said Farnaby.

"But you said that your only interest was to see the older lady, you know. How could I tell? But as to Jenefy's beauty, people are very much divided in opinion. Many people maintain that far from being beautiful, she is an awkward gawky girl, rather plain than otherwise."

"Oh, come now, Mrs. Henningtree, that won't do. Rather plain than otherwise, with those magnificent great eyes, and all the wealth of varied expression that there is in them."

"I do think her handsome certainly, and so does Cyril. But tastes differ, you know; and I can assure you that Jenefy is by no means universally admitted to be even tolerably well-looking. Good-night! I suppose you two will want to smoke a cigar before going to bed."

"Just one," said Hemmingtree. "Come along into my sanctum, Walter."

And then, while they were smoking, Farnaby asked his host who and what this strangely beautiful and intelligent girl was. And Hemmingtree had felt tempted for a moment to tell his friend all the facts of her history, thinking it well, perhaps, that Farnaby should know them, before the very evident admiration with which he had been smitten should have had time to grow into any more serious feeling. But the next minute's consideration decided him not to do so. He reflected, in the first place, that he had no right to divulge secrets that had been entrusted to him, solely because it was deemed that he would be incapable of doing so. And then, in the next place, he pooh-poohed, in his own mind, the notion that the information in question could be of any real interest or importance to his friend. Why, after all, Jenefy was a child—a mere child. He recollected all that Farnaby had said of his sentiments on inequality of age in marriage, and told himself that in a day or two Walter would return to London, never, in all human probability, to see Jenefy again. So he answered shortly that the young lady was understood to be a niece of Miss Senhouse, who had entirely brought her up, and that he, Hemmingtree, knew nothing whatever of her parents.

In a few days Farnaby did return to town, and

that without having seen Jenefy a second time. For little Mrs. Henningtree had had her eyes open, and had made her own observations, and drawn her conclusions as to certain possibilities that might, as it seemed to her, lead to more evil than good. And the result was that the active little lady so managed that during the few remaining days of his visit Miss Senhouse did not return to the architect's house; and when Farnaby called on Miss Senhouse, the ladies were not at home.

CHAPTER IX.

An Inspector of Parish Apprentices.

FARNABY returned from Silchester to his solitary chambers in the Temple.

His chambers were more solitary now, or, at least, were more frequently so than when we last saw him in them; for his friend and close neighbour, Bentham Linacre, was now very frequently absent. It was not that the attorneys had discovered previously ignored merits in Mr. Linacre, barrister-at-law, since he had become the recognized heir to an earldom and vast estates, or were more disposed than before to tolerate the altogether intolerable browbeatings which were sure to await the mortal hardy enough to enter on any business discussion with him; but there *are* quarters in which the merits of a gentleman in the position which Bentham Linacre was now known to hold are wont to be more carefully considered. The contemplation of the direct heir to an earldom earning precarious bread and cheese by the obscure work of a law bookseller's

back, is a painful one to any well-constituted mind, and was deemed, in the days to which this narrative refers, to be by no means a salutary spectacle to the world in general. There were many sincere places in those days, appointed to meet with decency the requirements of such anomalous situations; but Mr. Bentham Linaere was, it was understood, not disposed to accept any such. He was willing to work, and only asked for work to do. So it was found for him, in the shape of an Inspectorship of parish apprentices.

It was pretty well known that his predecessor in the office had contented himself with drawing his salary, and signing certain formal returns, which, when they had been thus duly signed, never met mortal eye any more. And, doubtless, in thus performing the duties of his office, he was very accurately fulfilling the intentions with which it had been instituted. But Bentham Linaere only asked for work. Give him work to do, and he would conscientiously do it. And bitterly did the parish guardians, and the apprentices, and the masters of the apprentices, and the wives of the masters of the apprentices, and the cooks of the wives of the masters of the apprentices rue the day that had given them over to be inspected by so conscientious an inspector. He inspected every person, and every place, and everything that could be inspected in reference to the subject-matter entrusted to him. He argued, demonstrated, lectured, scolded, enlightened, bullied, and worried every man, woman, and child with whom his researches into the subject brought him into contact, in such sort that he would leave them with their minds a bewildered chaos, their brains whirling, and their bodies falling into deliquium with weariness. The reports

that he wrote made the officials, to whom they were consigned, aghast to look at them in bulk. The human mind refuses to contemplate the process of any attempt to read them.

Of course, the performance of these conscientiously understood duties caused Mr. B. Linaere to be often absent from the old chambers, which he still made his home; but it so chanced that Farnaby found him at home on his return from Silchester. It was his delight and his pride to have his room, not so much littered—that is not the word—but lined, crammed with papers—written papers, and printed papers connected with the duties of his office. A narrow pathway among them ran from the door to the desk at which he wrote. Papers were piled on each side of him as high as his shoulders; and there sat the mercilessly indefatigable Inspector in the middle of them, evolving reports, like a spider in the centre of his web.

“Farnaby, is that you?” said he, looking up as Walter entered the room. “Where do you come from?”

“I am just come back from Silchester. I’ve been to visit an old friend. You know the man—Henningtree.”

“Happy fellow! happy fellow!—that is, if idleness ever did make a man really happy, which it never did, nor ever will. Now I——”

“You, at least, are a happy fellow—if work ever did make a man happy, which it never did, nor ever will,” said Farnaby, laughing.

“Now, there we are at issue. I am ready——”

“No, no, no! We are not at issue. We won’t be

at issue. You are a happy man! And I wish I had as much to do as you have."

"By-the-by, Farnaby, I have never seen you to congratulate you on your volume of poems. Not so much to do but what I have read every line of it——"

"You don't mean it!"

"Of course I have. It's only idle men that have no time. Here it is," he continued, pulling out the slender volume, after some little search, from under a mountain of tape-tied foolscap. "Here it is. You'll find a number of passages marked, in which the grammatical construction is not, I think, exactly according to rule. You can consider the matter at your leisure; and, if you differ with me on any point, I shall be ready——"

"Thanks, thanks—many thanks, Linaere. I have no doubt that you are right. I am flattered that you should have found time——"

"My dear fellow, I can find time enough to do anything I want to do. It is a scandalous waste of the public money—which I hope to bring before the House—that there should be five of us inspectors. Give me an active man for my colleague, and I am ready to undertake the whole work of the office. Time! Bah! Such fellows as you, Farnaby, don't know that there are four-and-twenty hours in every day, and sixty minutes in each of them. I'll lay a wager that you have not enjoyed your holiday,—holiday!—pooh! all life is holiday to you,—your visit, we'll say, half so much as I have enjoyed my work here in town."

"I am very glad to hear it, Linaere. But I have enjoyed my trip too. Hemmingtree is a very old and

very dear friend of mine, and he has a most charming wife."

"Men's wives are apt to be very charming to their friends."

"Come, Linacre! if hard work can only make a man cynical, I'm all for idleness. My friend Henningtree's wife, however charming she may be to others, is ten times more charming, I'll be bound, to him. The fact is, Linacre," continued Farnaby, after a pause, "it's all very well to talk about work making a man happy, and all that sort of thing. All it can do is to leave him no time to remember that he is by no means happy. The truth is, that both you and I, old fellow, have missed the road. We ought to have taken the other turning a long way back. There is no true happiness to be got out of a life led monk's fashion in a monastic old hole like this, whether one sits in one's cell industriously writing reports like you, or idly scribbling verses like me. It won't do! It's not good for man to be alone. And the devil of it is, that one does not find out the eternal truth of the dictum, till it is too late."

"Hullo, Farnaby! Why you are quite breaking out in a new place. See what comes of visiting the sylvan shades of Sillshire, and talking to the very charming wife of one's old and very valued friend. Or is it all a part of the equipment of a full-pay poet? Or have you found your time of rustication fall so terribly heavy on your hands, that you have been driven upon the pastime of falling in love to get through the hours? Which is it?"

"Neither one nor the other. I am speaking what I believe to be the most simple prosaic truth; and I

have not been falling in love. Nor am I breaking out in a new place, as you call it. I am sure you have heard me say as much before now. But I'll tell you what I have been doing, Linaere. If I have not been falling in love, I have been finding out that I have left the doing so till it is too late. It is what so many of us do. You remember the German saying as to a bachelor's life: that it is like a day with a very good breakfast, rather a dreary dinner, and a most miserable supper."

"But how has it come to pass, Farnaby, that you have been finding out this pleasant fact now? Why is it too late? Have you been told so by any lady whom you would fain have persuaded otherwise? Out with it, man."

"Nothing of the kind," rejoined Farnaby, throwing his large length of limb on an old sofa pretty nearly covered with bundles of papers, as he spoke, and sprawling on the top of them as a great Newfoundland dog might do; "nothing of the kind. But I *have* seen what very forcibly set me thinking of the fatal mistake a man makes who suffers himself to reach my time of life unmated."

"I take it as a matter of course, that the vision which put such unpleasant thoughts into your head assumed a female form," said Linaere.

"It was just simply a little girl, who came to drink tea at Henningtree's house with her aunt,—a mere child, whom it would be preposterous to talk of my falling in love with, and who would as soon have thought of falling in love with me as with her own grandfather."

“The latter of the two preposterous things being, I take it, the more difficult to be got over.”

“Probably so,” returned Farnaby, with unalterable good humour; “but that is just the point of my sermon,—the sermon I have been preaching to myself, I mean. Of course I have no call to preach it to you. That is just it! If one could only get old in heart and mind as fast as one does in body! There I see a young creature who, I am not a bit too old to feel, would be such a companion for life as would make every hour of it a happiness beyond anything which a poor loveless bachelor can conceive; and of whom I feel at the same time that it would be preposterous to ask her to think of becoming my wife.”

“In short, you have fallen in love, and that with a degree of unwisdom that is so glaring as to have forced the recognition of it even on a lover! That is about the true statement of the case, I apprehend. You know, Farnaby, that if you come to me for an opinion, you will only get the exact and unvarnished truth. And knowing that you won’t be angry with me?”

“Angry, not I! If I could be made angry by words, should I be here now, old fellow? But the fact is, you are altogether mistaken in the case, as you call it. You have not read your brief with any sufficient attention. I tell you that I have not fallen in love with this girl. I am not miserable about her! I know that I shall never set eyes on her again. I did not even make any strong attempt before I came away to do so. But if I had been twenty, even fifteen, ay, if I had been only ten years younger, I might have fallen in love, with my eyes open, and with the perfectly conscious intention of doing so. And that is the point

which has been forced on my thoughts. It is that damnable and most wretched word TOO LATE!"

"But why too late? Because it would be absurd at your time of life to fall in love with a school-girl? Now does it follow that it is too late for you to make a more suitable match, which would be tenfold more likely to ensure happiness?" said Linaere.

"Yes, all that sounds like excellent good sense. No doubt you would have the court with you, brother Linaere. But, when one sees such a girl as that Miss Senhouse,—that is her name,—after seeing and talking to her," said Farnaby, jumping up from his recumbent position on the sofa, and thrusting his hands into the pockets of his trousers, as he moved across the room with wide strides, among the all-covering litter of papers; "when one has seen one's ideal, Linaere, you see, it is very difficult,—it is hardly to be expected that one can——"

"Don't trouble yourself to explain, my dear fellow. I understand it all perfectly well. Now, what I should recommend would be this: just let me give you the work of one of my clerks for a week or ten days. You may depend upon it, that it would effect a perfect cure in that time."

"I tell you again, Linaere, that I have no malady to be cured of. I am *not* in love with this child. I know myself well enough to be quite sure of that. I tell you that I have not the slightest idea that I shall ever see her again. No; it is not because that special happiness is beyond my reach that my old bachelor quarters on the other side of the staircase there seem but a dreary and hopeless home to me, but because I

have been led to see that I have shut myself out from any such happiness."

"Pray was the young lady—the very young lady—at all pretty?" asked Linacre.

"Pretty! No; she wasn't pretty at all. But she had the most spiritual expression of face I ever saw in a woman, and the most sweetly sympathetic—and the most magnificent pair of eyes you can conceive;—with the figure of a sylph, and the step of a deer!"

"Poor fellow! poor fellow! Better take my offer. You may set to work on the St. Pancras returns at once, if you will. I guarantee the cure."

"D—n the St. Pancras returns! You live on nothing else from morning till night; but you will find out some day that you too have made the same mistake that I have. It is not good, I say, for man to be alone; not even for an Inspector of parish apprentices."

"Well, I'll tell you what: whether it is good for me or not, I must be alone now, for I must finish this report before dinner. I say, Farnaby, let's dine together. Will you dine with me at the Club—seven o'clock?"

"Very good. I'll look in here, and we can walk together."

Walter Farnaby was unquestionably but a little less than forty years old, according to the uncompromising testimony of baptismal registers and such like matter-of-fact evidences. But he was, in fact, very little changed in any respect from what he had been when he was first presented to the reader some fourteen years ago. There was the same large, easy-going, rolling swing about his movements; the same odd

mixture of lounging sprawliness of manner, with superabundant activity of muscular action; the same clear blue laughing eye; the same unalterable good-humour and sweet temper; and, as yet, the same abundance of bright auburn crisp curling hair and beard.

Bentham Linacre was more altered, though he, too, was but little changed. The sharp, quick, decided, snapping manner of the man was exactly what it had always been. He was not quite so upright as he had been; but it was not so much any stoop of his whole figure that he had acquired as a poke forward of his chin and head, and a habit of bringing forward his shoulders, which was especially ungainly. His cold grey eye was as sharp and as restless as ever; the movements of his body and limbs as short and jerky, and his whole person and outline as angular and gaunt, but not more so than of old.

"I did not ask you if you had had any news from Linacre since I saw you," said Farnaby, as they left the Temple to walk to their dinner that afternoon.

"Not a word. Everything, I take it, remains in exact *statu quo* there," said Linacre.

"Who could have guessed a dozen years ago,—more isn't it? let's see; aye, going on for fifteen years ago,—that you would still be Mr. Linacre? We said that those shocking tragedies which struck down the poor old Earl, one on the back of the other, must assuredly kill an old man, seeming as they did to carry enough of misery with them to strike any man down in the pride of his strength. But there he lives on still."

"The fact is that life may be almost indefinitely prolonged when it was become reduced to a merely

animal existence, led with the utmost regularity. I take it the old man *was* killed, as far as his intellectual nature and capacity for moral suffering went. It is that part of us that wears out the body,—that and physical imprudence. Remove both these, and there is no saying how long the little consuming lamp of life may last.”

“He must be a very old man!” said Farnaby.

“Yes, but this side of eighty I take it. He may live for the next ten years. And, God knows, I have no desire to abridge his days, poor old man, if they are of any advantage to him in any way! If I were to become Earl of Linaere, I don’t know what would become of the apprentice inspection. I don’t know where they would find a man to do my work as I have done it. I don’t, upon my word.”

“I suppose you hear from the Park occasionally?” said Farnaby.

“Yes; one Mr. Barnwell, the steward, deemed it his duty—or his interest, which I suppose is the same thing,—to put himself in communication with me; and I get a letter from him from time to time. I take it, from the tone of his letters, that I might have had the real management of the estate, to all intents and purposes, in my hands,—that the Earl gives no attention to anything, and is apparently incapable of doing so. But this, under all the circumstances, I did not choose; and I have abstained from interfering in any way.”

“I think, under the circumstances, you acted judiciously. Did you ever hear anything more of those unhappy Garstangs, who were turned out of their holding?”

“Not a syllable.”

"I wonder what became of them? The fate of that poor fellow who was hung made a great impression on me at the time."

"I take it they are there still—at Garstang Grange, that is. They have land of their own, besides that they held under the Earl. I daresay that the loss of the farm they held was a heavy blow to them, but I suppose it did not involve destitution. What their own lands may be worth I do not know; but I suppose they live on the produce of them, whatever it may be. If they had been so ruined as to have to leave the Grange, and if their land had been to be sold, I think I should have heard of it; more especially as the purchase would be a very desirable one for the Linaere estate. Of course the best thing for them would be to sell."

"Why?" asked Farnaby, shortly.

"Because the principles of political economy are all against them. The progress of the age is against small landowners; the soil is less profitable in their hands than it would be in the hands of a larger owner," replied Linaere dogmatically.

"But I thought that I had heard you argue that the influence of large estates and great landowners was evil?" returned Farnaby.

"It is so like you, Farnaby, to confound the reasonings and the expediencies which belong to one order of ideas with those which have reference to quite a different department of human life. In a social and political point of view, there are reasons for preferring that the land should not be accumulated in the hands of a few very large proprietors. But in a purely

economical point of view, there can be no doubt that the small owner has many things against him."

"The position of the matter seems rather an unhappy one, then," said Farnaby.

"But I am not inconsistent; be so good as to observe that. If the two desirabilities are, as matters stand for the present, incompatible, the fault is to be found in certain errors which lie at the very roots of our social system. Let us just examine the matter——"

"Not now, Linaere. I will take my lesson another time with all attention; but now I want to tell you all about my visit at Silchester."

Mr. Bentham Linaere resigned himself with a sigh to the postponement of his lecture, and by the time the two men had finished their dinner and were sitting with a modest bottle of port between them after it, Farnaby had drifted into descriptive talk of all the physical and spiritual perfections of that Miss Senhouse, whom he was so sure he should never again set eyes on.

Mr. Bentham Linaere's account of the state of things at the Park, and at Billmouth generally, was a perfectly correct one. The Earl lived on from year to year without any visible change in his condition. It was not quite true that his life had become a merely animal one, or that he was by any means in such a state as to have escaped from mental suffering. There probably was not an hour in the old man's life in which the painful consciousness of his misfortunes was not present to his mind. But it was true that the utter and absolute changelessness of his life seemed to be a cause of the prolongation of it. He went on liv-

ing because nothing occurred to produce such a jar as would suffice to break the thread of his existence. Like the bough of a tree violently bent at right angles, the first injury to which might likely enough have killed it; but which, having recovered that, and shaped its growth to the new form imposed upon it, is none the more likely to die because of the old wrench, the Earl's mind had grown into the shape of his grief, and become rigid in that position.

Mr. Linacre was equally correct in his supposition as to the inhabitants of the Grange. Mr. Barnwell was perfectly well aware that the purchase of the Garstang acres would be a very desirable one for the Linacre estate. And if only those pestilent Garstangs could be driven to leave the country, and sell their land, it was hardly likely that anybody else save the Earl could be the purchaser. The only other property by which the little Garstang estate was bounded was that of Artingale Castle, the property of a spendthrift absentee baronet, whose London extravagances were ruining his own estate, and who was little likely to become a competitor for the purchase in question. And Mr. Barnwell had probably entertained hopes of such a consummation at the time when the Garstangs had been turned out of the Bishopscroft farm; but if such hopes had occurred to him, he had long since abandoned them. If those inextinguishable Garstangs could live two years on their poverty-stricken acres, there was nothing to prevent their doing so for two dozen.

And there, too, at the Grange, as at the Park, all had been going on, during these years, with the most unchanging monotony. Harvest followed seed-time and

seed-time harvest. Each morning brought with it the same labour, and each evening the same repose from toil. From time to time letters came from Silchester containing uniformly favourable reports of the progress in mind and body of the absent daughter of the house, and these were briefly discussed between the brother and sister. Respecting that other matter, which lay deeper in Wilfred Garstang's heart than any other wish, or hope, or fear, which was in very truth the object and the passion for which he lived,—his cherished vengeance on the Earl,—no word was ever spoken between him and his sister. But the subject was one rarely for many hours absent from Wilfred's mind. As the closing hour struck of each year added to the slowly and inexorably increasing tale of years, the gloomy man, feeling as if he were the doomster divinely appointed to measure out retribution, scored up in his heart another twelvemonth of suffering and misery added to the punishment of his enemy.

But more and more as the time went on he grew to feel that he could not allow the Earl to come to the end of his misery and depart, without finding the means of standing by his bedside for one short half-hour, that he might say to him, "I, Wilfred Garstang, the brother of the man you hunted to death, have doomed you to the misery you have suffered for so many years. In *my* hand it has been to remove from your heart the worst part of your suffering; and I have not done so, because of your conduct towards my brother. In *my* hand it now rests to rescue your name from disgrace—to restore the honour and reputation of your lost child—and to raise up to you a direct heir of your body for the inheritance of your estate and the

continuation of your race. This it is now in my power to do; but I will not do it, because of the evil you have done to me and mine!"

Wilfred Garstang felt, as has been said, more and more, with each vanishing year, that the Earl must not be allowed to die till these words should have been said in his ear. And from time to time, by the means of old Ralph, he obtained tidings of the condition of things at the Park, and ascertained that the unhappy old man was not yet to be liberated from his long punishment.

And this was during those long uneventful years almost the only tidings of the outer world which penetrated the grim stone walls of the old Grange, or which its inhabitants cared to hear.

BOOK V.



COMPETITION.

CHAPTER I.

Girlhood's First Sorrow.

IN the spring of the year after the autumn in which had fallen Jenefy's sixteenth birthday, the time came when, according to the terms of the arrangement originally made, she was to leave the care of Miss Senhouse, and return to the Grange. And the time brought with it the crisis of the difficulty to which Miss Senhouse had long looked forward with alarm and misgiving—the necessity of imparting to the young girl the knowledge of the circumstances of her birth and of her real relatives.

The fact was that Wilfred had hoped, at the time that the arrangement with Miss Senhouse had been made, had fully expected indeed, that no such necessity would ever arise,—that is to say, that no necessity would arise of saying anything to the child respecting her birth and parentage until she, together with the world in general, should be told that she was the child of a marriage between George Garstang and the Lady Juliette Linacre, and was herself Jenefy Baroness Linacre in her own right, and the possessor of all the estates attached to that title and heirship. There was at that time fair reason to expect that this information would have been given to her while she was yet a child, incapable of any great degree of wonder or shock at the announcement, and equally incapable of very deeply feeling the sad story of her father's fate, which

would necessarily be communicated to her at the same time.

All this might reasonably have been expected to happen. But time crept on. Year after year glided by monotonously, and the Earl did not die; and the time appointed in Wilfred's immutable programme of vengeance for the declaration of the marriage between his brother and the Lady Juliette did not arrive; and now Jenefy was a young woman, of age to feel the full weight of the terrible blow that was to fall on her, and by temperament and character eminently fitted to be very fatally injured by the falling of it. And Wilfred was far from being incapable of comprehending this in all its force. But as the time had gone on, he had still flattered himself that if the Earl were still living when the twelve years stipulated with Miss Senhouse should have come to an end, it would be easy still to defer making any communication to his niece upon the subject of her parentage by the simple expedient of leaving her awhile longer with her present protectress. And no doubt this might have been easily arranged, if any intimation had sooner been made to Miss Senhouse that such a prolongation of her services might be desired. When, in reply to a letter from Miss Senhouse, reminding Wilfred that the twelve years agreed upon were now about to expire, and requesting him to make the necessary dispositions for the return of his niece to Garstang, he wrote back to say that circumstances made it desirable that Jenefy should remain away from her home yet awhile longer, and that he trusted it would not be inconvenient to Miss Senhouse to continue her care of the child for a year or two more, he received a second letter from Silchester,

regretting very sincerely the writer's inability to fall in with the proposal, in consequence of other plans and engagements which had been entered into on the supposition that she was then to lose Jenefy, and in which other persons were interested in a manner which made it impossible for her to break them.

Thus it became necessary that Jenefy should at once return to Garstang, and, as an inevitable consequence, be informed that she was the illegitimate child of a convict father and a dishonoured and disowned mother.

There *was* indeed another possibility; so obvious and clearly preferable a course, that it would appear to any one, reading the narrative of these workings of a diseased mind, that it was a matter of course to adopt it. It was simply that Wilfred should forego the further prosecution of his vengeance; that he should content himself with the twelve long years of suffering which had been inflicted on the Earl; that he should permit the old man, who had been so thoroughly crushed, to die at least in the knowledge that his daughter had not indelibly disgraced her name and lineage, and that the blood of his race had not flowed through the veins of so long a line of honourable and unblemished gentlemen to be extinguished at last in the foul slough of a nameless blot. It was simply that Wilfred should make up his mind to do this; and at once make known the claim and true position of his niece. But this course never even once occurred to him as a possibility. He had for too many years—for too many closings of each successive day, and risings of each successive sun, with the same thought ever, ever in his mind—contemplated the Earl's punishment

as a fixed decree of immutable fate; he had too genuinely represented to himself his own action as the moving of a power superior to his own will, and himself as the awarder indeed of destiny, but as acting in that capacity under the compulsion of an irresistible necessity. All this order of thoughts had been too long and too constantly the tenants of his mind for it to be possible to him to conceive the sudden reversal of the doom. No, the Earl's sentence had been pronounced, and it never entered into the stern avenger's mind for an instant to spare his niece, at the cost of remitting the remainder of that sentence.

A second letter from him in reply to that in which Miss Senhouse stated her inability to take further charge of Jenefy, told her briefly of his great regret that such an arrangement was impossible, and requested her to fix a day on which he should come to Silchester, to take Jenefy home.

This brought in reply a longer letter from Miss Senhouse, in which she entered at length into the question of the explanations which it was necessary to make to her charge, before she should be taken to the Grange as her home.

"I will not conceal from you, my dear sir," she wrote, "that this is a subject which has long given me considerable uneasiness. Frankly I dread the telling to the dear child the unhappy facts it will be our most painful duty to communicate to her. You know what your directions were in this respect; I need not tell you that they have been most scrupulously complied with. My own opinion would have led me to endeavour gradually during the course of—say—the last four or five years, to prepare her mind for the recep-

tion of the truths which it is now necessary for her to face, but you thought otherwise. And the mode in which different characters and temperaments would be effected by such a trial are so various, and the effect it would produce on them so uncertain, that I am very far from saying, or feeling sure, that you were wrong; but none the less does my mind now misgive me. The shock will be a very terrible one. It is inevitable however; and the only question now is how we may most spare, or rather how we may least terribly strike down the poor child. You will readily believe me, when I tell you that it would be the greatest possible relief to me, if the duty of making this communication to our dear Jenefy could fall to the lot of another; but, as I say, our sole consideration in the matter must be her good. And it is with reference to this view of the matter solely that I write to ask you, whether you will judge it best that you should yourself communicate to her what must be told when you come here for her; or whether you would prefer that I should do it before you arrive? If you incline to the latter course, I am ready to undertake the very, the most painful task; and you may, in that case, depend on my doing the utmost that my strong affection for her, and my thorough knowledge of her character and temperament, can suggest to make the cruel blow fall as lightly as may be possible. Should you decide that Jenefy shall be informed of the truth before you see her, I will ask you to let me know your decision to that effect with as little delay as possible, and also to give me a brief and concise statement of the facts with which it is necessary to make her acquainted."

In answer to this Wilfred wrote back at once, ac-

cepting with much gratitude the offer made by Miss Senhouse. He, too, would have given much that no such tale should ever have to be poured into his niece's ear: but he would not give, as the price, any portion of his vengeance. Had it been proposed to him to escape from the terrible necessity before him by such an exit from it, the suggestion would have appeared to him to involve as great an impossibility as a proposal to reverse the appointed course of the world's destinies.

With regard to the facts to be communicated to Jenefy, he wrote thus:—

“Jenefy is the child of my brother, George Garstang, and of the Lady Juliette Linaere. Her mother died in giving birth to her in this house. Her father, George Garstang, was executed as a felon at Silchester for striking to death, in sudden encounter, a member of a press-gang engaged in capturing a working-man of this town. He was adjudged to be guilty of murder only because the weapon with which he struck the slain man was a stick artificially prepared for giving a deadly blow. He had then such a weapon in his hand for the first time in his life; and had no more idea of inflicting death on the man he struck than you have. The motives of his interference were wholly generous and noble, as he was one of the most generous and noble-hearted of men. Yet for this blow he was adjudged to die as a murderer. Had he been spared, there can be no doubt that, when obstacles in the way should have been removed, a marriage would have taken place between the father and mother of my niece. These are the facts, my dear madam,—most painful ones, as you justly say, with which it is ne-

cessary that my niece should be made acquainted. If I accept with gratitude your offer to be yourself the medium for the communication of them, it is not that I seek to spare myself the pain of having to tell them to her, but that I have no doubt whatever that you will do it with a gentler hand, and more judicious caution."

Then followed a cordial acquiescence in a suggestion, with which Miss Senhouse had closed her letter, to the effect that if the task of telling what had to be told to Jenefy were to be left to her, she should wish that at least a fortnight should be left to her for the doing of it. And Wilfred's letter fixed a day for him to come to Silchester in accordance with that suggestion.

Thus Eva Senhouse had the task of doing that which she admitted to herself was the most disagreeable duty that had ever fallen to her lot. She dreaded it much. And her first preparation for the performance of it was to talk the matter over with Miriam Henningtree. Her old pupil listened to the statement of the case with close attention. The general outline of the sad story was not new to her; but, on hearing it, the bright little lady remained in deep thought for some minutes; and then, in reply to her old friend's remark that she must fairly confess that she had never had a task before her that she dreaded so much, said quietly,—

"Suppose you leave it to me, Eva."

"You don't mean to say that you would undertake it, Miriam? I assure you such a thing never entered my head."

"But, in thinking of the matter, it has entered into

mine. It will be a difficult job to do, and, as you say truly, an exceedingly painful one. Poor little Jenefy! but I think—you see, we have been great friends. I love the dear girl with all my heart; and I think that she is fond of me. She has, in my opinion, one of the sweetest natures I ever knew. Naturally enough she looks on you more as a superior, whom it is her duty to obey, and before whom it is her duty to control herself. Now, though self-control is an admirable thing, Eva,—I am sure nobody who has come out from *your* hands can doubt that at all,—I have a notion that this is a case, and that Jenefy has a nature, which, under the first shock of this blow, would make expansion more beneficial than the self-control which could only be obtained by a violent effort. And I think that Jenefy, not unnaturally, would be more likely to be expansive with me than with you;—not, God knows, for want of affection for you, but because she stands less in awe of me, and regards me as approaching more to her own level. I think you understand what I mean; and, if you think it best, I will undertake it.”

“It is just like you, my own dear child; ‘Miriam Henningtree is too light-hearted to feel very deeply on any subject,’ I heard that handsome idiot, Juliana Slowcome, say; catch any one of them as ready as you, my bright little busy-bee, to take pain on yourself in order to do good to others: it is partly to spare me, I know, but I have no doubt that you are right. I feel the truth of what you say. It is a terrible story, is it not, to have to tell?”

“I wonder,” said Miriam, “whether she has any recollection at all of the time before she came to Sil-

chester;—any kind of remembrance of that strange melancholy man, her uncle, who brought her here?”

“None at all, I fancy; or only a very dim and confused one. You see, she had never lived with this uncle and the aunt, whom I have never seen. She had been put out to nurse, and had remained with her foster-mother till she came here at four years old. She can just remember this woman, and recollects that she used to call her ‘Mammy Margery.’ I think we shall find that we had to deal with a mind quite blank as to any previous memories or notions.”

“Perhaps it will be better that it should be so,” said Mrs. Henningtree; and then there was a considerable pause in the conversation, during which that active-minded little lady was meditating deeply. At length she said,—“And when shall I undertake my task?”

“I have stipulated with Mr. Garstang for a clear fortnight for the performance of it. Some time I thought might be needed for preparation, and some for recovery from the shock.”

“For the latter, yes; but for the former—I do not see that we can do much in that way. Any attempt to prepare her mind,—to let her know that *something*, which it would need her fortitude to bear, was about to befall her, would only produce such a degree of suspense and nervous dread as would cause her extra suffering, and use up beforehand a great part of that capacity for making a strong effort, of which we have so much need,” replied Miriam.

“You purpose then to tell the terrible tale outright, and at once?” said Miss Senhouse, thoughtfully.

“So far at least as to leave nothing to be told at

a subsequent interview. When I have once begun I shall not part from her till she knows all. Shall she come here to-morrow?"

"I dread it to that degree;—but there is nothing to be gained by deferring it. Yes; there is no reason why she should not come to you to-morrow. You are very brave, Miriam!"

"Not so brave, perhaps, as you think for, Eva; I do dread it; but I will do my best. Poor child! I have so sincere an affection for her; she has a loving and affectionate little heart—and a gentle. But, I'll tell you what, Eva, if I do not mistake her altogether, she has more bravery in it,—more power of endurance, more of real fortitude, than you and I put together!"

"I, too, think she has a steadfast nature, that would be strong to stand up under the weight of any well-recognized duty. She shall come here then to-morrow," said Miss Senhouse, rising to go.

"Yes; let her come to spend the day. Let her come as soon as Cyril has gone out to the Cathedral,—say at ten o'clock."

"You will tell Mr. Henningtree of the labour of love you have undertaken, I suppose?"

"To be sure I shall, and shall very likely reckon upon him for some help."

And then the two friends parted; and on the morrow poor little Jenefy, all unconscious, and delighted with the prospect of a day with Miriam, which was always one of the greatest pleasures in her evenly-flowing life, made her appearance, light-hearted and joyous, at the appointed hour, at the architect's house.

"Come upstairs, darling, and let us go into my sanctum. This is to be a talking morning; for I have

a great deal that I want to say to you," said Mrs. Henningtree, meeting her guest in the hall, and speaking, as she thought, quite in her usual manner and with her accustomed cheerfulness.

"There is something amiss," cried Jenefy, looking with a wistful and eager glance into her friend's face, and catching her by the hand as she spoke. "I am sure you have some misfortune to tell me. What is it? Tell me at once, dearest Mrs. Henningtree," she added, with short coming breath, and clinging hard to Miriam's hand.

"Come upstairs, my dear child. It is true that I have to tell you some things that it will pain you to hear. Let us sit down together on this sofa," said Miriam.

"Is it about yourself? Has any misfortune come to you?" said Jenefy, nestling close up to Mrs. Henningtree's side.

"No, darling; no evil has happened to us, and no evil has happened to anybody. Nothing has happened now; and no new misfortune has fallen upon anybody. But some sad things happened a long time ago, which it is right that you should know. It was thought not right to tell them to you when you were a child. But now that you have the sense to attach to them the degree of importance which is reasonable, and no greater degree, my darling;—now that you are about to return to the friends who placed you under Eva's care, it is fitting that you should be no longer kept in ignorance——"

"It is about myself, then?" said Jenefy, with bated breath, and looking with large eyes and cheeks yet paler than usual into Mrs. Henningtree's face. "Oh,

I knew that there was misfortune in anything that took me away from Silchester! Does not Miss Senhouse know of it?"

"Yes, darling; Miss Senhouse knows all the story I have to tell you. But she thought,—we both thought, Jenefy, that perhaps you would like best to hear it from me. We have always been dear friends, haven't we, Jenefy; and I hope always shall be, my dear girl."

The young girl nestled yet closer to the side of her friend, and laid her head upon her shoulder; but she made no reply in words.

"Now, darling, you must listen to the story I am going to tell you; and you must remember, Jenefy, as you hear it, that the people whose misfortunes I am going to speak of have long since gone out of this world to a better life, where there is no sorrow and no grieving."

Jenefy pressed her head down on Miriam's shoulder, and stole her arm around her waist; but still made no answer in words.

"You have heard of such things as press-gangs, darling, and know the object of them. Well, about seventeen years ago—seventeen years ago—England was engaged in a great war, and the press-gangs were actively seeking to get sailors for the fleet on the northern coast of this county. And it happened one day that a gentleman of the name of Garstang——"

"Garstang!" cried Jenefy, with a little start, and uttering the words in a sort of dreamy tone; "Garstang!" Then she nestled her head down again and said, "Go on please, Mrs. Henningtree, I am listening."

“—Mr. Garstang suddenly and unexpectedly came in sight of a party of press-men on the point of making capture of a man whom he knew. Without thinking a minute about it, he sprang forward, and with two blows knocked down two of the press-men with a stick he had in his hand, and thus enabled the captured man to escape.”

“*That* was bravely done,” said Jenefy, raising her head from its reclining position for a moment and looking up into Miriam’s face, “and I should have loved that Mr. Garstang.” Then she resumed her attitude of listening.

“Yes, dearest, it was bravely and generously done. And Mr. Garstang had no thought nor intention to do more to the men he struck than to make them let their prisoner go. But, Jenefy, one of the men who was so knocked down was killed by the blow;—and the law and the lawyers said that Mr. Garstang was guilty of *murder!*”

Mrs. Henningtree felt a shiver run through the frame of the girl which was pressed against her side. “Murder!” she said, in a low voice scarcely above a whisper, “when he did not mean to kill the man.”

“The lawyers decided that he was guilty of murder; and for that blow that he so struck, Mr. Garstang was hanged here in Silchester,” said Miriam, in low and solemn accents.

“Then *he* was murdered by the lawyers, for they meant that he should be killed, and they knew that he had never meant to kill any man!” said Jenefy, almost fiercely, raising herself to an upright sitting posture as she spoke, and facing round towards Mrs. Henningtree.

The latter took both the girl’s hands in hers, and

drawing her towards her, and looking with tender earnestness into her eyes, said,—

“That Mr. Garstang, Jenefy, who did that deed, for which you say you should have loved him, was *your father!*”

The effect of the announcement was different from anything which Mrs. Hemmingtree had anticipated. She felt again a sudden start, a thrill and quiver run through the entire frame of the slenderly built girl. But then she rose to her feet and took one or two hurried turns up and down the little room, and then, suddenly stopping short in her walk on the other side of a little table which stood in front of the sofa on which they had been sitting, so as to face Mrs. Hemmingtree, and drawing her slight figure up to its full height, with flashing eyes and quivering pale lips, she said,—

“I am not sorry to be the daughter of that man, Mrs. Hemmingtree. I cannot be sorry, though all the people in England conspired to hang him. I would have stood by him, and kissed his hand, and told all the world that I was proud of my father! My father!”

And then the swelling heart could be kept down no longer. The quivering upper lip was drawn spasmodically, the large dark eyes filled with tears, and the poor girl threw herself on the sofa beside her friend in an agony of hysterical weeping.

Mrs. Hemmingtree did not attempt to check her tears. But when she had become a little more quiet, she said,—

“But my story is not all told, my love. Rest your head on my shoulder, dear one, as you were before,

while you listen to the rest of it. So. I have spoken you know, Jenefy, as yet only of your father. I must tell you also of your mother."

"She is dead too?" said Jenefy, interrogatively.

"She has been dead, my Jenefy, just as many years as you have lived. She died, my child, in giving birth to you. And you were her first child."

"Poor mother!" said the girl, while her tears streamed quietly and abundantly over the polished surface of Mrs. Henningtree's black silk dress. "Did she die after or before——"

"After the death of your father. Doubtless the terrible circumstances of his death mainly contributed to occasion her own. But still, darling, there is more to tell,—more that it is right that you should know. You do not ask me who your mother was. She was the daughter, Jenefy, of one of the richest and greatest noblemen of this county,—the Earl of Linacre. Your father lived very near to the mansion of the Earl of Linacre. He and your mother, the Lady Juliette Linacre, loved each other; but the Earl could not endure that his daughter should marry a man in the position of your father, who, though a landowner and of a very ancient family, was a poor man; and so—it came to pass that—they were never married. You know, my child, that it is against the laws of God and man for two persons to live together as man and wife without being properly married. But your father and mother did this."

A deep and prolonged sigh came from the girl's heart; and her quiet tears continued to flow unchecked for some minutes. At last Mrs. Hemmingtree gently raised her head between her two hands, and pressing a

kiss upon the large fair extent of her white forehead, said:—

“Now, dearest, I have only this more to say to you; you must not think more of the consequences resulting to yourself from the fault of your parents, than is in truth necessary——”

“I have not thought at all about any consequences to me, Mrs. Henningtree. I was only thinking of all the sorrow and unhappiness that—that have been! I don’t know what the consequences to myself are!”

“Those children,” began Mrs. Henningtree, after a pause of some embarrassment, “whose parents have never been married, are considered to have no right to their father’s name; they are, in fact, considered not to be the children of anybody.”

“What matters it whether I am considered to be the child of anybody, when, if I were ever so much considered to be their child, my father and my mother are both dead—dead as soon as I was born! And I have been thinking, Mrs. Henningtree, that that Earl of Linacre must have been a very cruel man—a cruel and bad man. Then he is my grandfather?” said Jenefy thoughtfully.

“He was in truth the father of your mother, my dear child; but, as one of the consequences of your mother’s fault, he would not consider himself as having any relationship to you, or anything to do with you.”

“Who has anything to do with me?” said Jenefy, in a tone of profound discouragement and sadness; “why have I been living with dear Miss Senhouse, and why has she taken care of me?”

Then Miriam explained to the child all that still

remained to be told for the due explanation of her present position, and ended by telling her that the uncle, who had hitherto charged himself with providing for her, was coming to take her to his home, which had been the home of her father also, in a couple of weeks' time.

But she found that she was less able to draw her hearer's mind to this part of her information, than she had been to fix it on what had gone before. Jenefy's thoughts, for the present at least, would turn to the past rather than to the future, despite the fact that her own immediate prospects were involved in the one subject of consideration, and only her sympathies with those whom she might have loved, had the opportunity been granted to her, in the other. Nevertheless, the tone of her mind quickly became calmer, and she seemed to be busied with thoughts that led her to melancholy reverie, rather than to the passionate grief which her friends had so much dreaded for her.

At last she said, lifting up her face to Mrs. Henningtree, with a deep sigh, "Are all the people whom I know here acquainted with the circumstances you have been telling me, dear Mrs. Henningtree?"

"Most of those whom you know best, my dear, are well aware of them; Mr. Henningtree and myself, and Mr. and Mrs. Slowcome, for instance. I do not suppose that the young ladies at Mr. Slowcome's have any knowledge of them."

"Nor others, whom I have made less acquaintance with I suppose, such as Mr. Chaytor, and Mrs. Chaytor, and—that gentleman who came here the other day—Mr. Farnaby, for instance?"

A slight blush passed over Jenefy's clear, pale

cheek as she named her last "instance." Mr. and Mrs. Chaytor were a minor canon and his wife, who sometimes visited the Henningtrees, and whom Jenefy had made acquaintance with at their house. And quick little Mrs. Henningtree knew perfectly well that they had been introduced into Jenefy's question merely as dummies to prevent the other name from standing alone. On another occasion she might very probably have rewarded the detected *ruse* with some little word of bantering; but now she was content to remark and remember the incident, and to reply,—

"Certainly not, my dear! It is extremely improbable that any such mere chance acquaintances, should ever have heard anything upon the subject."

And then Jenefy relapsed into a prolonged fit of apparently absent meditation.

"Don't you think, dear Mrs. Henningtree, that it is wrong for me to call myself Miss Senhouse when I am not Miss Senhouse, and to—to seem to other people to be—to be different to what I really am?" she said at last, after having remained thoughtfully silent for many minutes, during which Miriam did not disturb her.

"My dear Jenefy, you have been hitherto a mere child, you know. Most of those who have really taken any interest in you, such as would give them a title to be treated with confidence by your friends, do know the truth about you, as I have already told you. And it is mainly because, as you say, it would not be right that you should, now that you are about to enter life, be supposed to be other than you really are, that it has been decided that you should be told this. Henceforward, all who know you will know you by your

real name—by the name, that is, that your uncle intends that you should bear.”

“What name?” said Jenefy, opening her large eyes with surprise.

“Garstang, my love! You will be called Jenefy Garstang. I have explained to you that, under the unhappy circumstances attending your birth, the law does not consider you to be entitled to the name. But your uncle has every right to accord it to you, and it is his wish that you should be called by it.”

“Has my uncle any wife?” the girl asked, after another pause for thought.

“No, my dear, he is a bachelor; and he lives with a maiden sister. They live, I believe, quite alone; and you will live with them. I have no doubt that they will be very kind to you; and it will be your duty, my dear Jenefy, to bring a little of that sunshine into their home which the young can always bring with them.”

Then Mrs. Henningtree judiciously proposed that her young friend should go with her to the cathedral to bring Mr. Henningtree home to luncheon, an errand upon which Jenefy had often accompanied Miriam on former occasions. And sometimes she succeeded in bringing the architect back with them; and sometimes he could not be induced to leave the labour he delighted in. Upon this occasion he acceded at once to the proposal. And Jenefy was soon quite sure that Mr. Henningtree knew how the morning had been passed by her and his wife.

In the evening, when Miss Senhouse came to walk home with her, she found her pupil calmer and more composed than she had hoped for. And so she con-

timed to be for the remainder of the time which had yet to elapse before her uncle was expected at Silchester. She was very thoughtful, and very silent during these days. And though in many other ways she manifested her affection for Miss Senhouse, and her grief at the coming parting with her, she did not show any disposition to talk with her at any length, as might in the case of most girls have been expected, on all the many subjects on which her young mind was doubtless busily at work.

And Eva Senhouse, on her part, judged that it was her most judicious course to abstain scrupulously from any sort of attempt to invite her pupil's confidence on those subjects.

CHAPTER II.

Jenefy's Return to the Grange.

At length the day came for Jenefy to bid adieu to her Silchester friends, and to return with her uncle to her home.

"Home!" From the cheerful little cottage, where she had passed twelve years,—her whole life as far as her consciousness went,—from the kind friends who had hitherto made her whole world, she was to be taken to live at Garstang Grange, with Wilfred and Patience Garstang, whom,—as far as her consciousness went,—she had never, or scarcely ever seen before. And this was Jenefy's going home!

The meeting between her and her uncle was a strange one. Assuredly the more embarrassed, the more shy, and one might almost say the more timid of the two was the uncle. Unconsciously to himself

he had been expecting to find a child, very much such as he had left. Of course the mere statement of such expectation would have been enough to dissipate it. But unstated, and uninquied into, that was the notion—or the image rather—at the bottom of his mind. So much so that he started with surprise when a striking, beautiful girl, now as tall as she was ever likely to be, was presented to him. It would have seemed to his imagination more according to the natural order of things, and he would have been less taken aback, if this tall niece had been arrayed after the fashion of her aunt Patience. He had never paid much attention to the costume Patience delighted in, and if he had done so, would not have deemed that there was any especial virtue or excellence in it. But a female looking like Patience was indelibly imprinted on his mind as the normal idea of a female of the house of Garstang. He knew that other women did not look like Patience. But it was so entirely accepted and recognized a fact in his mind, that the Garstangs were not as other people, that they were not to be expected to look like other people, that it seemed something unnatural and incredible that the elegant young lady before him, dressed simply enough, but still elegantly, and according to the modes and fashions then in vogue, should be his niece.

Miss Senhouse had specially recommended Jenefy to exert herself to meet her uncle with cheerfulness, deferring any allusion to the painful subjects, which it would doubtless be necessary for them to speak of together, to a future opportunity. And Jenefy did exert herself to comply with her friend's recommendation. And this was a further source of amazement and of

embarrassment to Wilfred. It was not that he wondered that the facts which had been recently communicated to her should not have saddened her more. His thoughts on the subject did not go so far as that. But such a manner was strange to him. He had rarely seen one of his race smile. Since the death of George he had never seen such a thing as a smile on the face of a Garstang. There was no feeling approaching to disapproval in his mind either as to the elegant appearance, or as to the cheerful bearing of his niece. On the contrary, he told himself that he was well pleased that it should be so. But he was amazed, puzzled, thrown out.

And then he turned his mind to the contemplation of this niece, such as he saw her, put to live, to pass her days one after the other, from the morning till the evening, at Garstang Grange. And an immense feeling of compassion, not unmingled with a sort of dread, took possession of him.

During the few minutes of last leave-taking between Miss Senhouse and her pupil, the attempt at cheerfulness was cast aside equally by both of them. It could not be expected that it should be otherwise.

"I did my best, dearest Miss Senhouse! I did my best!" said the poor child clinging to her; "but my heart is breaking to leave you; you and everybody that I have ever loved in my life!"

"You owe your uncle much, darling, you will love him; and will find your happiness in striving to make his home a happy one."

"He seems very unhappy, does not he? I wonder whether he is always as melancholy as that? I wonder——"

A sudden outburst of passionate tears cut short her words.

"Hush, darling, hush! do not give your uncle the impression that it is painful to you to go with him. There, wash your eyes, my child! we must go down. Compose yourself, my own dear Jenefy! We shall meet again, never fear; and who knows how soon! Now really we must go down."

"You will write to me, dearest Miss Senhouse?"

"Of course I will; and so will Miriam. Depend upon it we shall not let you forget us, and you will write and tell us all about yourself, and how you get on. Remember, that you cannot write too often."

And then there were last words, and last clinging kisses, and Jenefy Garstang started with her uncle for her "home."

In every way in which he knew how to be so, he was kind and considerate to her on the journey. But the conversation which passed between them was not calculated to comfort or reassure her. He was so impressed by the incongruity between this last of the Garstangs and the home he was taking her to, he was so struck by the immense difference between her and all that he had around him at the Grange, that he dreaded the shock which the first introduction to the home of her ancestors and the life that belonged to it must needs produce upon her; and set himself to prepare her as far as he could for that which was before her.

"I fear, my dear niece, that you will not find the Grange so pleasant a home as you have been accustomed to at Silchester. We are very poor people, Jenefy, and we live without any luxury or super-

fluity," he said with his grave slow speech and melancholy looks.

"Dear uncle, don't imagine that I care for anything of the sort. You can't suppose that what is good enough for you and for my aunt Patience, will not be good enough for me," said Jenefy in a cheerful voice; and really feeling cheerfully at the idea of the ease with which she could reconcile herself to such privations as her uncle spoke of.

"And our amusements consist of work from morning till night," he continued in the same tone; "not that there will be any necessity," he added, "that you should join in any such employments. Indeed I had much rather that you should occupy yourself with your books, and in keeping up the knowledge of the things you have learned. But I am afraid that you will find the life a very dull one. We see no company."

"I am sure, uncle, I shall find enough to do from morning till night, and I hope my aunt Patience will let me help her in the house. I don't want company indeed."

"I shall be very happy, Jenefy, if I see that you can be happy at the Grange; but, to tell you the truth, it is not a happy, not a cheerful house. We are not cheerful people, my niece. You will, however, bear one thing in mind, my dear child: the life, such as you will find it, is for your aunt and for me such as it must be till the end of our lives. We have no change to look forward to. With you it is different—you have life before you. The existence which you must now lead at the Grange will be but for a time. Better days will come to you. You must look forward; and by the help of looking forward, strive to bear the present as well as you can."

"Dear uncle, I do not see that there will be so much to bear. I do not doubt that I shall be as happy as the day is long."

"As happy as the day is long!" repeated Wilfred with a deep long-drawn sigh. "Well, well; I will not say, nay! I will not say, nay! But you are a Garstang, my child, the last of the name. Well, well, it may be."

And then they fell into silence; and Jenefy meditated, much puzzled on the meaning of these strange and discouraging utterances.

At last the end of the journey was reached, a porter was found to take Jenefy's effects up to the Grange by the long road round by the Artingale woods, by which alone the Grange was accessible on wheels; and Jenefy and her uncle walked by the zigzag path up the side of the cliff.

Jenefy was in ecstasies with the beauty of the seaward view. She had never seen the sea since she was old enough to remember the sight, and now, as each successive angle in the zigzag path placed the spectacle immediately in front of her, she could not contain her delight. Wilfred stood still patiently each time she stopped, and looked at her, as she looked at the ocean with a face as changeful as its own, with an expression of meditative sadness, that would not have been without pathos to any observer of the pair who could have guessed, as well as the reader can guess, what sort of thoughts were passing in his mind.

"There, my niece, that is Garstang Grange," said Wilfred, as they topped the cliff, "the house in which your father lived, and his and your forefathers dwelt for more generations than history can count! We

Garstangs were there, my niece, and have possessed this soil before either Linaere or Artingale was heard of in the country."

"Linaere?" said Jenefy interrogatively, with a slightly startled voice.

"Those are the woods of Linaere Park," replied her uncle, pointing across the valley of the Bill to the eastwards, "and all that side of the country belongs to the Earl,—a rich and fertile country. Our acres are few and poor, Jenefy! It is as much as they can do to give their owners bread. But Garstang was there before Linaere, and shall be after!"

Jenefy looked at her uncle with a puzzled and meditative glance for an instant, and then turning again towards the grand seaward view, she said, "It is very beautiful."

"Yes, I have looked at it man and boy every day for near half a century, and it *is* beautiful. But you must not think that it always looks as it does to-day. We have very violent storms on this coast sometimes; storms when the wind, loaded with salt spray, beats against this old house till the stone walls shake, and seem almost to stagger under the blow. But the old house has stood, and will stand! But it is a bleak, dreary place, Jenefy, in winter weather; very dreary to those who are not used to it! We Garstangs *are* used to it."

"I think I should like to see a great storm from this cliff," said Jenefy.

"It will not be long probably before you will have the opportunity of doing so. Come, niece, let us go into the house. You aunt is expecting us by this time. Welcome to the Grange, Jenefy, the last of the Garstang race!"

CHAPTER III.

Life at the Grange.

JENEFY and her uncle found Patience waiting to receive them, seated in the same place in the stone kitchen, and in the same chair on which Jenefy had found her, when, now between twelve and thirteen years ago, she had insisted upon riding on her aunt's back. And it was the memory of that afternoon which contributed the greater part of the elements that went to the forming of the idea that Patience Garstang's imagination had pictured to herself of the niece whose coming she was awaiting. Of course she did not expect to be again subjected to the same exercises. She was aware that she was about to see a young girl approaching the confines of womanhood. But one of the tricks which imagination habitually plays us, is to suggest images so perseveringly, and yet so subtly, so privately, and behind reason's back as it were, that we are constantly fooled by them, and led to expect what we clearly know we have no reason for expecting.

Wilfred Garstang had been startled at the first appearance of his niece, when she was presented to him. But Patience was much more, and more disagreeably surprised. She saw a tall, slender figure, elegantly clad in a dress of black silk, made after the fashion of the day, and admirably showing all the outline of the delicately formed bust, and the lithe elastic roundness of the small waist. She saw beneath it,—for dresses were worn short in that day,—a long, slender, high-arched foot, with the contour of its instep well-defined by a pretty and dainty boot; she saw two very

large dark eyes, which seemed to occupy the larger part of a delicate white face; and she saw two large thick curls of dark glossy hair, hanging down on each side of the white face below the sloping shoulder. Worse still than all this, she saw that the black silk dress was plentifully trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons. But worst, far worst of all to Miss Patience, was the head-dress that surmounted this palpably mundane and unregenerate figure. Shepherdess hats, as they were called, were worn in those days. And they were a great deal prettier than the huge hats of monstrous circumference that succeeded them. They were fashioned very much in the style of the head-gear one sees in Watteau's pictures,—light, flat, little hats of straw, with a profusion of long streaming ribbons, somewhat jauntily worn, the least bit in the world saucy in their expression,—and most mundanely pretty. Jenefy wore, as other girls of the day did, a hat of this kind. The ribbons were cherry-coloured, and excellently well became her dark ringlets, clear pale face, and large dark eyes.

And that was her niece! that was the young woman who was to be an inmate of the Grange, and of whom she, Patience Garstang, was to take the charge! Why it was bringing her one, who was even as the daughters of the Gentiles! a Canaanitish woman! Surely it must be from Jezreel, and not from Silchester—lost in worldliness as that dissipated capital might be—that this creature had come. Ay, this was what had come from intermarrying with the princes of this world! Patience had always had misgivings as to what the child of a Lady Juliette would turn out to be.

Patience rose slowly from her chair when Jenefy,

closely followed by her uncle, entered the room. And the niece was almost as much taken aback at the first sight of her unknown aunt as the latter was at the appearance of her niece. Of course Patience Garstang's dismay and disapprobation did not render the expression of her face more inviting than it usually was. Her long, lean, rigid figure, in its black stuff gown, shapeless, straight from arm-pit to ankle, stood up stiff and unbending like a black column. She had a long deep coal-scuttle-shaped bonnet on, made of a piece of black silk, drawn tightly over a large sheet of paste-board, bent into the shape of a waggon-roof. For Patience had of late years taken to wear such a bonnet at all hours of the day, whether she were indoors or out of doors. And she held her hands lapped over each other in front of her waistband, in which certain little twitching movements were visible, the result of nervous indecision whether she should, or could, or ought to put out her hand to welcome the stranger to her new home, or not.

"Here is our niece at home at last, Patience!" said Wilfred in as cheery a voice as he could manage to command; "we must endeavour to make it as little disagreeable to her as may be."

"I fear me this house is a little likely to suit the tastes and desires of such a young lady as this, brother!" said Patience, with an exaggeration of the slow, harsh tones that were habitual to her.

"Oh, aunt, don't say that: I am sure I hope, and intend to be happy and contented here, if only I can please you and my uncle," said Jenefy, making impulsively a step forwards towards Miss Patience, who replied to this attempt at a cordial greeting by bobbing

a little stiff, straight up and down curtsey, with a look of much alarm in her face.

"You will get on better with my sister when you both know each other better," said Wilfred. "Now, Patience, show our niece the chamber that is to be hers, and when you have taken off your things, my dear, and are ready to come down, we will have some tea."

"Come," said Patience, turning and stalking to the door, without adding another word.

Jenefy followed her aunt up the wide uncarpeted stone staircase; and as the dreary sounding echoes repeated the heavy foot-fall of each step of Patience on the stone, she could not prevent her heart from sinking in her bosom. It all seemed not only so dismal, but so strange. Jenefy had as yet seen no human being save her uncle and aunt, since she had entered the house; and there was a strange weird, deadly silence over it all, that made it appear to the young girl's excited fancy as if she had come among people and things that did not belong to the ordinary living world, but to some other ghostly, still, enchanted state of existence.

There were two doors nearly facing the head of the staircase on the opposite side of the wide landing-place, itself as large, it seemed to Jenefy, as the whole of the cheerful little bit of a cottage she had inhabited with Miss Senhouse. To one of these doors Patience advanced, and flung it wide open. It disclosed a large chamber,—to Jenefy's an immense chamber,—with one very wide latticed window looking out seawards,—to the north, that is. It had a large yawning hearth, without any sign of having contained any fire for many

a long day, and no morsel of carpet; by the side of the bed was a rush mat. The bed itself was very large, with four very massive posts, and curtains of a woollen material called moreen, of a striped pattern, the colours of which had once been green and white, but were now pretty nearly black and yellow,—very funereal in their effect. There were shutters to the window, but no curtains. Opposite to the huge fireplace was a very large chest of drawers, and over this, and over the mantelpiece, were two very much faded portraits of ladies of the house of Garstang belonging to generations long since forgotten. One of these was as severely dressed as Patience, in black, and in almost a monastic fashion. But the other, that over the fireplace, was the picture of a younger, and a very handsome woman, dressed in the height of the fashion of Charles the II.'s day. But Jenefy was struck by observing that in both of them she could see, even in the hurried glance which she cast on the pictures on first looking round the room, an unmistakable likeness to the grim woman who was standing by her side. The only other articles of furniture in the large room were a heavy massive table in the middle of it, and four very large and high-backed arm-chairs, covered with the same material as the bed-curtains. One of these stood on each side of the bed, and one on each side of the chest of drawers. Other object of any kind in the room there was none. For all the appurtenances for washing, and a small toilet table with a miniature glass above it, were in a small dressing-room, with a window of its own, into which a door opened in the corner of the room farthest from the door by which Jenefy had entered. There was wherewithal, as far as space

was concerned, to make a very luxurious bedroom and dressing-room. But in the bare and dismal condition in which the place was, the ample size only served to increase the look of dreariness and gloom. And poor little Jenefy shuddered with surprise and dismay, as she compared the scene before her with the picture in her mind of her tiny but cheerful and cosy little chamber in Miss Senhouse's cottage at Silechester. There was the view of the sea immediately facing the large window, and the thunder of the pulsing tide as it beat against the cavernous rocks at the base of the Garstang cliff was distinctly audible,—a magnificent view of the sea, as any lover of such sights, and Jenefy among the first, would have admitted. But now, already, as seen from that dreary chamber, the expression of the view she had admired so much from the esplanade in front of the house, seemed changed; and had the effect of adding to the forlorn and melancholy feeling of solitariness and cheerlessness which appeared to be characteristic of the house and all connected with it.

“This will be your chamber, my niece. It is the room which was always your father's, and it was in that bed that you were born, and that your mother died. May the remembrance of her early end, so fitted to remind the most hardened that in the midst of life we are in death, be sanctified to you, and chasten you with that fear which is the beginning of wisdom. As soon as you have—taken from your head that—” and Patience pointed with her forefinger to the offending hat,—“you had better come down, for your uncle will be waiting for his tea.”

And with these words the grim figure vanished,

shutting the door behind her, not violently, but yet with a noise that sent a mournful echo wandering round the walls of the cheerless old chamber.

Jenefy's heart began to sink within her, despite her strong determination that it should not do so. It was a brave little heart; but yet it began, if not to turn coward, at least to feel that all its courage would be needed in this new and strange life. There she stood in the middle of the wide floor, slowly, and as it were cautiously, looking around her, as though she were afraid of what her eyes might next rest on in their survey. It did not occur to her that it would have been kinder in her aunt not to have immediately given her the unnecessary information that it was in this dismal chamber, and in that huge funereal-looking bed, that her mother had died. But she felt that the fact added no little to the sombre and gloomy images which assailed her imagination. And that room was to be her own special home; and that strange woman who had left her there was her aunt, her only female relative. The weather was not cold, but she shivered, and felt as if a mortal coldness struck her from the bare walls and floor of the large room; it seemed as if it needed an exercise of strong will to move from the spot on which she had been left standing, when her aunt shut the door behind her. She roused herself, and did move to the window, the shutters of which were not shut; and there beneath her was the wide expanse of sea, boundless around the greater part of the horizon, but with the tall crag of a bold promontory visible to the extreme west.

The moon was beginning to rise, and made a pathway of pale light extending away into the unknown

distances, where sea and sky met. And an uneasy wind had sprung up with it, moaning not loudly, but wearily and discontentedly around the house; and the beating of the surf against the foot of the cliff was more distinctly audible than before. There was much of beauty in the scene, though all the elements of it were depressing; and Jenefy stood at the window gazing, and as if fascinated, and altogether forgetful of the injunction she had received to take off her hat and come downstairs forthwith.

There had been just light enough to do so, at the time when Miss Patience bade her to do so. But the twilight was rapidly failing, and inside the room it had become all but quite dark, while Jenefy still stood gazing out of the window. Presently she was startled by the sound of the door opening.

It was old Margery, the one female servant at the Grange, and the mother of the "Mammy Margery," the memory of whom was not quite blotted out from the mind of her former nurseling.

"Laws, Miss Jenefy!" the old woman began as she opened the door, and then seeing the figure of the girl against the window across the room, the old woman advanced slowly, and with some hesitation. Jenefy turned towards her; but it was so dark, that she could barely see the outline of the old woman's figure. "You be Miss, Miss Jenefy? Ben't you?" she said, as she came close up to the window.

"Yes, indeed, and I suppose you are Margery. My uncle told me all about you!" said Jenefy, relieved to find one living thing in this enchanted castle, who spoke in the tones of an ordinary human creature.

"I almost began to doubt it might be your poor dear mother's ghost, standing that fashion so still and silent like in the moonlight. But why, for the love of heaven, don't ye come down? There's your uncle and aunt a waiting for their tea, and you've not atook your bonnet off."

"I'll come this minute; I am so sorry I forgot. I just looked out of the window, and then I forgot all about it. But I am quite ready; say I'll come this minute, please, Margery."

"Stay a minute and I'll get you a light, Miss, for to take off your things," said Margery.

"No, I don't want one; I must not waste any more time. There, I am ready now; I will go down with you," said Jenefy, hastily throwing her hat on the great table in the middle of the room.

"I am afraid, my niece," said Miss Patience as she entered the stone kitchen, "that you have learned among the children of this world the evil habit of wasting much time at your dressing-table. We have no such habits here, and it will be well for you to know that precious hours so employed are sacrifices offered to Belial. Your uncle has been waiting for his tea."

"I am so sorry, aunt; but indeed I was not at the dressing-table, and have not been near it. I went to look out at the window; and then forgot all about coming down to tea, till Margery called me."

"And I was not waiting for my tea, my dear," said her uncle; "for I was doing just the same thing down here, that you were doing overhead: looking out over the view, which is as old to me as it is new to you, and forgetting all about the tea; and that, I am afraid, is a true Garstang habit, if, as Patience says, we are

not long at our dressing-tables. It is a fine view, Jenefy, is it not?"

"It is very beautiful, uncle, and yet there seems to be a sort of melancholy mournfulness about it. It is as different from the views about Silchester as if it were a thousand miles away, instead of being in the same county," said Jenefy.

"Ay, you have struck the key-note already, and will fall into the old tune quite naturally," said her uncle; and then he became absolutely silent, and his head dropped upon his breast.

To Jenefy the words he had uttered were altogether unintelligible. Whether they were words of approval or disapproval, she was at a loss to guess. So she also remained silent and embarrassed.

Patience also, when she had drunk a cup of tea, and eaten with it a slice of dry bread, sat in silence, with her hands before her, and her eyes cast up to the ceiling. She was mentally asking for aid, and a blessing on a great effort, and an attempt to perform a great duty, which she was about to make.

"My niece," she said after a while; and Jenefy started from a reverie, as the harsh grating tones fell upon her ear,—“it has fallen to my lot before now according to the will of my Master, to have duties set before me which were not pleasant to perform; but that did not deter me, thanks be to Him, from performing them as He gave me strength. Nor will I shrink from my duty now; and my duty it is to tell you that the manner and fashion of the garments wherewith you deck out your mortal and sinful body, is an offence to the Lord, a mark and a badge of your bondage to the world and to the flesh; and that it will be needful for

those on whom the responsibility of guiding you in the way is laid, to insist on an entire change in all your habits in that respect. I do not wish to blame you, my child; the blame must rest with those who ought to have been your spiritual pastors and masters, as it would rest henceforward with us, if——”

“Stop a minute, Patience, if you please,” said Wilfred, appearing suddenly to wake up from his reverie. “There is a word to be said on this matter; and as you have chosen to broach the subject so soon, it is as well that the word should be spoken now, and once for all,” he said, laying a special emphasis on the last words, and gently striking the table with his outspread hand, in a manner of which his sister well understood the significance. “You have your notions of what is right and good, Patience, and nobody has ever interfered to hinder you from acting up to them; and it would not be right for you to interfere with others who may think differently from you. I believe that the lady who has hitherto educated my niece is a very good and religious woman; and it is my wish and my will that Jenefy shall continue to practise all such habits and ways as were taught her in the house of Miss Senhouse. It is my intention that she shall have thirty pounds a-year entirely at her own disposition, for the purpose of dressing herself,—to the extent for which that may suffice,—as she has hitherto been accustomed to dress herself.”

“Indeed, uncle,——” began Jenefy.

“Thirty pounds, brother!” said Patience, aghast.

“Let no more be said upon the subject by any of us,” said Wilfred, repeating the despotic action with his outstretched hand on the table. “You know, Pa-

tience, and I wish Jenefy also to know, that we shall be neither the richer nor the poorer by one stiver whether this money is allocated for this purpose or not. A sum has been set apart for your education, my child, and in no case will that sum be touched for any other purpose. I might have named sixty pounds a-year; it would have made no difference to Patience or to me. I named thirty because I thought that it was a sum which in reason ought to suffice. To-morrow I will hand you the first quarter of it. And I hope to see you, my dear, always looking as I have hitherto seen you. Patience, let no further word, either when I am with you or when I am not with you, be said upon this subject."

Thenceforward Miss Patience endured with heroism and in silence the constant agony of seeing her niece look even as one of the women of the Gentiles,—and a very pretty one too. Nor did the pain thus inflicted on her cause Miss Patience to behave herself any less kindly to her niece than she might otherwise have done. But however kindly Patience Garstang might feel towards any man, woman, or child, it was altogether impossible to her to appear so to them in outward manner. And a very terrible trial it was to the girl to live with such a person as her amnt for her sole female companion. But she had no reason to complain of her conduct to her.

And then, soon after that solemn laying down of the domestic law by her uncle, came the time for separating for the night, and Jenefy had to retire alone to her horribly dreary chamber. The shutters had been closed; and the boxes containing her dresses, her books, and the various little treasures of her childhood days

had been brought up. But that was all that had been done in the way of preparing the great room for her habitation.

Jenefy put her hand to the great heavy shutters and found that they were merely closed. She opened one of them, and again fell to looking out on the sea view, now lighted by the moon high in the heavens. And then she remained at the window for several hours, pondering many things, regretfully musing over the past, and striving to understand the strange present around her, till her candle was burned out. And then she crept to bed by the moonlight.

It was all very strange; very unlike aught that all she had hitherto seen of life had enabled her to imagine; very dismal, and almost deathlike in the unbroken stillness, and the unsmiling monotonously sad life around her.

CHAPTER IV.

Spring comes even at the Grange.

IF it could not be said that Miss Patience was unkind to her niece, still less could any accusation of the sort be made against her uncle. Wilfred exerted himself to be as kind to her as he could. Nevertheless, the kindness of old Margery the servant was, it can hardly be doubted, more valuable to her; not to her heart, but as an aid to endurance of the life she had to live. It was not that the life was hard. There was a sufficiency of shelter, warmth, and clean and wholesome food, and Jenefy would not have given a second thought to any small differences in such respects which

she might have observed between her Silchester life and the greater plainness and roughness of that at the Grange. Nor was it that she was called on to take part in any toil of a kind to which she had not been accustomed. Her uncle specially set himself against anything of the kind being required from her. He wished that she should employ her time with her books, and her drawing, and such like occupations. And even when the hour for necessary out-of-door exercise came, he preferred that she should amuse herself, if amusement might so be found, in walks about the neighbouring fields and coast, rather than that she should put her hand to any domestic labour. And Patience, on her side, seemed to prefer to be uninterfered with in her avocations.

The long, long hours, and the long uneventful days might have passed with less of almost intolerable weariness,—it might have been better for Jenefy if the views of her relatives had been other than they were in this respect. For the utter stillness and monotony of the girl's life were terrible. And to any other eyes than those of Wilfred and Patience Garstang, it must have become evident that such a mode of existence was beginning to tell injuriously upon her. As if she had caught the fashion of the place, and had been made to feel that a smile was a thing totally out of character at Garstang Grange, the light laugh which had so frequently been as a ray of sunshine in the cheerful little cottage at Silchester or in the house of the Hennings-trees, was heard no more. The young girl's face became as smileless as that of Patience herself.

She did endeavour to occupy herself with her books and her studies as much, and during as many hours as

she could. But, as those who have tried it, from Dr. Faustus downwards, know to their cost, man cannot live on books alone. Still less can a young girl of sixteen or seventeen years old. And the life which Jenefy was leading at the Grange was a very unhealthy one, if not immediately to the animal organism, yet certainly to the mind. She began to be aware that her power of concentrating her attention on the study which occupied her was becoming less. In the midst of the long morning hours, when she would be sitting in her own huge room, with her books before her, at the table at which she had placed herself with the intention of getting through the whole forenoon by dint of hard reading, she would with a start surprise herself in the midst of a deep reverie, which had lasted,—she had no idea how long, while her thoughts were rambling vaguely far away, and her eyes would be unconsciously fixed on the view from the window, or still more dreamily on one of the two portraits that hung one on either side of her chamber. Then she would rouse herself, and go down to walk up and down the esplanade at the front of the house, and after awhile return and attempt again to fix her attention on her books.

And all the time,—all the long morning,—whether she went up the great stairs or down, whether she passed out at the front door or returned to her own chamber, she seemed to be the only living creature in the house. Patience was either in the kitchen or the dairy, or shut up in her own room. Margery was always either in the farm-yard or the kitchen; and Wilfred and old Ralph were in the fields always from the breakfast to the dinner hour. Between these two epochs

Jenefy saw no living being. And we know enough of the fashion in which the hours devoted to the family meals passed at Garstang Grange, to be able to form a tolerably accurate idea of the degree of "distraction" and enlivenment which those times were likely to afford to the poor girl.

She did read a great deal despite all difficulties. Of course it seems to busy people, who would fain find a few quiet hours for reading, that nothing could be more favourable for unlimited reading than such a life as Jenefy is here described to have led. It is a mistake! The mind won't yield its service upon such terms. A little human companionship would have made half the hours at her disposition more profitable than the whole of the long days which had no such interruption.

(Nevertheless she did read a great deal. There was one thing, in the matter of bodily privation, that threatened to be a very serious evil and source of suffering to her at the Grange,—the want of fire. As the autumn faded into winter, Jenefy began to fear that she should be obliged to live wholly in the stone kitchen, or out of doors. It never seemed to occur to any of the inhabitants of the Grange that it was impossible, or well nigh so, to sit at sedentary occupations at that time of the year without fire. Nobody within the memory of man had ever had a fire in their own room at the Grange. There was one fire in the front, or stone kitchen, as it was called, in which the family lived, and one in the back kitchen, in which the servants lived, and no other in the house. The occupations of the inmates were all of a more or less non-sedentary kind, and such was the habit of the house.

Jenefy had debated with herself the possibility of asking that she might have a fire, but had decided that it was impossible for her to do so, or, at all events, that the evil of doing so would be greater than the evil, terrible as it was, of going without.

But one day it happened that, on coming down stairs to the midday dinner, she was shivering so palpably that it drew her uncle's attention.

"You have no fire in your room, Jenefy?" he said. "Is none ever lighted there, or have you let it go out?"

"No fire has been lighted there, uncle. It is a little cold to-day. But I daresay I shall get used to it."

"Patience, let there be a fire made every day during the winter in our niece's room," said Wilfred.

"A fire in her bedroom, brother!" said Patience, looking as much aghast as if she had been ordered to set the room itself on fire. "There never was such a thing done at the Grange, or heard of! Those who lived in that room before her needed no fire."

"They did not pass the mornings in study. But it is to be supposed that such a thing has been done at the Grange before, seeing that there is a fireplace in the room. Let the fire be lighted every morning, Patience, if you please," said her brother, in the quiet tones which Patience knew it was useless to dispute.

And thenceforth the fire was always lighted; but Jenefy had the annoyance of knowing that her aunt greatly disapproved of the indulgence. It was not that Patience grudged the fire; and Jenefy knew that that was not the thought in her aunt's heart. Amid all their poverty there was nothing of meanness or

grudging in the nature of Patience. It was not that. It was the excess of carnal luxury that offended her. She would have equally objected to the thing if the Garstang acres had produced twice as many thousands as they produced hundreds.

Nevertheless, as on the former occasion, when the notions and principles of Miss Patience had been overruled by the will of her brother in the matter of Jenefy's attire, she did not visit the offence upon the cause of it by any sort of unkindness or alteration of manner towards her. There never was any kindness in her manner to Jenefy. But neither could there fairly be said to be any unkindness. When she spoke to her it was as if the words were spoken by an automaton, without any expression whatever. And the movements of Patience about the house, and the general bearing of her, always struck her niece as what might be fancied to be the manner of some mysterious member of a former generation, strangely permitted to step from out a picture-frame, and assume a ghostlike semblance of living the life that was going on around her.

Perhaps this strange fancy, which unfortunately forced itself upon Jenefy's mind, was in great measure due to the strangely striking resemblance between Patience and the unlike figure of one of the two portraits which were hung in her room. Often would she sit gazing at this picture in half-unconscious reverie, till she seemed to forget whether it were her living aunt or the portrait of the long-since-forgotten lady of the Garstang race that she was contemplating. Possibly, also, the offence to Miss Patience, arising from the "worldly" style of her niece's attire and appear-

ance, might have been sharpened by the equally strong resemblance which Jenefy bore to the subject of the other picture on the opposite wall,—the beautiful lady in the costume of the time of Charles II. The likeness was unmistakable. But neither her uncle nor her aunt had ever noticed, or at least had ever alluded to it. Nor had Jenefy herself made the discovery; partly, perhaps, because this picture hung over the fireplace, and from the place at which she was wont to sit at her table, her eyes, when they wandered from her book, more naturally fell upon the opposite wall.

She herself, the last scion of the house, would have made a striking and interesting picture, if she could have been painted, together with the still life around her, by an artist who could have seen, and made his canvas show to others, all the story which the scene was calculated to tell.

The wood-fire, reduced to three or four half-burned logs and a few glowing embers, is throwing fitful and capricious gleams of red light on the brass ornaments of the large dogs, which are duly proportioned to the vast cavernous hearth; and Jenefy is sitting in one of the four huge arm-chairs, as near to the fire as the necessity of sitting at the table in the centre of the room will allow her to do. For to move this central table nearer to the hearth is quite out of the question, it is so large and massive and heavy. The slender figure of the girl does not nearly half fill the huge, broad, high-backed arm-chair, which might accommodate two other such within its wide-spreading oaken arms. Tired with reading, she has thrown herself back in the chair, the dingy-coloured covering of which throws out in strong relief the pale face that leans back in the corner

of it. One elbow is resting on the arm of the chair, and the hand belonging to it is supporting the chin. The other hand is lying listlessly on the book open on the table before her,—a long, slender, white hand, whiter than it should be. The depth of the great chair causes her feet to be thrown forward, and they are resting on the screw-shaped carved oaken rung of the table. To the left of her is the great funereal bed with its pall-like hangings; and to the right, the large casement window, divided by heavy mullions into six portions, three larger ones below, and three smaller ones above, and filled with small circular panes in leaden frames. Exactly opposite to her is the picture of the nunlike lady so strongly resembling Patience. Her eyes are resting on it, but she is scarcely seeing it. She is listening, listening to the great silence in all the house, and to the noises, which are saying how dead the silence is: the noise of the north wind moaning around the sharp stone corners of the unprotected house, and the dead, dull booming of the waves at the distant foot of the cliff. No other sound is there in all the house, and these serve but to tell how deep the silence is.

Her ears are listening to these sounds as her eyes are resting on the portrait. But she is thinking of neither the one nor the other. She was thinking, but half unconsciously, what horizon there was around the vast ocean of solitude by which her life seemed to be environed. Was there anything beyond? And what? Suddenly she had been taken and placed in the midst of this strange life with a spell of silence on it,—this unchanging death in life. Would any change ever come? And how would it come? And what would it

be? Was there any shore to this great silent sea, in which she was becalmed, like Coleridge's *Mariner*?

And then suddenly her mind began to think of the carved stone ornaments on the tomb of the thirteenth century bishop in the Lady Chapel of Silchester Cathedral. And then, still in a dreamy sort of way, she set herself to think how it was that her mind should have suddenly lighted on a thought or a memory so strangely dissevered from all around her, and, as at first sight appeared, from all that she had before been thinking of. And then, tracing one thought and one image back to another, she remembered that she had last seen the bishop's tomb in company with Mr. Farnaby, and had had a long talk with him about these same carved ornaments, and other such carvings elsewhere.

And then, sitting all by herself in that dreary dim room, in the huge arm-chair, she blushed all over her cheeks and forehead and neck, and shaking her head, sprang hurriedly forward in her seat and applied herself eagerly to the book before her.

When the winter had passed away, and the weather began to make it possible to sit out of doors, and the woods began to put on their spring dresses of varied greens, things were a little better with Jenefy; for she was able to go out with her sketch-book. Under the tuition, in the first instance, of Miss Senhouse, and afterwards, in sketching from nature, of Mrs. Henningtree, Jenefy had made herself a sufficiently expert water-colour artist to find great delight in the practice of the art. The country around Garstang, both coastward and inland towards Artingale, afforded her an abundance of very enticing subjects, and she found that she was able to spend a greater number of consecutive hours

with her pencils in her hand than she could spend satisfactorily over her books. It was a great resource to her, and as the season progressed she spent thus a great part of her time out of doors.

Nevertheless, her life continued to be a terribly dreary one. The excessive monotonousness of it was dreadful to her. Any sort of event would have been welcome to her. The unchanging equableness of the temper and conduct of her uncle and aunt were unspeakably oppressive. If only they would have scolded her sometimes, if there could have been the change of fair and foul weather, of storm and sunshine within the house, it would have been more tolerable. But there was never any storm, and never, never, any sunshine. The morning and the evening were the first, and the second, and the third, and the fourth, and every following day; and they were all exactly like one another. If only there had been any event, anything to be expected even with painful anxiety, it would have been better. But there was nothing to awaken expectation of any event save the setting of the sun, and the rising of it again on the following day.

Wilfred, as we well know, was expecting;—waiting, waiting patiently, but always eagerly expecting. But the tidings from the Park continued to be always the same. No change could be observed in the Earl. And Wilfred heard the privately given report from old Ralph, and was contented to wait, knowing that all this time—and the more fully the longer he lived—the Earl was paying him his debt of vengeance.

He was contented to wait. He told himself that he was contented; and assuredly no breach, no flaw in the utter calmness—calmness as of a stagnant pool—of his

manner and appearance belied the assertion that he was quite contented to bide his time. Yet if content means happiness, Wilfred was certainly not a contented man. There is this notable difference between those sins which may be called sins of the body, and those which may be more properly termed spiritual sins. The former do minister joy and contentment, however transitory, and however low and poor the nature of the joy may be. Those who can so be pleased *do* get their pleasure for a time. But it may well be doubted whether spiritual sins ever procure to any man any modicum of really pleasurable feeling even for an hour. The man who gratifies his hatred, his vindictiveness, his malice, does not in doing so gratify himself. In denying those passions the gratification they seek, he would more gratify himself, even in the midst of the hard struggle of denying them. The blockhead body and its befooled brain do really get the pleasure and the jollity to be found in the bottle, despite the headache, and the "sermons and soda-water" of the morrow. And the pleasure passes away, and the pain passes away, and the body itself passes away, and there is an end to the whole merely temporary concern. But the nature of spiritual sin is so eternal, it is so essentially ever the same, before commission, in the moment of commission, and afterwards; it partakes so inextricably of the immortal nature of the soul from which it springs, that the present of it is even as the future.

And it cannot be doubted that Wilfred was not a happy or contented man during all those years that he was, as he would have said, enjoying the fruition of his vengeance. The contemplation of his own determination in the matter was necessarily incompatible

with any approach to cheerfulness. It was not a matter that could sometimes be taken up for a subject of thought, and at other times allowed to pass out of mind. It was necessarily *always* in his mind. And, strive as he might to argue down the reproaches of conscience by representing himself to his own fancy as the appointed executioner of a righteous doom, it could not be but that the mood of mind resulting from such thoughts was strung up to a gloomy sternness of imagination that looked upon the part assigned to himself in the terrible tragedy as one little compatible with lightheartedness or joyousness of mind.

He spoke but little and rarely to Jenefy; occasionally a word, if it occurred to him that she had any wish or want unsatisfied, and now and then an inquiry how she got on with her studies. And sometimes he would seem to be conscious that the life his niece was leading was, perhaps, hardly calculated to make a young girl happy; and then he would drop mysterious words, to the effect that a brighter and better future would not be long in coming,—that though that life at the Grange was the proper lot for him and Patience, and they could not look forward to any other, yet that things were different in her case,—and other vague words to the like effect.

And then Jenefy would sit and ponder what these sayings might mean, if indeed there were any serious purpose in them.

The spring came on, and advanced joyously towards the summer,—joyously on the sunshine-tipped crests of the “white horses” on the expanse of ocean, and on the glancing white sails of the now more numerous boats passing eastward or westward beneath the Gar-

stang cliff,—joyously in the Artingale woods and water meadows. But within the stone walls of the Grange there was little or nothing of change,—nothing absolutely in the faces and manners of the inmates. The dreary monotony produced on Jenefy the effect of a life passed in a strange and wearying dream. She seemed to live in a vast void, and the void seemed to stretch and widen itself around her. Sometimes she would picture her life to herself as that of one alone—all alone—in one of those far, far ships, which she would watch on the dim edge of the horizon from the great window of her room. But by sailing on and on the ship would come to some shore at last. To what shore was her life tending? Towards what future—what possible ending to the changelessness around her was she advancing?

Still she struggled on bravely,—lived in the occupations of the present, as much as was possible to her; shook herself out of dreamy reverie whenever she caught herself in the act of indulging in it; suffered her thoughts but sparingly to feed themselves with reminiscences of the past Silchester life; and sternly interdicted them from dwelling on one particular episode of it.

And so rolled on the utterly uneventful days that were making up, none the less rapidly for their wearisome monotony, Jenefy's eighteenth year.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Linaere determines to go down to Billmouth.

ON reaching his chambers in Gray's Inn on one bright morning of that same spring, Mr. Wentworth, of the firm of Wentworth and Jennings, found, among others, the following letter on his table:—

“RESPECTED SIR,—I think it my duty to write to you, not knowing what else to do. I can't say as there is much change in the Earl. Mr. Atkins—that's his lordship's own man, as may be you know, sir—says that he didn't see no change in him for the better, nor yet for the worse; barring he passes rather more of his time in bed than he used to, always getting up as early as ever, but going off to bed sooner of an evening. But Mr. Atkins his opinion is as the Earl is as likely to live another ten years as one; which don't make my difficulty, sir, any ways less, but contrarywise more. For what am I to do, sir? The Earl always used to give the orders and manage the estate himself. And even after the misfortunes of the family, he would send for me time and again, to give orders about the letting of the farms and such like; and when there was need of his lordship's signature, Mr. Atkins he was always able to lay the paper before his lordship and get it. But now the Earl has forbid Mr. Atkins to bring him any papers or speak to him at all about the estate. His lordship says, says he, 'they may look to it as it concerns, it don't concern me.' Those words, sir, were

the very words his lordship said to Mr. Atkins, and I want to know what I am to do? Come Michaelmas there will be the largest farm on the estate to let—that is Leawoods, as Mr. Greenhill held. He died quite sudden the other day, though he was but a young man, and come from London to take the farm. They say it was heart disease as killed him. Any way there'll be the farm to let, and a tenant to be found for it: not that there will be any difficulty about that, there will be plenty of offers for Leawood. But that's just it, sir; there'll be to choose between 'em, and it's the best farm on the property; and my lord thought a deal of it, and chose the tenant himself, when it was let to Mr. Greenhill, as was, and wouldn't have let him have it, if so be as it hadn't been that Greenhill's father was a Sillshire man. But now he is dead, and what am I to do? And there's other matters want attending to, and the Earl won't make nor meddle with it in no way. They may look to it as it concerns, his lordship says. It don't concern me, says he. And, sir, my notion is, and Mr. Atkins he have the same opinion, that when my lord spoke that way, he had in his mind to say 'let Mr. Linacre see to it.' His lordship wouldn't name Mr. Linacre by name, not if it was ever so; and naturally his lordship could not be expected to do it, seeing things is as they is. And so, sir, when I came to talk over the matter with Mr. Atkins, what we thought was, that the best thing to be done was to write to you that you might tell Mr. Linacre, if so be you judge it to be right and proper to do so, that the best thing he could do, would be to come down here for a few days, just to look after the things a bit. Not for to think of seeing the Earl;

that's quite out of the question, but just to see to the things a bit, and to give the necessary instructions and directions. Mr. Linaere would find very good accomodation for man and beast at the 'Linaere Arms,' or I would make bold to say in my house if he preferred it, and was not fearful of giving offence by the offer.

"I am, respected Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOHN BARNWELL."

"Strange how that old man lingers on! Care can't kill Earls, it is clear, whatever it may do to cats," said Mr. Wentworth to himself, as, having read Mr. Barnwell's letter, he laid it by the side of his desk, as a sign that it was to receive immediate attention. And when, later in the day, he went out, having, among other matters, some business at the Temple, he put the letter in his pocket, intending to call on Mr. Linaere and speak to him on the subject of it.

And it so happened that Mr. Linaere was found at home in his chambers, sitting at his desk, almost hidden behind piles of paper, and writing away as fast as his pen could cover the foolscap.

"Mr. Wentworth, of Wentworth and Jennings, to speak to you, sir," said a clerk putting into the room a head with a pen behind the ear.

"Ask Mr. Wentworth to walk in," said Bentham Linaere, who had little doubt that the solicitor brought the tidings of the Earl's death.

"Pray sit down Mr. Wentworth—if indeed you can find a chair. You will excuse the confusion of my room. If you'd call on my colleague Mr. Arundel

now, he'd receive you in a comfortable room, quite free from all this litter."

"Thank you, Mr. Linaere," said Wentworth, smiling, "I am used to similar evidences of hard work."

"It *is* hard work; every man's work is hard, if he does it thoroughly. Have you any news from Linaere?"

"Yes, I have a letter here from Barnwell, the steward, which reached me this morning. I might have simply forwarded it to you, but I thought it better to speak to you about it, if you can spare me a few minutes."

"Oh, certainly! I have to make minutes somehow. No change in the Earl?" replied Linaere, with just the faintest sense of disappointment in his heart.

"No, it would seem not from Barnwell's letter; little or none, save that he goes to bed somewhat earlier, and makes his nights a little longer than he used to do, and that he absolutely refuses to do anything or look at any paper with reference to the management of the estate. Barnwell's object in writing to me is to suggest the desirability of your running down there for a day or two."

"Why not Mr. Jones, or Mr. Brown, or Mr. Robinson, or any man whom you saw in Fleet Street on your way hither?" replied Mr. Linaere, mentally squaring at his antagonist, *i.e.* the man who was speaking to him.

"Simply, Mr. Linaere, because, as it seems to me, you have more interest in the matter than any of those persons," said Mr. Wentworth, quietly twirling his

thumbs, with his elbows resting on the arms of the chair in which he sat.

“Interest in the matter! But what *locus standi* have I? That is the question. Surely you must perceive, Mr. Wentworth, that that is the real question?”

“Quite true, Mr. Linaere. Speaking legally and by the card, you have no *locus standi* during the lifetime of the present Earl. But simply as a matter of convenience and expediency, I should advise, that is,—” said Mr. Wentworth, correcting a phrase which it struck him might be offensive to Mr. Linaere’s barristerhood,—“that is, I mean, my notion would be that it would be as well to content old Barnwell in this respect. He is in much difficulty as to what he ought to do as to the management of the estate. And he seems to think, I have no doubt with good reason, that the Earl himself wishes that you should be consulted. He won’t say so, in so many words. He feels sore, poor old man; and who can wonder at it? One would wish to spare him; and I am quite sure that would be your feeling, Mr. Linaere. ‘Let those look after the estate who have an interest in it,’ he says, when they attempt to speak to him on business. And now, it so happens that, as Barnwell tells me, the most valuable farm on the estate, Leawood, has fallen in——”

“Leawood! I know it very well. Yes, I have no doubt that it *is* the best farm on the estate,—a capital good home, too, in a charming situation. A most desirable holding,” interrupted Linaere.

“Well, the tenant has suddenly died, and Barnwell is at a loss what to do about it. The Earl, it seems, interested himself personally in the letting of it to the

late tenant; and it would be a pity, you see—— It would not be necessary for you to assume to take any legal step, or do any act, you see. But Barnwell would be very glad to act under your advice—call it advice—and thus to be assured that what was done would meet your approbation—when you have a *locus standi*.”

“It would be a great pity that Leawood should be let to some old-fashioned blockhead with no more notion of the present state of agricultural science than a bullock, unquestionably. And if the Earl finds himself unable to take any direction into his own hands, and really has expressed himself as you say—— But it would be quite out of the question for me to intrude myself upon him, observe.”

“Certainly; it would be better not to think of it. Barnwell will have no difficulty in acting on his own responsibility under the direction of a word from you. You will find him a very well-meaning and intelligent fellow.”

“Well-meaning, I dare say. As for the intelligence—— But how am I to find time to get down to Sillshire? You don't know, Mr. Wentworth—nobody knows—what the work I have to get through is. Look here now, here is a pressing case demanding immediate investigation, just turned up this morning. Here is a child, Timothy Langshaft, apprenticed by the guardians of Bracton Parva to one Richard Wriggleby a tinman. Complains that the bed assigned to him to sleep in is so short that he can get no rest, and his life is a burthen to him;—bed absolutely shorter than his own length! Now that is a monstrous tyranny which I will not tolerate. All sorts of dreadful evils

might result,—deformity, curved spine, and all sorts of things. Case must be investigated. I *must* go down to Braeton Parva.”

“Couldn’t you send and require them to furnish you with the exact measurements of both the boy and the bed?” said Mr. Wentworth, laughing in his sleeve at the hardworked Inspector.

“Just what I did in the first instance, my dear sir. But would you believe it, by an altogether incredible excess of swinish stupidity,—unless, indeed, we are rather to suppose *mala fides*, of which I confess I have my suspicions,—they made a return of the height of the boy when he was first apprenticed two years ago. He has been growing ever since and the bed has not! Don’t you see? Braeton Parva,—let me see. Excuse me one minute, Mr. Wentworth. You see, every day lost in this matter is a night lost to poor Timothy Langshaft. But I will see if it can be managed. Peerbody!”

The same clerk who had opened the door to Mr. Wentworth appeared in answer to the Inspector’s call.

“Peerbody, you must take up this case down at Braeton Parva. I had intended going myself; but I am called away by business in another quarter. You can go down this evening. Take care that you don’t allow yourself to be hoodwinked.”

“I’ll take care, sir,” said Mr. Peerbody, looking as if it would be about as easy to hoodwink him as to come over a wild cat with soft sawder.

“Measure the boy, and measure the bed with the utmost possible accuracy, and take note of the results.”

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Peerbody, as grave as a judge and as sharp as a ferret.

"The boy without his shoes, and the bed inside the posts, Peerbody."

"Yes, sir."

"And you will say a word to let them know what I have thought of their abominable doltishness in sending me the measure of the boy as he was, instead of as he is."

"Yes, sir."

"Or, stay, Peerbody. Never mind saying anything about that. It would be more satisfactory to do it myself. I must run down there when I return from Sillshire. I'll do the disagreeable part of the business myself."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Peerbody, who remarked to his fellow-clerk on leaving the presence, that the governor would go a deal farther than to Bracton Parva to have the pleasure of blowing anybody up sky-high.

"So that's settled for the present, my dear sir; and I will act in accordance with your suggestion."

"I suppose I ought to give you the substance of Barnwell's letter in its entirety. He adds that you will find good accommodation at the 'Linacre Arms,' unless you would accept a lodging at his house."

"I suppose that is a hint that I should do well to avoid showing myself at the Park? No danger of that. Can I do anything for you down there?"

"Nothing, I think, at present, thank you, Mr. Linacre. When the Earl's life drops, of course I shall have to take your pleasure on many points. Good-morning, sir; I am glad you have decided to go down.

Will you kindly thank Barnwell for his letter to me, and tell him that your coming is the reply to it?"

And with that Mr. Wentworth took his departure.

"Peerbody!" called Mr. Linaere, as soon as he had heard the door shut behind his visitor.

"Yes, sir."

"Will you have the kindness to step across and ask Mr. Farnaby if he would be so good as to come over for a minute?"

"What is it, Linaere?" said Farnaby, lounging into the room and stretching himself as he walked, while he passed one large hand through his still abundant curly auburn hair, and kept the other in his trousers-pocket.

"I've just had a visit from Wentworth of Wentworth and Jennings."

"The Earl's life dropped at last!" exclaimed Farnaby.

"So I thought when he came in. But that's not it. Not a bit of it. The Earl is alive, and as likely to live as ever. But it seems he declines to take any further trouble about the property, and says that those interested in it may do so, if they like; he won't. And the steward wants me to go down; and Wentworth much advises me to do so; and, in short, I have promised to go. What I wanted to say was, will you go with me? Do, there's a good fellow. It's rarely enough, as you know, that I take a holiday, and it would be a very dull one to go down there by myself. And you want shaking up. The trip would do you good. I am off to-morrow morning. Say yes, like a good fellow."

"Well, I don't mind if I do say yes. I should

like to see the place I have heard so much of; and I think I do want a little shaking up as you say. I have been a little out of sorts lately—not this great strong lubberly body—I don't mean that, but my mind and my intellect. I am becoming as stupid as a select vestryman."

"The trip will do you all the good in the world, and you are a capital fellow for coming," returned Linacre in higher good humour than was usual with him.

"And we are to start to-morrow morning. By the by, how would it be if we were to come back by Silchester? I should like to introduce you to my friends the Henningtrees. It would not be far out of the way."

"It would be very nearly all the distance from Billmouth to Silchester, out of the way. I said the trip would do you good, Farnaby, but I did not say that it would do you any good to revisit Silchester just at present. Do you think it would yourself?" said Linacre.

"I don't know, I am sure: I don't know what would do me good, and what would not," returned Farnaby colouring up as brightly as a girl. "Any way," he added, "I'll be ready to start with you to-morrow-morning."

And on the morrow, the two friends did start accordingly.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Linaere at Billmouth.

UPON the whole, and specially under the circumstance of having his friend Farnaby with him, Mr. Linaere preferred availing himself of the good accommodation for man and beast, to be found at the "Linaere Arms," to availing himself of the hospitality of Mr. Barnwell.

The good accommodation was about as good as was usually to be found in hostelries of similar rank and pretensions, and in similar situations in those days. There was a comfortable, bright and cheerful-looking parlour, with a bow-window, and sanded floor on one side of the entrance. But this was used by the farmers of the neighbourhood, when they drove into Billmouth in their tax-carts, (so called not because they paid, but because they were exempt from the tax payable on other carriages,) and by the principal tradesmen of the town, and was not therefore for the use of such guests as Mr. Linaere and his companion. Casting a longing glance at the bright fire and cheerful aspect of this plebeian place of resort through the half-open door, they yielded to destiny personified by the landlord, who, with the most obsequiously peremptory gestures, ushered them towards a more distant door, and entered—much as unhappily prescient oxen may be observed entering after much demur the door of a slaughter-house—a curtained and carpeted cell, which the uncongenial, but in this case co-operating, genii of damp and dust had long since marked for their own. There

was a sepia-coloured table in the middle, and a side-board of similar hue, with little dingy brass ornaments, of the sort which decorators of the Georgian era were pleased to denominate the "patera" pattern, and with a little round mirror hanging above it, above which a black eagle, with little brass chains dangling in festoons from his beak, hovered. There was a narrow bench covered with shiny black horsehair, which called itself a sofa, and six similarly accoutred chairs; there was nothing else in the room, save the coloured portrait of the winner of the Corporation cup at the Silchester races in some long since forgotten contest, which hung over the fireplace, and there was no fire in the grate.

"Noblesse oblige, I suppose," said Farnaby, shivering and looking around him ruefully; "but what a thing it would be, if we could be allowed to go into that jolly little room in the front there with the blazing fire. I suppose it is not to be thought of. This is what comes of travelling in company with Inspectors *in esse*, and Earls *in posse*."

"Any way we may have a fire, I suppose; just ring the bell," said Linacre.

Farnaby put his vigorous hand to the bell-rope, and down it came together with a shower of dust in obedience to his pull; but no other result followed.

"The sound of the summoning bell,
These tables and chairs never heard!"

said Farnaby, holding the ruined bell-rope in his hand.

"Landlord!" roared Linacre, opening the door, and putting his head out.

When in answer to this summons the man came running in all haste, Farnaby held out the bell-rope to

him, shaking his head with a sorrowful look of mild reproach in his blue eyes, which the landlord accepted as a sign of the most profound contrition for the mischief done.

"No harm done, sir. No sort of signification, sir," said he.

"Landlord," said Linaere in a short sharp voice, "was that intended for ornament, or to cause the bell to ring?"

"Well, sir, they is hornamental, bell-ropes is to a room: that can't be denied."

Linaere looked at Farnaby as if there were now no future hope for the human race, and sighed deeply. Farnaby pointed to the bell-rope lying in a coil on the floor; and said with deep sadness, "not when so fallen, landlord."

"No, sir: certainly, sir," said the landlord picking up the rope.

"Would you order a fire to be lit as quickly as possible. This room feels like a well."

"Yes, sir; directly, sir."

"And, landlord," said Linaere recalling him, as he was hastening out of the room.

"Yes, sir."

"That step in the passage is extremely ill-placed; it is absolutely dangerous."

"It *is* hokkard, sir; but you see, sir, it can't no ways be avoided by reason of the trap for letting the beer down into the cellar from the street. The hogs-heads has to pass under that there passage, and if it wasn't for that there step, there would not be room."

"Pshaw, I don't believe a word of it. What is the diameter of a hogshead?"

"Sir?" said the landlord staring inquiringly at his questioner.

"With a view to ascertaining whether the inconvenience of that step might not be remedied, I ask you, what the diameter of a hogshead of beer may be?" said Mr. Linacre in the tone of a barrister examining an unwilling witness.

"If you please, sir, I don't know sir; I never heard tell, sir, as our hogsheads in these parts had any such thing," said the landlord, feeling as if he was being baited.

"It's quite hopeless," groaned Mr. Linacre, lifting up his hands in despair.

"Quite so sir, we've a tried it again and again," said the landlord. "What will you please to have for dinner, gentlemen?"

"Could you give us a leg of mutton? eh?" said Linacre."

"Yes, sir; prime Sillshire mutton, sir."

"There is no better thing than a little leg of Sillshire mutton," said Farnaby.

"If the farmers only had the most rudimentary knowledge of the proper feeding system," said Linacre.

"Shall we go and have a look at the town while the dinner is getting ready?" said Farnaby.

"Yes, I think so. Landlord, how soon will dinner be ready? Say an hour. And, landlord, will you be so good as to send somebody to Mr. Barnwell, and tell him that I should be glad to speak to him, if he could make it convenient to look in here after dinner, say at seven o'clock?"

And then the two gentlemen strolled out into the town, and finding their way down to the new pier, as

it still continued to be called, sauntered thence along the beach to the westward, till they came to the last straggling fishermen's cottages, which formed the suburb of the little town in that direction, and were near to the spot at which the path turned off to ascend the Garstang Cliff.

"It must have been very near this spot, that that terrible tragedy was enacted which cost Lord Saltash his life," said Linacre to his companion.

"And cost the press-gang man *his* life, and brought that unfortunate man to the gallows," added Farnaby. "I suppose that path going up the hill there must be the zigzag path so often referred to at the trial."

"I take it so. Garstang Grange I know stands on the top of that cliff. But though I have been here more than once before in old times, I am not much *au fait* as to the localities. And I have never been here since that sad affair happened."

"I dare say that good-looking woman standing at the door of that cottage could tell us all about it," said Farnaby, indicating a stout buxom dame, who stood gazing out seaward, with a couple of children clinging to her gown, while she held a third in her arms.

"We can but try," said Linacre moving towards her.

A few questions and answers, in the course of which Mr. Bentham Linacre had already earned the character of the most worritingest and upsettingest gentleman ever known to the speaker, while his friend Farnaby had in the same space of time won the heart of the woman addressed as the most pleasant-spoken and pleasant-looking gentleman she ever met with, brought to light the fact that the buxom dame with the three

children there present and other three then absent, was no other than Lucy—once pretty Lucy Baldock, now Lucy Benton, the wife of a fisherman, for the appearance of whose boat in the offing she was then anxiously watching.

It was not without many an application of her apron to her eyes that the tale of Lucy's reminiscences of that sad time had been drawn from her. And if Mr. Linacre had been the sole "examining counsel" doubtless it would not have been obtained at all. But it was impossible to resist the genial, gentle manner, the evidently sympathising interest, and pleasant looks of Walter Farnaby. To him, as he lounged on the bench at the cottage-door, sprawling out his long large limbs, while one of the children had already been enticed to establish itself on his knee, Lucy told that the East Rock cottage had long since been let to other tenants, and her father had been dead many years. Poor Ned, the innocent cause of all that dreadful affair, was dead too. Poor Ned had taken to bad courses. The interest attaching to him in consequence of the share he had had in that matter, had made him a welcome guest in much request in public-house parlours. And the consequence had been that he had taken to drink and idle habits—and now he was dead.

Lucy was married, thank God! to a good husband, as hard-working industrious a man as ever another in Billmouth; and she had much cause to be thankful. No, never, never to her dying day, should she forget that awful night! And it seemed as if God Almighty intended her to remember it, seeing as His providence had sent her to live hard by the spot where it happened.

Yes, there was the place! There, in the middle of the path, just where the side-path turns off to go up the hill. There was the corner of the rock round which Lord Saltash and Mr. Garstang were coming. And it was all over, and all the mischief done before you could turn your head and call out a'most. Sudden? Lord bless you, why there was not one of all them, that stood on that ground that unfortunate night, that could any more have guessed the minute before it happened what was going to happen the next minute, than the folk up in London could. Young Garstang lead Lord Saltash into it! Ah, there had been a deal of wicked talk! a deal! a deal! And if people was to be judged by what was in their hearts, there was a many would have more to answer for in that business than poor George Garstang! He was as good and humane and kind-hearted a young man as ever stepped; and had no more thought to kill the man he struck, than Lucy had to kill Mr. Farnaby that minute. And it was all wicked rubbish to talk of his having led Lord Saltash into the business. It was Lord Saltash as led him! That was God's own truth of the matter. Well, why was Lord Saltash so keen to rescue Ned from the press-gang? Why because he was a good, kind-hearted gentleman, who had always been very good to her, and it was she, Lucy, who had called out to him to save her brother. That was the whole truth of the matter. And there had been wicked things said about that too. But Lucy only hoped that there was no more wrong between any of those who had spoken evil of her than there was between her and poor Lord Saltash. She knew one thing, however, and that was, that she would not advise the best man that stood in

shoe-leather in Billmouth to let Benton hear them say a word against her in that matter, or in any other. As for poor George Garstang, if ever there was a man murdered by the law and the lawyers, he was. And be it as 'twas they could not have hanged him, as she had heard tell at the time by them as know'd, if it hadn't a-been for that poor demented creature, his sister, that stood on the path coming down from the cliff, just there, and then swore his life away in court, so that the very judge's hair stood on end to hear her. Yes, she was alive still, and lived up there at the Grange along with her brother, Mr. Wilfred. But Luey believed that they were very poor, now that they had nothing but their own bit of land to depend on. And nobody ever heard anything about them.

And then Mr. Linaere and his friend, thanking Luey and bidding her good night returned to their leg of mutton at the "Linaere Arms."

Then as they were sitting, after having discussed it, one on each side of the dreary little fireplace, talking over the details of the story which had just been so casually but so vividly brought anew under their attention, Mr. Barnwell was announced.

Having been asked to take a chair, which he did at the opposite side of the table from the fire, and having been further accommodated with a glass of the "Linaere Arms" port, which he handselled by drinking first to the health of Mr. Linaere, and then to that of "Your friend, sir, asking his pardon for the liberty," Mr. Barnwell said that he was exceedingly happy to see Mr. Linaere at Billmouth.

"Well, it was altogether your letter that brought me here, Mr. Barnwell. Mr. Wentworth called on me;

and he also was of opinion that it would be well that I should come down here."

"There is such a many things to be seed to, you see, sir. And the Earl, he won't give no orders about nothing."

"The Leawood farm is vacant you say, or on the point of becoming so. Had Mr.—the poor man who died so suddenly,—no lease?"

"No, sir. We don't hold much by leases in these parts, sir. The Earl did not never grant no leases on his estate."

"Nice sort of state of things, isn't it, Farnaby? And pray, Mr. Barnwell, did you find persons of capital and responsibility willing to put their money into the land without the smallest guarantee that they should not be turned out of it at a minute's notice?"

"Find people, sir? Bless you, sir, there isn't a farmer in all Sillshire that wouldn't be glad to hold land under the Earl; and you'll find a score of offers for Leawood, without a man of them ever thinking of so much as speaking of a lease! And as for guarantee, sir, the way the Earl's tenants has always been dealt with is well known. Why, Mr. Linacre, sir, there's tenants on the estate as have held the land they holds now nobody can say how long,—generation after generation of 'em, time out of mind!" said Mr. Barnwell, warmly.

"And yet the oldest tenant on the estate was turned out of his holding at a minute's notice a few years ago, you know, Mr. Barnwell," said Mr. Linacre.

"Meaning the Garstangs, sir, as held the Bishops-croft farm? Six month's notice, sir,—legal notice,—they had," said the steward.

"Yes, of course; you could not get rid of them without legal notice. But I mean they were deprived of their holding at the pleasure of the landlord. That's the point, Mr. Barnwell," said Mr. Linacre, in a slightly irritated tone.

"And a good job it was, sir, that they could be so turned out and got rid of. That's what I say, sir. That's where you are with your leases! When you want to get rid of a man, he throws his lease in your face, and then where are you? And there's many a way a tenant might make himself disagreeable to his landlord, sir, if so be as he could not be turned out, let alone such a case as them there Garstangs, which please God, we shan't see again in a hurry!"

"I should have thought they could hardly have made a living out of their own land, judging from what I remember. But I suppose they have nothing else?" said Mr. Linacre.

"Not a pennypiece else, sir. And nobody would ha' thought that they could ha' lived on them there poor hungry acres! But they have lived on 'em for the last seventeen years; how I can't tell, nor nobody else neither. Everybody thought that they would ha' been obliged to leave the country. But no; there they sticks and starves, and starves and sticks," said Mr. Barnwell, with much indignation, "and calls themselves Garstangs of Garstang, if you please, just as if they was squires! Not that I ever see anything of any of them, nor none of the neighbours, so far as I know."

"Why don't they sell their land? No doubt it would bring a price that would put them in far better

circumstances than they can be, continuing to hold it," said Linaere.

"Ah, why indeed, sir! That's what I say, sir. Why don't they sell their bit of land and have done with it, and clear themselves out of a country where nobody wants 'em?" said Mr. Barnwell.

"Do you know whether any overtures of the sort were ever made to them?" continued Mr. Linaere.

"Not to my knowledge, sir. There's nobody here-about but the Earl as it would be likely to suit; for Sir George Artingale,—he by all accounts is more likely to be a seller than a buyer. Mr. Farland of Farlandstoke might buy 'em out as easy as look, if he had a mind to; but his land don't touch theirs nowhere, and it wouldn't be suitable. And the Earl,—I am pretty sure, sir, that his lordship has never taken no such step, and I know nothing about it," said Mr. Barnwell.

"For aught we know to the contrary, then, the Garstangs may be willing enough to sell," returned Mr. Linaere.

"I can't say as they mightn't sir; but I don't think it. You'll say, 'How do you know anything about it, not having any acquaintance with the parties?' Well, sir, I *don't* know. But,"—and Mr. Barnwell shook his head with a Burleigh-like fulness of significance, and scratched his head just over his left ear,—“them Garstangs, sir, is somehow not like other people. Though I mayn't know them, I know the name they have in the country, and have had for generations past. I'll tell you, sir,” continued Mr. Barnwell, placing his hands on the knees of his corduroy breeches, and leaning across the table as he sank his voice to an awe-

stricken whisper, "my notion is that you m'et as well go and ask the Earl if he'd sell Linacre as ask them Garstangs to put a price upon their miserable poverty-stricken bit of land! I do think it, sir," added the steward, with a lively sense of the monstrosity of the idea he had expressed. "You'll say they must be stark staring madmen, sir! Well, sir, that's it," said Mr. Barnwell, suddenly shutting his lips tightly, and pointing menacingly to the fire opposite to him. "If so be as you was to say that, sir, you'd just hit the mark. I believe they are every one on 'em as mad as March hares. And if you ask any 'sponsible and reasonable man in the country, sir, they'll tell you the same. Mad, sir, from father to son, that's what them Garstangs are!"

"Pshaw, a parcel of nonsense! A whole family of madmen living at large and conducting their affairs like other folks. Who ever heard such trash! Were they too mad to cultivate the Bishopscroft farm to advantage from generation to generation, eh, Mr. Barnwell?" said Mr. Linacre.

"I can't say as they was not good farmers, sir; a deal better, for the matter of that, than the man who holds the farm now; and that minds me of another matter I shall have to trouble you with, sir,—but as for them Garstangs, sir," said Mr. Barnwell, with his lip twisted into a quiet smile, which duly read, would have been seen to be the expression of his pity for, and superiority to, the silly presumption of a young gentleman from London who could imagine himself to know anything about questions of sanity and insanity in Sillshire,—“as for them Garstangs, sir, they are as well known to all the country to be mad, every man

and woman of the lot of them, as that there ugly old house of theirs is known to stand on the top of Garstang Cliff. There's no need to go a-nigh the house to know that; and there's no need to go a-nigh the owners of it to know they are all as mad as hatters," said Mr. Barnwell, emboldened to reiterate his opinion thus positively by the consciousness of the extreme felicity of his illustration.

"Well known to be! Yes, that's the darling formula of the goddess of vulgar error. There must be such a goddess, Farnaby, eh?" said Linaere, turning to his friend, who had been an interested listener to the foregoing conversation.

"Unquestionably! I have often seen her in poetic vision. Majestic-looking old lady, with high Roman nose, large spectacles, and a turban, seated on a pile of folios, with a newspaper in her hand," replied Farnaby.

"You shall write an ode to her, Farnaby! You might have a worse subject. My belief is, Mr. Barnwell," continued Mr. Linaere, turning again to the steward, who was almost tempted to imagine that in talking about the madness of the Garstangs to the gentleman before him, he had committed the error of him who talks of a rope in the presence of the son of a man who was hanged,—“my full belief is that all the country, as you say, talk a great deal of nonsense about what they know nothing of whatever. Now, my experience, Mr. Barnwell, is that I never yet met with a man out of Bedlam so mad as not to know his own interest——”

“Then your experience has been a narrow one, Linaere!” interrupted Farnaby.

“—when it was clearly put before him!” continued

Mr. Linaere, turning sharply on Farnaby as he added those words, with an air that said very clearly that his friend had blundered into an absurdity by interrupting him before he had concluded his sentence; though Linaere knew very well that he had uttered an untenable proposition; "when it was clearly put before him," he repeated, turning again to the steward, "and I have a very good mind to see this Mr. Garstang myself, and sound him upon the subject."

"There's no reason in life why you shouldn't, sir. He's not so mad as to do you a mischief. But I think you'll say, sir, that he's a rummer customer to deal with than you have often met with," said Mr. Barnwell.

"Well, the experiment will be all the better worth making. Now as for Leawood—let's see. If you be here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, I will be ready to go there and have a look at the farm with you. Will that do?"

And then Mr. Barnwell bowed himself out; and the travellers, after a little talk, which turned mainly on the Garstangs, and the strangeness of the fact that such a reputation, as Mr. Barnwell had described, should be attached to a family from generation to generation, went off to their bedrooms.

CHAPTER VII.

Down in the Water Meads.

WHEN Mr. Barnwell came, true to his appointment, at nine o'clock on the following morning, to accompany Mr. Linaere on his visit to the Leawood farm, Farnaby said that, instead of going with them, he would take a stroll by himself. He longed, he said, to explore that enticing-looking valley which they had looked down on from the road as they came close to Billmouth, and which could be seen stretching away towards the south, in among the Artingale woods that covered the hills on either side of it.

So Mr. Linaere and Barnwell set forth on their expedition, leaving the town behind them to the westward—all the Linaere property lying, as has been said, to the east of the town and the valley of the Bill; while Walter Farnaby, putting a book into his pocket, started for what he meant to make a long day's stroll up the valley of the little river.

For a mile or two above the town, it is rather an estuary than a little river; but, after that, it suddenly contracts its dimensions, as does the valley also. There, too, begin a system of water-meads, occupying the flat ground on either side of the stream, between its margin and the somewhat suddenly-commencing slope of the hills, and rich in all the varied bits of picturesque material for the sketch-book which are the special and peculiar property of water-meadows,—such as sluices of all sizes, and in every stage of that weather-worn process towards decay which makes them pictorially

beautiful,—still clear pools, with a wealth of aquatic plants visibly growing in their pellucid depths,—little rushing and sparkling streamlets, here glancing in the sun, and there penetrating the deep shade of some luxuriant thicket, and changing their own character to a Lethe-like stillness and blackness as they do so.

Farnaby's quick and practised eye had not deceived him, when he saw at a glance, in looking down from the carriage-road above, that this valley of the Bill must be worth exploring.

He took the eastern, or Linacre, side of the stream, and was slowly and ramblingly sauntering up the valley, now among the woods, which came down to the edge of the water-meads at the foot of the hill, and now making his way, where it was practicable to do so, among the intricate network of larger and smaller streams, now clearing them by a jump, and now crossing by the opportunity of a sluice, when, having been thus conducted by the necessities of the watery labyrinth to the edge of the river, he saw a young lady, sitting with a sketch-book on her knees, at no great distance from the bank of the river on the other side—at no great distance, yet far enough off to make it impossible for him to see more than that there was a lady sitting on the framework of a sluice, with a sketch-book on her knees,—a young lady, of course! Old ladies don't much go out sketching.

Who could she be? Artingale Castle was shut up. There was certainly no young lady living at the Park. Mr. Farland, of Farlandstoke, had one only son, as Farnaby knew. Yet he was quite sure—he could not have intelligibly told why—but he was quite sure that the figure he saw was that of a lady.

As these thoughts were passing through his mind, she got up, put up her sketch-book and pencils, and walked away in the direction of the town. Had she seen him, and was the sight of him the cause of her flight? He could not tell. She was sitting facing the town, evidently engaged on a charming bit of vista through the wooded valley, at the end of which the tower of Billmouth church, and a morsel of sunlit sea beyond could be seen. And, if she had been very assiduously intent on her subject, it might well be that she had been unaware of his proximity.

Farnaby, with an impulse which seemed to him so natural as to need no accounting for, though, if he had tried to account for it, he would have been puzzled to do so, immediately looked about for means to cross the stream to the spot where she had been sitting. Not an hundred yards higher up the stream there was a lock, the gate-tops of which made a very practicable bridge, and across this Farnaby sprang in a couple of bounds, and in the next minute was standing on the spot where the lady had been sitting.

Yes, that was evidently the bit of landscape she had been engaged on; and a very well-chosen bit it was. And now, standing on the spot where the sketcher had been seated, he could see to the right, as he stood looking northwards towards the sea, a lone, isolated, bleak-looking house on the top of the hill, rising in its nakedness above the Artingale woods, which clothed all the lower hillside. That must, no doubt, be Garstang Grange. The situation was exactly that which had been described to him. And, no doubt, the other side of the high ground, which, from the southward, looked like a rounded hill, was an abrupt

cliff overhanging the sea. The house on its naked height would, from the point where Farnaby now stood, come into the view on which the lady had been engaged, and form the extreme right of the landscape.

Farnaby, noting all this, sat down on the sluice, which had served the sketcher for a seat, in order to see whether and to what degree the relative position of the objects were changed by that change in his attitude. And as he did so, he saw a sheet of paper on the ground, which had evidently been inadvertently left there by the sketcher. He picked it up, expecting to find that it was some first attempt, or fragmentary bit, such as might easily fall from a sketcher's portfolio; but as he cast his eyes on it, with this impression, he saw at a glance, the rapidity of which would not, doubtless, have sufficed to show him any other combination of words—the first line of one of the poems in the volume he had recently printed!

Justified by this unintentional discovery in a further examination of the paper, he found that it contained the entirety of one of his poems; the writing, a delicately small female hand, so small that the entire six stanzas of which the poem consisted were written on one side of the paper, which, from the way it was folded, had evidently been the cover of a letter. On the back of it, another little poem of four stanzas had been copied. And in both of them, there were one or two such substitutions of one word for another as would seem to show that the poems had been transcribed from memory.

Now indeed the question who could the sketcher have been assumed an aspect of interest to him. Who on earth in this remote corner of a distant county could

have thus formed spiritual acquaintanceship with him? Stay!—was there not something slightly and palely written across the lines of the poem on the outside of the cover? Yes! clearly a direction, which a closer examination showed to be—“Miss Eva Senhouse, Silchester.”

Who upon earth could the unknown lady be, who was sketching a view at Billmouth, and had written out a couple of his poems on the back of a letter addressed to Miss Senhouse? Miss Senhouse herself? It was hardly likely!—not very probable that she should be sketching here fifty miles away from Silchester. Not very probable either, as Farnaby told himself; that she should have taken the trouble of transcribing two of his poems. But if not Miss Senhouse the elder, why not Miss Senhouse the younger? Farnaby's blood made a sudden rush from his extremities to his heart, and then back again from his heart to his extremities, making his ears tingle and his cheeks burn, as this thought crossed his mind. But how was it possible to account for so strange a circumstance, as that the young girl whom he had found and had left under the care of Miss Eva Senhouse at Silchester should be sitting all alone sketching in the valley of the Bill?

One thing, however was clear,—that the finding of the paper furnished him with a very sufficient excuse for hastening after the lady, let her be who she might, for the purpose of restoring it.

There was no path along the bank of the stream towards the town from the place where the lady had been sitting, the ground being cut up and intersected by a number of streamlets. But there was, a few paces from the sluice which had been her seat, a small

road coming down out of the Artingale woods, and then following the river up the valley, *i. e.*, away from the town. Clearly the lady had not gone that way. The road in that direction lay in sight for a considerable distance. But in the other direction, entering the wood, which clothed the hillside, it was lost to sight after a few yards. Besides, the path that way might very probably lead to the town. The other way it clearly led away from it. But what Farnaby could not see from the spot where he was standing, and what indeed would have in no wise helped him to any guess as to the subject of his thoughts if he had known it, was, that this road, winding up through the Artingale woods, reached the top of the Garstang cliff without touching the town at all.

It was clear, however, that the lady must have taken this path, and in this direction Farnaby started in pursuit of her. And in a very few minutes he caught sight of the skirt of a nankeen coloured dress, which harmonized perfectly with the tints of the dead leaves which still thickly strewed the woodland road, just vanishing round the turn in the road but a few paces above him. In the next minute he was near enough to the wearer for her to hear the rustle of his step on the fallen leaves; and she turned to see who was following her. Then Farnaby recognized her at once. He had felt almost sure before that he knew the step, and figure and the movement of it.

“Miss Senhouse!” he cried, “who could have dreamed of the good fortune of meeting you here? If I had known that you were the sketcher I saw from the other side of the river, I should have trusted to our Silchester acquaintanceship to have followed you.

But, supposing you a stranger, I was pursuing you to restore this paper, which I found where you were sitting."

He put out his hand to her as he spoke, and she put her slender little hand into his large broad long-fingered hand with frank cordiality, holding out the other for the paper, which she supposed was some sheet that had fallen from her sketch-book.

"I could not help seeing what was written on it," he said, pressing her hand, and looking down on her with a very unmistakable expression of tenderness in his frank large blue eyes.

Then for an instant the tell-tale blood rushed in a flush of rich darker colouring over Jenefy's pale white cheek, and yet whiter brow. But in the next she recovered her self-possession, and said simply and quietly,—

"I read them at Mrs. Henningtree's, and not possessing the volume myself, I wrote them down when I went home, that I might remember them. I liked them—we both, Mrs. Henningtree and I, liked them, perhaps the best in all the volume."

"If I have not liked them better than any other lines I ever wrote before, they certainly will be my most special favourites henceforth, Miss Senhouse. And you really remembered them well enough to write them down from memory? You have changed a word or two in a few of the lines. Need I say which I shall consider the better reading for the future?"

"Now, Mr. Farnaby, you are laughing at me. You don't doubt that I wrote the poems out as correctly as I could. I was very stupid not to have remembered them better! But I must tell you that you must not

call me Miss Senhouse any more. 'That is not my name now. I did not know that I had, or ever should have any other, when—when we met at Silchester,'" said Jenefy, with a painful sensation, which she was determined to put down and conquer. 'There was some feeling in her heart of which she did not attempt to render any account to herself, which made it specially disagreeable to her to remember that she had been first introduced to Mr. Farnaby as a different person from what she really was. And she was quite determined to take the very earliest opportunity of setting that matter right.

"And by what name may I call you now? I hope you have not changed your Christian name too. I never met with it before, and I think it such a very pretty name."

"No, my name is still Jenefy; but it is Jenefy Garstang now."

"Garstang!" cried Farnaby, in a tone of surprise, in which a quick ear might perhaps have detected a faint tone of dismay.

Jenefy *had* a quick and an accurate ear, and the shade of expression was not unperceived by her.

"That is the name of my family," she said, with a certain haughty stiffness in her voice and manner, the whole meaning, and causes, and explanation of which Farnaby understood in a moment. He thought he understood, too, why Miss Garstang had been called by the name of her governess at Silchester. He had heard quite enough of the family history to enable him to guess that the lovely girl before him could be none other than the illegitimate child of the unfortunate man who was hung at Silchester, and of the daughter

of the Earl of Linaere, who had died under such miserable circumstances. But we know how men are apt to feel respecting such things when they are in love. And the fact was that Walter Farnaby was quite sufficiently in love to think that no prejudice could be so narrow, so mean, so every way detestable as that which should cast a stigma on such a girl as Jenefy Garstang, because of the misfortunes of her parents. He had left Jenefy at Silchester, fully believing that he should never see her again, without having made an attempt, as he had told Linaere, to pay her a farewell visit. But he had brought away with him the arrow sticking in his heart; and every day that passed since had made his heart the sorer. It was too late, he told himself again and again. What had he to offer that could justify him in attempting to match his autumnal forty with her springtide seventeen!

But now fate had in the teeth of all likelihood and probability thrown her into his path again. He was attacked utterly unexpectedly, without having time to summon the smallest fragment of philosophy or prudential consideration to his aid. And besides, there was that evidence, to which it was impossible that a poet's mind and heart should be insensible, that he had at least been present to her thoughts,—that her spirit had at least intellectually sympathized with his. And altogether he was quite carried off by the current beyond the signal-posts, which his prudence had set up, with labels of "dangerous" upon them.

"I was surprised at the name," he said, answering the stiffly pronounced announcement, "because I had heard of it often before. Mr. Linaere, the man who inherits the Earl's property and title at his death, is

an intimate friend of mine, and I came here with him at his invitation, little guessing that I should have the great good fortune to meet another friend here. From my acquaintance with Mr. Linaere, you will understand that I have heard much of your family name," he said, with grave gentleness.

"I am not the daughter of Mr. Wilfred Garstang at the Grange; I am his niece," said Jenefy, with a sort of desperate bravery, which was determined that there should be no remnant of error respecting herself and her antecedents in the mind of Mr. Farnaby.

"No. I am aware that he is a bachelor. I am aware," he said, putting out his hand to take hers, almost unconsciously to himself, as he spoke, "I am aware that you have neither father nor mother living."

There was something in the tone of his voice as he said this, something in the glance of his eye, something in the expression of the action as he put his hand out, that impelled her, almost as unconsciously to herself, to put her hand out to meet his, and trust it to the strong grasp with which he encircled it. If the act itself was not altogether unconsciously done, the motives which led her to do it were quite unexplained to her own consciousness by any reflection on them. Nevertheless, she was quite aware, when that pressure of the hands had been accomplished, that there existed then, and thenceforth, a bond between her and the man who had so spoken and so done to her of a different nature from any which existed between her and any other human being on the face of the earth. And she felt sure, too—though how the information had been conveyed to her it would be difficult to explain—that Farnaby had nothing more to learn respect-

ing the terrible secrets of her history, which had been communicated to her by Mrs. Hemmingtree.

"I suppose that is Garstang Grange which I saw on the hill from the spot where you were sketeling?" he said, as he proceeded to walk by her side up the hill.

"Yes. It is seen very well from there, and makes a good object in the landscape. But it looks less—less pleasant to the imagination when seen close at hand," said Jenefy.

"It must be a fine old house, too. You are returning home now?" said Farnaby.

"Yes. I must be at home by one o'clock. That is our dinner-hour at the Grange."

"May I walk with you? I should be so glad to make the acquaintance of your uncle. I think, indeed, that I am bound to do so, after having thus presumed to claim that of his niece."

Jenefy was much puzzled how to answer this. It was not that she had the slightest taint of that vulgarity which would have made her feel any shame that Mr. Farnaby should see the nakedness and poverty of her home. There was, on the contrary, some feeling at the bottom of her heart that made her desire that this friend of hers should labour under no misapprehensions respecting her and her social position in any respect. Even to the extent of making him aware what sort of persons the uncle and aunt with whom she lived were, she would have wished this. But she feared that she might give offence to uncle Wilfred and aunt Patience by thus bringing a stranger to the house. She had now lived long enough at the Grange, poor child, to be fully conscious that that Garstang

home was not as other homes are. She had never known any stranger to enter the doors in all those months; and she felt as if there was no saying what might be the result of such an innovation. It seemed by no means impossible, not only that she herself might incur the grave displeasure of her relatives, but that the stranger who should attempt such an adventure might find it a very unpleasant one. It was not, therefore, till after she had paused for a minute or two to think, nor without evident hesitation, that she replied,—

“I should like that you should know uncle Wilfred and aunt Patience, Mr. Farnaby—but—I am not sure whether they might not think that I was doing wrong in bringing you to the Grange. We do not see any—friends there. My uncle and aunt lead very retired lives. All the time that I have been there, I have never seen or spoken with any person but one of the family. You will understand, therefore——”

And as she spoke the last words she looked appealingly up into his large, bearded, frank face, and immediately encountered the two big light blue eyes looking down at her, thoughtfully and gravely, but with an expression of loving and protecting tenderness in them that sent a thrill of delight to her heart, but at the same time caused the blood to rush tumultuously to her face and neck, and made her drop her eyes to the ground from that meeting with his, as quickly as burned fingers drop heated iron.

At the same moment, too, Farnaby's eyes were opened to the fact that he was most indubitably and undeniably in love with the girl by whose side he was walking; that what he wanted and desired infinitely

more than aught else in the world was her love; that what he should, would, and must do would be to obtain her for his wife, it by any means it should be possible for him to win such a prize. Of course, he had fallen in love with her when he had left her in Silchester, and came home restless and discontented, and out of humour with his life, and when his friend Linaere, perceiving as much, had recommended him to set to work on the parish apprentice returns of St. Pancras as a cure. But he had declared that he needed no such antiplilogistic—had denied that he was in love at all, denying it to himself far more positively and vigorously than he denied it to his friend. But now his eyes were opened, and he knew how it was with him.

And how about all the "May" and "September" theories, on which he had enlarged so eloquently to his friend Linaere? Not, unhappily for him, blown to the winds. As to the "September" side of the question, indeed, he had no further difficulty or doubt. That it would be for his lasting happiness and well-being to obtain that beautiful girl, with her clear poesy-fed, and yet not poesy-fooled, brain, with the great deep eyes, out of which all sorts of high, and noble, and loving thoughts continually, and never any low or base one, looked out, and with her pure honest heart, to be his companion for life, his friend, and his wife, he had no longer any manner of doubt. But as to May's view upon the subject? That remained for him yet greatly, terribly dark. Nevertheless, in those few minutes, which passed in silence between them, after she had appealed to him in her difficulty about letting him accompany her to the Grange, and he had replied

to her only. By his eyes, he perfectly and finally made up his mind that he would do his best to try to win the prize, of which he now so clearly recognized the incalculable value.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Partie Carrée in the Grange Porch.

EVERY nation best expresses in its own tongue the things which it possesses, or which characterize it most specially. Thus the French have no word for "home," as has been often said; and we have no adequate translation of the word "*fatuité*." (The difference in the meaning of our adjective "fatuous," and the causes of that difference are worth a whole chapter on national characteristics.) But we all know what *fatuité* means. And it may be used, therefore, for want of an exact English equivalent.

If Walter Farnaby had possessed one grain of that happiness-giving quality of *fatuité*, he might have saved himself very much painful misgiving as to that question, respecting the view of the matter on which all his heart was set that might be taken from the "May" standpoint. It would have needed probably a very large gift of the fine quality in question to have divined the strength and extent of the sentiment which drew all Jenefy's heart and mind towards him; to have guessed that he was in her eyes even as Ferdinand in those of Miranda! And then such endowment of the fine quality would have rendered such sentiment on Jenefy's part impossible. But if Farnaby had not been utterly devoid of it, he might have guessed at least a

portion of Jenefy's secret. *Her* eyes too had been tell-tale eyes when they had looked up at him in the place of all continuation of her broken sentence. And then that blush! and the unrepressed sunbeam in the first surprise at meeting, and the copied verses, and the choice of those selected for copying, and the touch of palm to palm! As if such touches could not say, and do not say, notwithstanding the strictest injunctions on the part of their owner to tell no such secrets, "I love you, as I love no other being in the world," or "pray, sir, understand that I do not care a button about you." But Farnaby, for want of the divine sense above mentioned, could read none of these signs.

Nevertheless, having quite made up his mind, during those few minutes of silence, to go in for the prize, and do his best to win, he answered quietly, at the end of the minutes in question, "I *do* understand, my dear Miss Garstang. Nevertheless I think that it will be right for me to call upon your uncle under the circumstances; but, of course, if you had rather that I should not walk home with you, I will leave you, and call at the Grange another time."

"Oh, no; if you wish to go to the Grange—if you mean to call on uncle—I do not see why you should not—that is—I mean—it is a very pretty walk this way up through the woods; prettier than the way from the town. And then I should tell aunt—" said Jenefy musingly, and there, feeling some embarrassment in shaping her thoughts into words, broke off.

"You would tell your aunt, that you had fallen in with an old acquaintance," said Farnaby.

"And I should have to say that you meant to call at the Grange, you know."

“So that the evil that way would be as great as taking me there, and presenting me at once. I see, and I think you are right,” said Farnaby smiling quietly.

So they walked on up the hill, through the wood together. And when they came to the top of the cliff, Farnaby was, if possible, more in love, and to speak the honest truth,—a truth quite honest with no reason for hiding itself at all,—Jenefy also was more in love than when they began their walk. Jenefy had been debating with herself, as she neared the house, how she should make known to any of the household the extraordinary thing that had befallen. The manner of the house was, that any one of the inmates who had occasion to enter the house lifted the latch of the door and walked in. Ringing or knocking at the door were practices unknown at the Grange. And Jenefy doubted much whether, even if she were to resort to such, either Ralph or Margy would in any wise comprehend that that was a signal for them to go and let somebody in. On the other hand, to open the door and to walk into the stone kitchen with a stranger altogether unannounced seemed to her a scheme having great difficulties attached to it.

As fortune willed it she was spared the necessity of acting on either of these alternatives. In the porch, as she rounded the corner of the house, she saw her uncle Wilfred, together with another person. They were still in earnest conversation—or rather the stranger was so—and it was evident that what was being said was the continuation of what had been said before in the house. Wilfred had the open door of the house in his hand, and was evidently desirous of closing the

interview, while the stranger was eagerly urging more last words upon his consideration.

"You are wrong, my dear sir,—wrong in principle, wrong in inference, wrong in your premises, wrong in your induction, and wrong in your conclusion; wrong from beginning to end," the stranger was saying, with extreme volubility, in a high-pitched argumentative voice, while Wilfred was standing stiff and rigid with the door in his hand, looking hard, obstinate, and gloomy as usual, as Jenefy and Farnaby came up. All four of the persons who thus met were in no small degree astonished at the meeting. The stranger standing in the porch was Mr. Linaere, as the reader, who has some knowledge of that gentleman, has divined; and he was exceedingly surprised at seeing his friend Farnaby walk up to the door of the Grange in company with a young lady. Wilfred, on his part, was no less astonished at the same phenomenon, although he had not the smallest idea who the stranger could be. Jenefy was not a little surprised at the strange coincidence which could bring about two such unprecedented facts as the arrival of two strangers at the Grange simultaneously. And Farnaby, though less so than either of the others, was surprised at the prompt suddenness with which Mr. Linaere had carried out the intention he had expressed overnight of paying a visit to the reputed mad family who dwelt on the top of the cliff. He had imagined that Mr. Linaere would have been fully occupied all that morning in attending to the business connected with the Leawood farm; and had already promised himself that he would make his friend Linaere's visit, when it should come off, an opportunity for returning to the Grange himself.

A special circumstance which had occurred to Mr. Linaere in the course of the morning,—to be mentioned more particularly presently,—had induced him to put into more immediate execution his intention of calling on the family at the Grange; and the same circumstance caused him to direct his special attention to the young lady, whom he had no difficulty in guessing to be that daughter of the late George Garstang and of his unhappy cousin Juliette, of whom he had heard in connection with the sad particulars of the circumstances which had made the old Earl childless and himself the heir to the earldom.

Somehow or other it came to pass that neither of the two friends seemed well pleased to see the other there. Why should it have been so? Probably neither of them would have been able to tell, or would, at all events, have refused to tell, even to their own hearts, why it was so. But so it was, that each of them was conscious of a feeling that the other was an intruder.

It was very evident that they were acquaintances, and Wilfred, rigid and forbidding as ever, stood silently expecting that the one with whom he had been speaking would say something to account for the presence of the other. It was left therefore to Jenefy to be the first to speak.

“Uncle, this is Mr. Farnaby, with whom I became acquainted at Silchester at Mrs. Henningtree’s. You may guess how astonished I was at seeing him here, in the valley below the Artingale woods, where I have been sketching.”

“And the surprise was quite as great on my part, Mr. Garstang. I little thought, when I agreed to accompany my friend, Mr. Linaere, to Billmouth, that I

should there have an opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with your niece," said Farnaby, cheerily, bowing to Wilfred as he spoke.

"And of ascertaining, I presume, sir, at the same time that such was the young lady's position?" rejoined Wilfred, returning the bow very stiffly, and not speaking at all cheerily.

"Exactly so," said Farnaby, smiling. "I parted with Miss Senhouse at Silchester, little dreaming that I should ever have the good fortune to meet with her again, and I find Miss Garstang at Billmouth. The fact is, I saw a lady sketching from the other side of the river, and when I came up to the spot where she had been sitting, she had already left it, and I chanced to pick up a sheet of paper which had dropped from her sketch-book," (here Jenefy blushed violently, but was observed to do so only by Mr. Linacre, whose whole attention was concentrated on her), "and hastened after her to restore it. And then, on overtaking her, I found, to my infinite surprise, that the sketching lady was my old Silchester acquaintance."

"I am sorry, sir, that she should have been thoughtless enough to give you the very unnecessary trouble of accompanying her to the top of this steep hill. She is accustomed to walk about these fields by herself; and the exceeding improbability of meeting any one who would be likely to address her makes all escort unnecessary."

"Nor did I dream of any such necessity, my dear sir; nor can my walk up the hill be attributed to any thoughtlessness on the part of Miss Garstang. I obtained her permission to attend her on her walk home, with some little difficulty; and I asked for it, that I

might have an opportunity of explaining to you how it had come to pass that I had enjoyed the good fortune of making her acquaintance at Silchester, and had ventured to seek the renewal of it here," said Farnaby, still in perfect good-humour.

Another cold bow was all the answer Wilfred vouchsafed to him.

"I didn't imagine," continued Farnaby, "that I was likely to meet you here this morning, Linaere."

"You might have imagined it likely enough, seeing that I was speaking last night in your presence of my intention of calling on Mr. Garstang," said Linaere, with a sort of sour ill-humour in his manner which Farnaby could not account for, unless by imagining that he had caught it by contact with Wilfred Garstang.

"I had promised myself the pleasure of coming here with you, but I had no idea that you would have been able to find time for the visit this morning," rejoined Farnaby.

"When I have business in hand I can generally find time for it," replied Linaere. "But Mr. Garstang and I have not concluded the matter on which I came here to speak, merely theoretically, you know," he continued, turning to Wilfred, and taking him by the button, while he emphasized his words by significant pokings of the forefinger of the other hand at his chest;—"merely theoretically, and as a question of political economy, you know. We *must* return to the subject; you see, Mr. Garstang, the fact is that the march of agricultural science"—&c., &c., &c.

Wilfred was evidently writhing under the infliction

of the Inspector's eloquence, but was unable to escape from it.

Farnaby profited by the opportunity the while to say a few parting words to Jenefy; and managed to obtain from her the admission, as far, at least, as admission could be made by not saying no, that she must return to the same place in the valley on the following morning to finish her sketch.

"It's your dinner-time, and I won't detain you now, Mr. Garstang," said Linaere, at length releasing him; "but I shall return to the charge; and I feel sure that I shall make a convert of you."

"As far as concerns my own conduct, Mr. Linaere, you most assuredly never will. And as for the theoretical question, as you say, you may be right, but I don't care a rush about it," replied Garstang, as ungraciously as possible.

"I shall not give it up; we must talk the matter out," said Linaere.

"You say, sir, that you can always find time; I confess I am not so fortunate," returned Wilfred. "I am, as you see, sir, a labouring man, toiling with my hands hard enough for my daily bread. I have but an hour of leisure for my dinner——"

"A thousand pardons, I will not detain you; another day—another evening,—we all have our evenings, at least,—I shall do myself the pleasure of calling on you one of these evenings," persisted Linaere, who was not unused to the baffled attempts of the victims of his eloquence to escape from it; attempts which he characterized as the shuffling efforts of imbecility to escape from the light of truth.

"And I will hope to have an opportunity of im-

proving our acquaintance, Mr. Garstang, by accompanying my friend, whenever he puts his threat into execution," said Farnaby, putting out his hand to Wilfred with a cordiality, and a look in his bonny blue eyes which it was impossible to resist.

"But it is a tête-à-tête battle that Mr. Garstang and I must have. I scorn to fight two against one. I think our argument had better be carried on between ourselves, Farnaby; and that I will not ask you to come to the Grange with me," said Linaere, to his friend's great puzzlement.

"But perhaps I might take Mr. Garstang's view of the question, whatever it may be," said Farnaby, smiling; "but be that as it may, the fact is, Mr. Garstang," he continued, turning to Wilfred and speaking in a graver tone,—“the fact is that I wish to speak to you on a different subject from that on which my friend Linaere is so eager; and whether I accompany him or not, I shall take an early opportunity of doing so.”

And then the two strangers took their leave, and turned themselves towards the zigzag path that descended the cliff, to walk back to the town together.

Now the circumstance which had induced Mr. Linaere to make his purposed visit to Garstang Grange that very morning, instead of deferring it to another day, had fallen out in this wise,—

The way from the town to the Leawood farm lay for a short space just outside the Linaere park palings, at a point where they run at no great distance from the house. There, as Mr. Linaere and the steward were passing, they encountered Mr. Abel Atkins, who was evidently seeking an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Linaere. The latter supposed that the old valet had

something to say about the Earl's state of health; and seeing that the old man was unwilling to speak before Mr. Barnwell, he told the steward to go on, as he wished to speak to Atkins, and he was unable to walk their pace.

"I did wish to speak a word to you particular, sir. And Mr. Barnwell, he's a very good man, sir; but he's no more discretion in the way of keeping a thing to hisself, sir, than such sort of people mostly have, sir. The Earl is not so well these last two days, and that makes me anxious, for who knows what may happen! But that's not what I wished for to make bold to speak to you about, sir. Sir, the Earl have always had his boots from Black and Wornum, in the High Street in Silchester. But he wished for some alteration in the last ordered; and for that purpose, sir, the Earl sent me to Silchester, now near a month agoen."

The old valet then went on to tell the following story, which may be given, perhaps, with somewhat more brevity, if it is taken out of the old man's lips.

A certain old friend of his had been a rather intimate associate of the late Rev. John Brackenbury, minor canon in Silchester Cathedral. Enough has already been said of that gentleman, in a former page of this narrative, to indicate that it was likely enough that he might not be very exclusive in his associations. And then the possession of a voice available for the execution of such music as Jack Brackenbury loved better than anything else in the world—except, perhaps, poaching—is apt, like misfortune, to make men acquainted with strange companions. So, however, it was that the man—a worthy tradesman of Silchester—whom Mr. Abel Atkins called his friend, had been also the

friend and intimate associate of the not strictly clerical minor canon. And this common friend, having fallen in with Mr. Atkins on the occasion of this visit to Silchester, made by the valet as above related, had, in the course of certain conversation respecting matters at Linacre Park,—conversation not sought by him, Mr. Atkins said, as it never was his custom, and never had been, to talk of his master's affairs out of the family,—communicated to him, Mr. Atkins, the very startling opinion that the late Lady Juliette had been really married to the man—that man Garstang—who was the father of the child she had left behind her. That was what his friend had said; and he, Abel Atkins, though he did not believe for a minute that there was anything in it, had thought it right (seeing that the Earl was not in a state to be spoken to on such a subject, “a stirring of him up with them there recollections for the sake of a cock and bull story,” said Mr. Atkins) to tell Mr. Linacre what he had heard.

For a minute Mr. Atkins' communication took Mr. Bentham Linacre's breath away. But in the next minute his rapid legal mind had seen its way to the conclusion that there could be nothing worthy of attention in such a story. More than eighteen years had now elapsed since the date of such a marriage—unlikely enough in itself on every account—if it had ever taken place. And none of the parties who must have been cognisant of it, and who would have been most deeply interested in asserting it, had in all those years ever even raised the question of such a possibility.

And when Mr. Linacre had proceeded to put a few more questions to Mr. Atkins on the subject, the replies to them yet more completely convinced him of the ex-

treme improbability of there being any truth in the notion. What, in fact, had Mr. Atkins' friend, the respectable tradesman, been able to state? Not even that the late Mr. Brackenbury had ever distinctly asserted that he had celebrated any such marriage. But he had one *night*—and Mr. Linaere had in old times heard enough in north Sillshire of poor Jack Brackenbury's habits to be aware that his sayings at such a time were probably of even less weight than might have been attributed to them at another hour of the day—Jack Brackenbury had one night towards the end of his life said something which had led his hearer to conclude that such a marriage had been performed. Evidently the minor canon himself had not conceived the smallest notion that any such marriage could be legally set up and made good, or he would not have alluded to the subject in such a manner, and in no other. Clearly either no such marriage had ever taken place, as was by far most likely, or there was no extant legal proof of it; or, finally, such proof must be in the hands of somebody. And in whose hands was it possible under the circumstances to conceive that that proof could be concealed all this time? Upon the whole then, looking at the matter calmly, Mr. Linaere was of opinion that he was justified in treating Mr. Atkins' story as mere unfounded babble. The old valet, it may be observed, was doubtless ignorant of the main importance of the circumstances in question. He no doubt supposed that all that depended on the question whether the unfortunate Lady Juliette had been, or had not been, duly married, was her own good name, the honour of his master's family, and the legitimacy of the child she had left. But Mr. Linaere knew well enough that upon

the same question hinged the inheritance of the title and estates of Linaere.

And as he walked over the Leawood farm with Mr. Barnwell, and listened as attentively as he could to all the steward had to say to him upon the subject, he could not prevent his thoughts from recurring constantly to the story he had just heard. It was just possible that there might be something in it. Such cases had been heard of. There was no saying when, where, and how documents might come to light. And though he fully, and it may be added, conscientiously, believed that the story did not deserve the smallest degree of attention, he could not avoid feeling a certain amount of uneasiness on the subject.

It was this feeling that had led him to make his purposed visit to the Grange sooner than he had thought of 'doing. It made him curious to see this Wilfred Garstang, to talk to him, to have an opportunity of judging what sort of man he was. Surely, if any slightest notion of the possibility that such a claim and such a marriage might be set up existed in the mind of Wilfred Garstang, it would be likely that, in talking with him, Mr. Linaere, some word, some hint would be let fall.

So, bringing his business at Leawood to an end as quickly as he could, he had forthwith walked up to the Grange, and had there, as has been seen, had an opportunity of forming an opinion not only as to what sort of person Mr. Garstang was, but also as to what sort of person that daughter of the late Lady Juliette was, who, if by possibility there were any truth in Mr. Atkins' story, would become so important a personage.

He had seen, and had very keenly marked, what sort of person the young lady was. And the result of his observation had been the sudden birth and wonderfully rapid growth of a project in his mind.

What if he, Bentham Linaere, the heir to the earldom of that name, were to marry that child of his second cousin? An illegitimate child! Pooh! He was not going, at his time of life, to be for the first time a slave to such prejudices. If ever his eyes had rested on a being unmistakably proclaimed to be one of nature's nobles, that beautiful girl was one. The union would be a desirable and judicious one in so many ways. It would, in the first place, make all safe and right as to that matter on which he could not help feeling a certain amount of uneasiness. It would, in a certain sense, and to a certain degree, heal and cicatrize over the dreadful wound which the family name and the family honour had received. It would, probably, even be exceedingly acceptable, and bring a portion of comfort to the death-bed of the poor old man who had suffered so much. And, lastly—though, in truth, as Linaere turned over his project in his mind, and kept turning his eyes from the text of it to the "illustration" supplied by the picture of Jenefy indelibly photographed in his imagination, that last consideration soon pushed itself into the foremost place—lastly, the scheme would give him a more charming wife than his unaided fancy could ever have succeeded in picturing to him.

Hence the jealous feeling of dislike to his friend Farnaby's appearance on the scene; hence his objection to the proposal of the latter to join him in his next visit to the Grange; and hence arose something very

nearly resembling a sparring-match between the two friends as they walked down the hill to Billmouth.

"I suppose, then, that Miss Garstang was the young lady whom you spoke of having seen at Silchester when you came back to town?" said Linaere, after walking a little way in silence.

"Yes; it is the same person. You may guess of my surprise at finding her here. I had known her only as Miss Senhouse."

"Well," returned Linaere, after another considerable pause of silence, during which he had been meditating on the great desirability of announcing his project to his friend before waiting to be told by him the story of pretensions of his own in the same quarter, which he very much feared he was destined to hear,—
 "Well, I am truly glad that your notions and feelings with respect to the young lady are such as you then expressed to me, for—in one word, Farnaby, I mean to ask Miss Garstang to be my wife."

"You, Linaere! You are joking. You can't be in earnest," exclaimed Farnaby, in the utmost astonishment.

"And pray, why should I not be in earnest? You will remember that I thought your notions respecting the disparity of age absurd, and I told you so at the time. Why should it seem strange to you that I should act in accordance with different ideas?"

"I was thinking then of considerations of a different order," said Farnaby, apparently giving only half his thoughts to the conversation.

"And may I ask what order of considerations led you to find the intention I expressed to you a surprising one?" said Linaere, coldly.

"The rank you are about to inherit, Linacre—the social position. Miss Garstang is an illegitimate child."

"And you give that to *me* as a reason! Bah! I should have thought you had known me better."

"But you have seen Miss Garstang now for the first time, and have hardly had an opportunity of speaking to her," urged Farnaby again.

"Quite true; sir. But suppose I consider that in that time I have had sufficient means of forming a deliberate opinion that the step I propose would be a wise one? What then? An active mind can form a sound judgment before a dreamer, Farnaby, can bring his intellect into a position to begin thinking about thinking."

Then again there was a considerable pause of silence; at the end of which Farnaby said,—

"Look here, Linacre! You have told me this purpose of yours almost as soon as your mind has conceived it. It would be unpardonable in me, under the circumstances, to be less frank 'with you. It is my hope and my purpose—and it was, I am sure you will believe, my hope and my purpose before you spoke to me on the subject,—to make Miss Garstang my wife, if it may be possible for me to obtain so great a happiness."

"You, Farnaby!" cried Linacre, affecting an astonishment which he did not feel. For he had been nearly sure from what his observation at the Grange had shown him, joined to Farnaby's utterances on the subject when he came back from Silchester, that he should hear what his friend had now told him. "You, Farnaby; why *you* surely are joking!"

"And why, pray, should you think so if you yourself are serious?" rejoined Farnaby.

"Why! Have you forgotten all you said upon this very subject? Have you forgotten that you told me, speaking of this young lady, that you had no idea or intention of ever seeing her again? Have you forgotten all the wisdom about 'May' and 'September' that you favoured me with?"

"I have not forgotten it, Linacre. I wish I had. But, if wisdom it were, I have resolved to act in spite of it. That is all."

"Perhaps you will further think it right under the circumstances, Farnaby," said Linacre, after another pause, "to tell me whether you have already asked Miss Garstang to be your wife?"

"I don't quite see that any duty is laid upon me to answer such a question, Linacre; but as I have no wish whatever to keep you in the dark on the subject, or to steal a march on you in any way, I have no objection to tell you that I have not done so," said Farnaby, quite without any movement of temper.

"Nor have I, of course. But you will observe that my determination to do so was formed when I had not the least reason to imagine that you meditated anything of the sort; when, indeed, I had every reason to think that it was the last thing in the world that you would contemplate doing," said Linacre, with somewhat less perfect sincerity than that of Farnaby towards him.

"Quite so; quite so. Don't imagine for a moment that I have any idea that the course is not perfectly open to you, my dear fellow! Enter yourself for the cup, and run a winner if you can. You will offer to

Miss Garstang the coronet of a Countess. I shall offer her the hand of a poor poet. But, believe me, if I could prevent you from making the proposal you contemplate by holding my hand up I would not hold up my hand. I have told you truly that I have never yet asked Miss Garstang to be my wife. But—so much has passed between us, that if she were now to accept you and the coronet you offer her, I should feel that I had good ground to conclude that she is not the girl whom I would wish for my wife. Understand me, however; I should not have the slightest right to consider myself jilted or ill-used in any way. It is perfectly open to Miss Garstang to accept your offer without doing anything wrong or unbecoming in any way. Yet, Linacre, if you want my opinion, I would bet you a thousand to one that you meet with a refusal. 'Try it, by all means. I presume that it is your intention,' he added, after a pause, "to try with her, and not with that strange-looking uncle of hers, Linacre?"

"I make no promises of that kind. The proposal I make is one on which, for many reasons, it is eminently right and proper that a young girl should be counselled by her elders. But men do not nowadays marry girls driven against their will to the altar by cruel uncles. Certainly, at all events, I shall not do so."

And then, having reached their inn, the two men separated, Linacre saying that he should use the hours before dinner in writing letters, and Farnaby strolling out on the beach, to meditate whether he should indeed have been justified in making such a wager as that which he had professed himself ready to make.

CHAPTER IX.

Two Proposals.

THE next morning, as soon as their breakfast was over, Mr. Linacre said,—

“Now, Farnaby, I am off to the Grange. I have no wish to steal a march upon you either. I can’t stay down here much longer; I have no time to stand shilly-shallying. So I shall see Mr. Garstang at once.”

“You mean to speak to him before speaking to the lady? But you won’t find him at home, Linacre. You know he said he was out all day. You spoke of calling on him in the evening,” said Farnaby.

“But I had not then finally made my mind upon the more important subject, upon which I now want to see him. If he is not at home I shall seek him in the fields. I don’t mean to lose any time,” replied the Inspector of parish apprentices.

“What a terrible thing it is to be a busy man. I, being in less of a hurry, am going to see Miss Garstang this morning. You see I am frank to a fault,” returned Farnaby.

“How do you mean to see her? Do you suppose that you will be admitted if you march up to the Grange and ask for her? Because I have a shrewd notion that, if you do, you will get your walk for your pains,” said Linacre.

“But I am not going to try any such adventure,” said Farnaby, smiling; “I have a much better prospect

in view. I know a bank where—Miss Garstang will be found completing the sketch she left unfinished yesterday.”

“And you are going to meet her there by appointment?” said Linaere, with much scarcely concealed ill-humour in his voice and manner.

“Not quite that,” replied Farnaby, rather amused at his friend’s discomfiture. “I have no right to boast so much. But I do know where she is to be found, and I am going to find her.”

“I have a good mind to say, as you said when I spoke of calling again at the Grange, that I will go with you,” said Linaere, much perplexed in reality between his desire to be first in the field in laying his proposals before Wilfred Garstang, and his unwillingness, on the other hand, that his rival should, in the meanwhile, have it all to himself with the lady herself.

“There is nothing to prevent your doing so, certainly, if you think it would be agreeable or conducive to your object. I certainly shall not attempt to give you the slip. But come, Linaere, I will play this game out with you on the square, as we have played many another together. If you can ascertain—if I can ascertain—if we can ascertain that Miss Garstang would prefer your hand with a coronet in it to my hand empty, I am willing—nay, I should in such case much prefer—that she should be your wife rather than mine. Now see, I give you my word that, before speaking one word in my own behalf—beyond such as have already been spoken—I will inform Miss Garstang that it is the purpose of the heir to the earldom of Linaere to place himself and his fortunes at her feet, and that he has now gone to make proposals to that

effect to her uncle. If the knowledge of that fact has power to influence her unfavourably to my suit, let it do so."

Mr. Linacre did not feel as grateful as he ought to have felt for this handsome offer, and was rather at a loss how to reply to his friend's proposition. In truth, he was glad that the fact in question should be communicated to the lady, even in the manner in which Farnaby proposed to do so. He very much preferred that that information should reach her in any way before she should have committed herself to accepting Farnaby's offer. And at the bottom of his heart he considered his friend a great and outrageously presumptuous blockhead for dreaming of doing anything of the sort. He (Bentham Linacre) had no great belief in the danger that a decently educated young lady, in her proper senses, would refuse such an offer as he had to make in favour of one such as his friend Farnaby had to submit to her. Had he supposed, indeed, that the young lady's affections were deeply concerned in the matter, he might have thought differently. But he had no reason at all to think this, but every reason to suppose the contrary. The way in which Farnaby had spoken of the lady, and of his feelings towards her on his return from Silchester, made it pretty clear to Mr. Linacre's mind that she had not at that time given Farnaby any, the slightest, reason to hope or to imagine that she felt any special interest in him. And his experience, during the last twenty-four hours, of Mr. Farnaby's modes of thinking in such matters gave him, as he conceived, abundant ground for feeling sure that, if the very slightest hope of the sort had been afforded to him, he would have

been sure to make the most of it. And, then, if there had been nothing of the sort at Silchester, all their intercourse since had consisted of one not very long walk together; and to that Mr. Farnaby trusted his hope and expectation that this poor yeoman's daughter would refuse the offer of a Countess's coronet. Bah!

So he said, in reply to Farnaby's promise, that he would mention to Miss Garstang the destiny in store for her, if she would accept it,—

“As to that, Farnaby, you can do as you like, and as you think is most fair to the young lady herself. Perhaps it would *not* be quite fair to her, knowing what you know, to keep the knowledge from her while asking her to make an engagement to you. I cannot be in two places at once. I think it my duty to broach this matter first to her uncle; but, if it were not that it so chances that she will not be at home, and that you will have the opportunity of seeing her first, I should undoubtedly make my communication to her, as nearly contemporaneous as possible with my application to her uncle.”

“All right, Linaere, you may depend upon it, that Miss Garstang shall be treated quite fairly in this matter; and that if she consents to make the leap I would have her make, she shall not make it in the dark,” said Farnaby, turning to start on his walk, and thinking, as he went, that it might very possibly happen, if the Inspector were not careful, that he might mix up his papers together, and include a “report” of the affairs of his courtship among those relating to the parish apprentices.

Walter Farnaby did not on this occasion stroll quite so leisurely over the pathway leading up the

valley as he had done on the previous morning. He made such good speed on the contrary, taking the most tremendous leaps over the streamlets that barred his way in the water meads, that he reached the well-remembered sluice considerably earlier than on the day before. Nevertheless there, on the same spot, was the sketcher very busily at work on her drawing.—(I have seen that drawing, faded and discoloured, hanging in a shabby little black frame in the servants' hall of a certain house, and have heard an old housekeeper say, that "master's grandfather set particular store on that little picture, and always kept it in his own room, poor old gentleman! When he died at near ninety year old, and master had the house done up, the old picture was too shabby to hang in any of the rooms, and so got hung up here.)—Very busily the sketcher was working away at her drawing when Farnaby walked up. But it may be doubted whether previously to his approach her fingers had been equally industrious.

"I came here, Miss Garstang," said Farnaby after some little playful and blush-illustrated interchange of salutations and thanks poured forth on the one side and deprecated on the other, for the lady's coming to what she would fain have denied to be a trysting-place,—“I came here,” said Farnaby, then changing his voice and manner to a gentle gravity, “to speak to you, Miss Garstang, on my account, and on a subject which is more important to me than anything in the world beside. But I have promised, before doing so, to inform you of a fact which it is right that you should be made acquainted with before I say a word on the subject nearest to my heart.”

Jenefy looked up at him with a quick startled

glance, and an expression of alarm in her wide eyes. She had had experience which taught her to dread communications so mysteriously prefaced.

"There is nothing to be alarmed at, nothing for *you* to be alarmed at, Miss Garstang," said Farnaby hastily, taking her hand, as to reassure her, which from the need of such reassurance she allowed to remain in the clasp of his. "No doubt my news will surprise you, but there is nothing that need alarm you in it. You saw the gentleman who was talking with your uncle in the porch, when we reached the Grange yesterday? You know that it was Mr. Linaere, the heir to the title and estates of the old Earl, when the latter shall go; and he is now a very old man. Now, Mr. Linaere is a very old and intimate friend of mine, we have known each other nearly all our lives; and I ought to say that I know him to be an upright and honourable gentleman, who has been poor, and has preferred to labour honourably for his living to living on the public, as he might have done, without any labour at all. Now that Mr. Linaere, Jenefy,"—it was the first time he had ever called her so, but it seemed to her so natural that he should do so, and her mind was hanging so intently on his words, that it may be doubted if she even noticed it—"that Mr. Linaere, Jenefy," he said, tightening the clasp in which he held her hand, and looking with earnest gravity into her eyes, "has this morning gone to the Grange for the purpose of asking your uncle's permission to make an offer of marriage to you."

"Oh, Mr. Farnaby," gasped Jenefy, her breath being literally taken away by the wonderful announcement—"oh, Mr. Farnaby, it can't be, it is impossible,

it is a mistake! I—I—I never saw Mr. Linacre till yesterday, and then for a few minutes only. Oh, Mr. Farnaby, it can't be true! Don't let—" And sitting as they were, side by side on the sluice, she involuntarily cowered nearer to him, as for protection against the fate that threatened her. "That is," she continued with a hot check, and withdrawing the hand he had held all this time,—“that is, I mean, do you think—I mean, will my uncle want me to—to—to marry Mr. Linacre? But you said there was no cause for alarm!”

“Nor is there, Miss Garstang. There would then, to you, be no temptation in the destiny offered for your acceptance—to be Countess of Linacre, and the mistress of all that fine property?”

She looked at him for half an instant with a look in her eyes that he had not before seen there, and which he fervently hoped he might not see there again. Then there was a little spasmodic quiver about the lips, and she turned away from him without replying to his question.

“May I then now, having honestly done that which I promised to do, may I now speak to you on the subject which it was the real purpose of my coming here to speak of?” And he again, as he spoke, slowly and quietly possessed himself of the hand she had drawn away from him, and she did not seek to prevent him from doing so.

“But my uncle, Mr. Farnaby; do you think that he will wish me to do this?” said she again.

“My dear girl, it is rather for you to judge of that. I do not know your uncle. But, in any case, remember that no human being has the power to constrain you

to make a marriage against your own will. Do you, knowing your uncle, think it likely that he would wish you to accept such an offer?"

"I think not," she said, after a pause of deep meditation; "I think not. I do not think he seems much to care for grandeur and wealth. But I know him so little. I am nearly certain," she added eagerly, as the thought struck her, "that aunt Patience would not wish any such thing."

"What makes you think so, Jenefy?" he said, again calling her by her Christian name for the second time. It was odd that at some points of the conversation it seemed possible to him to do so, and at others not.

"Because," replied she, thoughtfully, "aunt Patience always seems to think it a bad thing and wicked to be great and rich. I think she considers all persons who are richer than we are to be reprobates in the sight of God," added Jenefy, with the most perfectly naïve gravity.

"Let us hope, then," said Farnaby, with a tender smile, "that we may have aunt Patience on our side;—may not I say on *our* side, Jenefy?"

And then he told his own tale—the telling of which it is not necessary further to follow in detail, because it cannot, strictly speaking, be said to have contained any things never before heard in prose or rhyme. Suffice it that the poet told his tale so well that when they walked up together through the Artingale woods for the second time, he would have had every right to consider himself an ill-used and jilted man, if Miss Garstang had after that inclined

her ear to any other offer of hearts or coronets that could be made to her.

The wooing of the Inspector and heir to the earldom had in the meantime sped less prosperously.

Wilfred Garstang, as Farnaby had reminded Mr. Linaere was likely to be the case, was not at the Grange. But Mr. Linaere had obtained from old Margy sufficient information as to the direction in which he might be found, that he had had no difficulty in falling in with him in the field in which he was labouring.

"Here I am again!" said he, in the most cheery manner he could assume—"as I threatened you."

"So I see, sir," said Wilfred, very drily; "and I, as I threatened you, am busily engaged in my daily labour."

"I see, I see; and it is a labour for which I have an especial respect. He who makes two blades of corn grow where one only grew before, Mr. Garstang, is a benefactor to mankind! But it is really necessary that I should crave your attention for a few minutes—only a few minutes, Mr. Garstang."

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind speaking, while I get on with this furrow, sir," said Wilfred, who began to think that it would become absolutely necessary to take some strong measure to put an end to this entirely new mode of persecution which the world seemed to be threatening him with. "I can listen to you while I work. But I assure you, sir, that my mind is quite made up on the subject on which we were speaking."

"I hope not—I hope not quite; but, Mr. Garstang, the fact is, that there is another matter on which it is urgent and imperative that I should speak to you."

Wilfred gave a compressed groan, and Mr. Linaere proceeded:—

“I will be as short as possible. The young lady whom I saw here yesterday—am I wrong in concluding that she is the daughter of your late brother and of the Lady Juliette Linaere?”

Wilfred stopped suddenly in his work, and fronting Mr. Linaere with his full height, said,—

“That young lady, sir, is the child of the late Lady Juliette Linaere.”

“Yes, yes, I understand. She has no claim to the name of Garstang. The circumstances, my dear sir, are well known to me. In my position you can easily understand that they naturally would be. Nevertheless, seeing that young lady here, under your protection, I may be permitted to compliment you on the remarkable grace and distinction of her appearance. She has a rare perfection of personal beauty, but a very judicious education alone could have imparted that elegance, and I may say dignity of bearing which so much struck me.”

Wilfred stared at his visitor in extreme surprise.

“The child *has* been well educated,” he said, drily, “as it was fitting that she should be.”

“Now my dear sir, to proceed directly and briefly to the point on which I wish to speak to you. You are aware, probably, that in default of the legitimate offspring of the Earl, I am the heir to the title and estates. Now I am one of those, Mr. Garstang, who much deplore the unjust and unreasonable prejudice attaching to the child of unmarried parents. It is one of the most cruel of the cases in which the faults of the parent are visited on the innocent offspring. Had the

ceremony of marriage been performed between your brother and my cousin, Lady Juliette, your niece would inherit both the title and estates; you are aware of that?"

"I am aware that such would, under those circumstances, be the case," said Wilfred, speaking slowly, and with a lowering brow.

"Now then I come to my object. I would fain remedy that injustice; I would fain make the advantages which my parentage procures for me not incompatible with the restoration of the elder branch in the direct line. Do you see my meaning?" said Mr. Linacre, with the air of a man explaining a knotty case.

"I see," said Wilfred, with a more lowering look than ever, "that it was in the Earl's power to have saved his daughter's honour, and kept his title and property to his own descendants if he had thought fit to consent to a marriage between his daughter and the son of a race older, though poorer, than his own."

"To be sure, to be sure, that terrible obsolete pride of rank. We are outgrowing that, Mr. Garstang, as we are many other things," said Linacre, thinking that he saw now where the shoe pinched his companion. "I am happy to say that I have no prejudices of the sort. There is that advantage in having been born a poor man's son. Now my notion is,—you will have already perceived it,—to remedy all these matters by proposing marriage to your niece. I will not say," he proceeded, finding that Wilfred made no remark, and seemed, indeed, to be struck dumb by the magnificence of the offer made to him,—“I will not say that I should have made this proposal, or perhaps have even thought of it, had I not been so very much struck by

the beauty and general appearance of your niece. If I have your permission to address her, I shall, I trust, succeed in convincing her that the reasons I have explained to you are by no means the only, or the chief ones, that have induced me to decide on taking this step."

Wilfred remained silent for an unconscionably long time, as it seemed to Mr. Linacre, after the conclusion of the above speech. Probably he was dumbfounded at the magnificence of the offer, and the prospect before his niece. The truth was, that many different lines of thought were competing for attention in his mind. Among them was the suddenly roused suspicion that somehow or other,—by some inexplicable means,—this Mr. Linacre must have obtained intimation of the real truth as regarded the birth and position of Jenefy Garstang. But the strong persuasion that this was not possible;—the apparent certainty that if any such notion of the truth had reached anybody, it would not have been kept from the Earl, and, if communicated to him, would immediately have been acted on;—and lastly, the reflection that in any case he, Wilfred, was at least sure that no proof of the marriage between his brother and the late Lady Juliette could be brought forward without his will and co-operation, led him to dismiss this thought from his mind.

"Would you object, sir, to accompany me as far as my house, in order that I may *there* give you more fittingly a reply to the communication you have made to me?" he said, at last, speaking in a slow concentrated manner, and yet with a strange sort of dreaminess

in his eyes and bearing, which made Mr. Linaere look at him with a sharp, curious, doubting glance.

“With pleasure, Mr. Garstang; only I am sorry to take you from your occupation—I am quite at your disposition,” he said.

And the two men walked silently side by side up to the house.

When they reached it, Wilfred, lifting the latch, ushered his visitor into the stone kitchen, where they found old Margy making preparations for the midday dinner.

“Leave the room, Margy; and let your mistress, and Miss Jenefy if she returns, know that I am engaged here with a stranger, and wish not to be interrupted,” said Wilfred, in, as Linaere thought, a strange constrained manner.

As soon as the old woman had left the room, Wilfred drew the bolt of the door behind her. And Mr. Linaere’s surprise began to grow into a feeling very much resembling fear. He was not a man to fear the physical result of an encounter with any man, though, in truth, he would probably have been as a child in the hands of Wilfred, had a struggle ensued between them. But the thought of what Mr. Barnwell had said dashed suddenly through his mind; and it was a thought which carries a special and half-superstitious fear with it to most men. What if the general report were no more than the truth? What if this man were indeed mad?—and this strange grim-looking house the abode of a race of madmen from generation to generation? And really the demeanour of Wilfred seemed to confirm the suspicion that such was indeed the case.

He pointed in silence to the great arm-chair, in which old Wilfred Garstang had been used to sit, and which still occupied its old place; and Linaere sat down in obedience to his gesture, keeping his eye intently fixed on Wilfred's face, and with the air of a man who holds himself ready for violent action at a moment's notice. In all probability, Wilfred knew perfectly well what was passing in his guest's mind; but he took two or three turns across the wide stone floor of the kitchen, with folded arms and a scowling brow, before he spoke.

"You are the cousin of the old man there at Linaere Park, and of the Lady Juliette, who died in this house?" he said at last, stopping in his walk in front of Linaere's chair, and speaking very slowly.

"Certainly I am, Mr. Garstang. I have already told you so," replied Mr. Linaere.

"And it is your wish and your proposal to intermarry with the child of that Lady Juliette, who was also the child of George Garstang, of this house?" said Wilfred, in the same cold, slow, and almost menacing manner.

"I have said so, and have given, as it seems to me, good reasons for thinking the marriage a desirable one on both sides," said Mr. Linaere, still keeping his active watch on the other's face.

"Good reasons for thinking, as it seems to you, that the marriage is desirable on both sides," repeated Wilfred, looking down at Linaere in the chair, as he stood before him, with a manner half-piteous and half of bitter mockery. "As it seems to you," he repeated again. "Give me your hand, Mr. Linaere."

And Mr. Linaere did as he was bid, with a some-

what hesitating doubtful action, but inclining to suppose that this was a preliminary to the acceptance of his proposal.

But Wilfred led him by the hand thus placed in his up to the immediate front of the old kitchen chimney, and pointing to the letters cut in the stone above it with rigid forefinger, said,—

“Read that!”

And Mr. Linacre did accordingly read the rhyme the reader wots of, beginning in a loud clear voice, which dropped into a much lower key as he came to the conclusion of the scroll.

“Now, perhaps, sir, you do *not* think it so desirable that the marriage you spoke of should take place?” said Wilfred, gloomily.

“My dear sir, the legend is a very curious one; but you will allow me to point out that it can scarcely be held to bear upon the union in question,” said Linacre, restored to complete self-possession, and every inch himself again at the prospect of a victorious lawyer-like argument on the point he had started.

Wilfred waved his hand, as if sweeping away all the objections the lawyer could adduce, and then, bringing it down heavily on the table, he said,—

“Garstang *did* with Garstang mate when my father married my mother. My brother was hung for a crime of which he was not guilty. *His*—the woman he loved fared as you know. I and mine have led lives of ruin and penury because of the unjust hate of that old man at the Park. There has been no sound of gladness heard, no smile ever seen within these walls for all the years that I can remember. *That* followed the last mating of Garstang with Garstang. And now

you would have the last Garstang again marry with a cousin—what is a name?—with a cousin. It is the same thing.”

Again, in great agitation, Wilfred betook himself to walking to and fro across the room. At the third turn, he suddenly withdrew the bolt he had drawn, and said, while he stood pointing to the door,—

“If you, the cousin of this girl, the last of my race, are still *mad* enough to wish to make such a marriage, know that I am, at least, not so mad as that. Know that I had rather see that child—ay, a thousand times rather see her fall a corpse on this floor than see her so married. Know that; and—and say no more, unless you would have me think that you are a fiend sent hither to tempt the last of my race to destruction. Go, sir, go. It is better,” said Wilfred, whose excitement had been gradually increasing till it had reached a pitch which made it evident even to Mr. Linaere that it was perhaps as well to give up “arguing the point” with him.

“As to the other point, Mr. Garstang,” he said, moving towards the door,—“as to that matter of which we were speaking yesterday——”

“Sir,” said Wilfred, apparently constraining himself by a great effort to speak calmly,—“Sir, between Garstang of Garstang and Linaere of Linaere there can be neither marrying, nor buying, nor selling. I can speak no more on the subject.”

And then Mr. Linaere went out of the door, feeling himself as much constrained to do so as if a dozen ushers had been warning him out of the presence of royalty.

CHAPTER X.

A Plea for Mercy.

WILFRED remained after Mr. Linacre had left him, as related in the last chapter, alone in the stone kitchen, pondering much on the strangeness of the proposal that had just been made to him, till he was aroused from his meditations by the entrance of old Ralph, who had just returned from an errand in the town in time for dinner. In the usual course of things he would have gone directly into the back kitchen; and Wilfred knew by this appearance out of his usual beat that he had some special tidings to tell.

"Zur, the 'Arl was took bad yesterday, and to-day Dr. Bartram have been sent for to the Park, and they say as a man and horse have been sent off to Billiford for to fetch Dr. Hathaway."

And Ralph having thus communicated at last the tidings which had been waited for so many years, withdrew the head he had thrust into the front kitchen, and betook himself to his own domain.

Wilfred sat quite still in the seat he was sitting in when this communication was made to him. So now then at last the time he had been so long expecting was at hand. Now was the time for him to act, to execute that crowning act of retribution, before the Earl should be finally allowed to escape from further punishment, which was to consist in the communication to him of the knowledge how, why, for what offence, and by what hand, his punishment had been awarded and meted out to him.

Wilfred had always pictured to himself the inflict-

ing of this crowning completion of his vengeance as a duty indeed, but a duty the performing of which would be very sweet to him. But now somehow he felt as if he would fain have put the day for it off yet a little longer—as if he himself almost dreaded the task. Not that so much as the shadow of an idea crossed his mind that this doom might be remitted. But he felt that he should go to the execution of it, not as to a triumph, but as a stern and passionless doomsman to deliver the ordained blow. And then next after, as soon as the Earl should be at rest, would come the duty of restoring his niece to her rightful position, and removing the stain from her mother's name. And that presumptuous man, who wanted to buy him out of the lands of his forefathers, how would he take it when he found his own expectations even as Dead Sea apples? And he, Wilfred, would doubtless have to abide the blame of the world. Well, that would be no great change to him. Events seemed to be strangely hurrying and combining themselves. And Wilfred was conscious of a strange sort of mixture of inertness and timidity in thinking of the necessity of facing them. He would rather that the dead monotony of the life he had been leading for so many years should have continued.

He knew, as he sat thus musing, that it was near the hour for dinner, the table for which meal had already been prepared, when he had brought Mr. Linaere into the kitchen; and he expected that Patience would come in. When the door opened, therefore, behind his back, as he sat facing the fireplace, he doubted not that it was Patience who entered, till he heard the hesitatingly apologetic voice of Jenefy, saying,—

"Uncle, if you please, here is Mr. Farnaby. He wishes, I believe—that is, he says that he hopes—I mean that he wishes to speak to you."

Wilfred sprung up from his chair with a heavy frown on his brow, and turning encountered Farnaby, who at the same moment entered the room.

"I owe you a thousand apologies, Mr. Garstang," said he, holding out his hand to Wilfred with the cheery, frank cordiality that so specially characterized him, "for thus intruding upon you, especially as I know that your time has already been broken in upon this morning by another visitor. You have had Mr. Linaere with you, have you not?"

"Mr. Linaere has been here, sir, and has not long been gone. The business upon which he came has been finally settled between us," said Wilfred.

Jenefy then escaped from the room, and shut the door behind her, leaving her uncle and her lover thus to their *tête-à-tête*.

"I am aware of the object of Mr. Linaere's visit to the Grange this morning. He confided to me his intention. Am I right, Mr. Garstang, in concluding, from the manner in which you speak of the final settlement of it, that the arrangement proposed did not meet with your approbation?"

"Sir, I am at a loss to imagine by what title—unless indeed as a messenger from Mr. Linaere—you question me upon the subject. But if you come here in his interest, I may say at once that Mr. Linaere by this time knows that such an alliance as he proposed is utterly out of the question. I will tell you more, sir. I will show you, as I showed him, the grounds on which any thought of such an union should be

considered as more fatal than any other terrible misfortune could be."

And then Wilfred made Farnaby read the fatal inscription which he and his had so long considered as the law of their race, and told him the story of the consequences resulting from the last infraction of that law, as he had told them to his previous visitor.

Farnaby was not a little impressed by the sad narrative. The poet nature of the man seized upon it in that aspect of the family history which was calculated to excite the imagination. And the doom thus pronounced and recorded,—too much in accordance with the indisputable facts of physiology to be altogether dismissed into the category of superstitious fancies,—and the idea of this family, thus branded first in their own imaginations, and then in those of all the world around them: and then again, partly probably from the real physiological operation of the curse, and partly in consequence of the social effects of it, stricken down by it, and living their whole lives under the ban of it, seemed to him to contain elements of tragedy of a very terrible order.

His look and bearing, as these thoughts crowded his mind when the tale had been told, were evidently conciliating to the gloomy and wayward spirit of Wilfred Garstang. And when, after a pause of silence, he looked with sad and sympathising glance into Wilfred's eyes, and gently, almost affectionately, laid his hand on his shoulder, as he spoke to him, Garstang could not help being drawn to him, as he had not felt himself drawn towards any man since the death of his brother.

"You rhyme, Mr. Garstang," he said, "pronounces

a doom which is as much recorded against others as against your family. In greater or in lesser degree the marriage of cousin with cousin is not a desirable one. Will you forgive me if I venture to take the liberty of saying that your decision with regard to Mr. Linaere's proposal will be a subject of great gladness to your niece?"

"I was fearing that it might be otherwise; that she might have been tempted by the offer of wealth and title," said Wilfred hastily, forgetting in his eagerness to be surprised that Farnaby should know anything on the subject.

"Not so. She on the contrary greatly feared that your wish might have been that she should accept the offer made her," said Farnaby.

"But, Mr. Farnaby," returned Wilfred, looking at him with a puzzled air, "how do you—I saw that you returned to the house with her;—but how had she any knowledge of Mr. Linaere's intention to make so very unlikely, so very unexpected a proposal?"

"Mr. Linaere told his intention to me this morning, and I, with his approval, told Miss Garstang that such was his purpose. He wished me indeed to do so, knowing that I hoped to see Miss Garstang this morning, because he was anxious that the knowledge of his intention to make an offer to her of his hand should reach her, Mr. Garstang," said Farnaby slowly, and pausing for a moment before going on to the conclusion of the sentence he was uttering,—"should reach her—before—I spoke to her—on my own behalf."

"You too!" exclaimed Wilfred, his first idea being a recurrence of the suspicion that some notion of the truth as regarded his niece had got abroad; "you too!"

Do you mean, Mr. Farnaby,—am I to understand that you have proposed marriage to my niece?"

"I think,—I hope—I trust that I have ascertained that Jenefy's wishes and my own would agree on the subject. But it would not be the wish of either, Mr. Garstang, to contemplate the marriage of Miss Garstang especially at so early an age without the full consent of her natural guardians. Perhaps you may think that I ought, like my rival, Mr. Linaere, to have spoken first to you on the subject. But remember that my acquaintance was first made with Miss Senhouse, and that I had learned to think that Jenefy alone, of all the women in the world could make the happiness of my life, before I had any conception that she was your niece."

"Ay, ay; Miss Senhouse—at Silehester," said Wilfred musingly, his mind being engaged on the evidence thus offered that Farnaby was not actuated by any knowledge of Jenefy's real position.

And then Farnaby profited by his companion's silence to set forth all that he had to say for himself as a suitor for Miss Garstang's hand. He told the story of his own life in a few words, dwelling on his life-long friendship with Mr. Henningtree, the most intimate friend of Miss Senhouse at Silehester; he showed what means he had to maintain a wife; spoke modestly of his recent literary successes; and touched lightly on the fact that no objection could be made to an alliance with him on the score of that which applied so strongly to his rival.

Wilfred listened to all he said without interrupting him, but apparently with only half attention. He was all the while meditating deeply on other matters in

connection with the proposal made to him. The news that had just reached him of the Earl's illness was of great importance in regard to this question. The time was in all probability near at hand when his niece's true position must be publicly known. Would it not be better that she should be engaged to a man against whom no objection of any sort could be made, and who had already won her affections, rather than be open to all the suitors which the knowledge of her real position would not fail to attract? Would it not be in every point of view a great thing that this marriage should be settled before the great secret was to be let out?

For a long time after Farnaby had ceased speaking, and while he was anxiously waiting for Wilfred's answer to what he had said, the latter remained silent and plunged in deep thought. At last, suddenly arousing himself, and turning quickly towards his guest with the manner of a man who has at length formed a great and important resolution, he said,—

“Mr. Farnaby, there is a great deal to be spoken of on this subject. You are a poor man, you tell me. My niece, at least since she has lived in the home of her ancestors, has lived the life of a very poor woman. We are poorer people here than you have ever been. On this score I do not see any reason to object to your proposal; I should not have seen any reason even if— if matters really stood as you suppose them to stand. But such is not the case. And I have determined, before allowing you to consider any engagement between you and my niece as fixed, to tell you what I have hitherto told to no man—to no man, and to no woman save my sister—especially, you will observe,

not to my niece. At the same time, it is honest to say that, in all probability, I should not have come to the determination to tell you the facts I am about to communicate to you, had not the time to all appearance come when the same will have to be told to all the world. You suppose my niece, Jenefy Garstang, to be the illegitimate daughter of my brother George and of the Lady Juliette Linaere. She is not so. She is the legitimate daughter of a marriage duly and regularly solemnized between them."

"But, good heavens, Mr. Garstang! are you aware that such a marriage would make your niece heiress, not only to all the Linaere property, but to the title also—at least, to that of Baroness Linaere," said Farnaby, in the extremity of astonishment, and still far from believing that any such marriage could be legally proved and held good.

"Perfectly, Mr. Farnaby. I am perfectly aware of all that. I know very well that my niece must, on the death of the Earl, inherit both the estates and the title," said Wilfred, slowly and calmly.

"But—excuse me, my dear Mr. Garstang! it seems—surely there must be some misconception! It seems impossible in so many ways."

"In *what* way?" said Wilfred, looking fixedly at him.

"Not that such a marriage might not have taken place—that it might have been performed secretly, and the secret not divulged. All that may very well have been; but how is such a marriage to be proved now after so many years, during which nothing was known about it?"

"I," said Wilfred, with a strong emphasis on the

word, "I have all the proof in my hands! I witnessed the marriage!"

A sudden thought rushed across Farnaby's mind, that after all there must be more truth in the reports of the mental alienation of the man before him than he had been inclined to believe; and that this notion of his brother's marriage must be a delusion of his aberration. And the thought brought a sharp pang with it.

"But if you yourself witnessed the marriage," returned Farnaby, "how could it have been unknown all these years? How is it possible that it should not have been declared, at least after the death of the Lady Juliette?"

"Ay! how came that about?" said Wilfred, rising and walking two or three times across the kitchen. "How came that about? That is the question;—that is what has now to be told, Mr. Farnaby," continued he, coming to a full stop in his walking, and standing drawn up to his full height, in a defiant and almost menacing attitude, at the table on which he rested one hand.

"Had you ever a brother? No. Well, I had. Whatever of hope we had was centred on him, whatever of light there was in the sky for us rested on his head. You know how he died? Perhaps you do not know that, whereas all the servile tribe of lickspittles in the country thought to make their court by saying that that unfortunate Lord Saltash was led into the affray in which he lost his own life, and for which George died, by my brother, the truth was that George was led into the mischief by the young lord."

"I was pretty well aware that such was the case," said Farnaby, nodding his head gravely.

"Then perhaps you may in some degree conceive the feelings with which I watched yonder old lord, as he sat on the judges' bench, while my brother was being tried for his life, gloating over the cruel false seeming that condemned him to die by the hangman's hand," said Wilfred fiercely, and becoming more and more excited by the memories that crowded on his mind, as he continued to speak. "You may, perhaps, imagine in part how I felt as I marked his triumph. I saw the cruel evil passion, the malice, the hatred in his eye, as he helped to hunt that poor boy to his death. I saw the pleasure that our agony was giving him. I knew all the hate that was in his heart. I saw the gleam of triumph in his eye when the doom was spoken which was to leave us desolate and disgraced. And I—I, Wilfred Garstang—swore to my own heart that that bad man's cruelty and malice should be punished."

And there he paused as if all he had to tell had been told, standing with his head erect, his eyes gleaming, his nostrils alternately expanding and contracting, and his closed fist pressed firmly on the table.

But Farnaby failed to perceive yet the connection between these causes of hate dating from nearly a generation ago, and the strange story which had been told him.

"But," said he, "if a marriage had been solemnized between the Earl's daughter and your brother, it must have happened previously to the time you are speaking of. How could any retribution fall on the Earl from thence?"

“The retribution—the ordained and most just retribution, sir,” said Wilfred, with an evil fire gleaming in his eyes, that seemed to his hearer evidence only too strong of his unsound mental condition,—“the retribution, sir, lay in *this*—that yonder miserable old man, whose pride is as the breath of his nostrils, has believed and believes that his daughter, the last of his proud race, died a disgraced woman; that his line has become extinct; that the honours and the wealth belonging to it would at his death pass away to a stranger, who was an abomination to him! This belief, sir, which has made the shipwreck and the misery of eighteen years of his life, and which will send him to his grave despairing; this, sir, is the retribution which I have awarded to that man for his cruelty and his pride. What price, think you, would have been too great for him to pay for the knowledge which I, and I only, could have given him—the knowledge that no disgrace rested on his child’s name, and that his line and his title would live in her descendants? Has he *not* been punished?”

Farnaby was absolutely so shocked—so frightened, it might almost be said—at the colossal vindictiveness, and at the terrible spectacle of the man, as, exulting and triumphing in his deed, he stood there with raised front declaring and avowing it, that for awhile he was struck dumb.

“Surely, Mr. Garstang,” he said at length, in a low and awestruck voice, “you cannot mean that you have knowingly and purposely kept the knowledge of his daughter’s marriage from that old man who lies dying there, for the sake of making him believe in her shame?”

“Even so!” said Wilfred, hard, gloomy, and defiant,—“even so! I, Wilfred Garstang, was trodden on; and I turned and stung him who put his foot on me. I awarded this punishment. Who shall say that it was an unjust one? His house has been left unto him desolate. Has not my house been made desolate to me? He has been stricken there where he was most sensible to the blow. Was the stroke that laid this house and this family in the dust more merciful?”

“‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay,’” said Farnaby, in slow and solemn accents, raising his eyes to meet fully those of Garstang as he spoke.

“And is it not the Lord who *has* repaid? What am I—what have I been in this matter but the instrument of God’s vengeance? It is His justice which has smitten this man,” returned Wilfred fiercely.

“Has he not suffered enough? You will not let him die in his error. You will pardon him in his last hours? I judge, indeed, from your telling me these facts, that you have determined to put an end to the torment he has endured,” said Farnaby, profoundly shocked and distressed.

“You judge wrongly, sir. I received not an hour ago the news that the Earl is ill. His hour has probably come. And it is my purpose that he shall not die without knowing that it has been *my* hand that has dealt out this punishment to him. He shall know that it has been, and that it is in *my* power to restore his race to its place, and her good name to his daughter. But he shall not have the consolation of knowing that I have any intention to do so.”

“Mr. Garstang,” said Farnaby, after a long pause, “despite the all-powerful reasons which I have for being anxious not to offend you, it is impossible for me to hear the expression of such sentiments—the announcement of such an intention—without giving utterance to my feeling on the subject. The vengeance you have taken is a terrible, and, in my opinion, wholly unjustifiable one. And the culmination of it which you propose is unworthy of a man—is worthy only of a devil! And believe me—ask your own inmost heart,” he added, rising to his feet, so as to front Garstang where he stood,—“ask your own inmost heart, whether the man who ventures to tell you so is not he who is most eager for your well-being and your future happiness? You have not been a happy man, Mr. Garstang,” he continued, laying his hand, with the magnetic touch of sympathy, on Wilfred’s shoulder as he spoke.

“The God above us knows that one more miserable has not walked his appointed path on this earth,” replied Garstang, standing there rigid and stiff, drawn up to his full height, and lifting his high bald forehead, surrounded by long sparse locks of iron grey, like the scathed trunk of some blasted tree, which nevertheless stands up unbending against the storms.

“And truly the misfortunes which have been laid on you have been sore and grievous. But, Mr. Garstang, terrible as was the cruel blow that took your brother from you, it has not been his loss alone which has made the abiding misery of your life. That has been caused by the hell which you have made and fostered in your own breast, by the nursing of your vengeance against yon unhappy old man! Ask your

own consciousness if I am not right in asserting that it is so."

Farnaby, as he spoke thus, kept his hand on Garstang's shoulder, and his eyes fixed on those of Wilfred. And the latter was, as many a man has felt himself, assuredly to a certain degree under the influence of the magnetic touch.

"But if it be so," he replied in a dull unimpassioned voice, "what is my happiness in the balance? Justice has been done, the wrongdoer and the oppressor has not triumphed; and he will know that his misery has been the judicial consequence of his cruelty and pride on that day."

"Nevertheless—" began Farnaby again: then suddenly changing his mind, he went on, "—but supposing, Mr. Garstang, that I were to think it my duty to make known to the Earl, or to others on his behalf, the facts which you have communicated to me, without, you will observe, any promise of secrecy on my part?"

"You are at perfect liberty to do so, sir; your doing so would serve well nigh the same purpose as my own doing so. You could inform his lordship that the extinction of his line, or its non-extinction is in my hand; but you would have no power whatever to hold out to him any hope that the sentence I passed on him would be reversed. That remains with me alone. None but I, and no will but mine can cause the recognition of this marriage, the rehabilitation of the Earl's daughter, and the heirship of her child."

"But it is your intention," rejoined Farnaby after some minutes of deep thought, "to have an interview with the Earl, before his death?"

"Such is my purpose; and now, Mr. Farnaby, that I have revealed to you the circumstances in consideration both of the communication you have made to me respecting your wishes with regard to my niece, and of the apparent nearness of the time at which they will be no longer kept secret, I suppose that there is no more to be said at present between us," rejoined Wilfred.

"I presume, of course, that Miss Garstang has no knowledge whatever or suspicion of her real position and prospects?" said Farnaby.

"I have said that no human being, save my sister, has any knowledge of what I have now told you," replied Wilfred.

There was again a pause of some little duration before Farnaby said, "I think, Mr. Garstang, that it will be better—that it will be incumbent upon me not to see Miss Garstang again until she shall have been made aware of the truth. And of course, when I do see her, it will be my duty to explain to her that I cannot consider her to be in any wise bound by aught that may have passed between us when she was in ignorance of such important facts. If I should see her before she is informed of them, and when I am not at liberty to communicate them to her, I should be contributing to deceive and mislead her."

"So be it, Mr. Farnaby! You will observe however, that I, knowing the prospects before my niece, have not expressed any objection to your addressing her," said Garstang.

"I am aware of it, Mr. Garstang, and am not insensible to the good opinion of me so indicated. But—at all events, I should choose that Miss Garstang

herself should not be in ignorance of her future destiny when I next meet her. May I ask, when it is your purpose to seek an interview with the Earl? You must remember, Mr. Garstang, that the secrecy you have thought fit to keep respecting this marriage has very prejudicially affected, and still affects, a third party. Think of the delusion into which Mr. Linaere has been led all this time!"

"I cannot help it, I had no thought of him, I did not seek to injure him. If injury has resulted to him, that also is due to the evil done by his kinsman, the Earl. I have been but the agent in the hand of a higher power, Mr. Farnaby! You ask me when I purpose seeing the Earl. It is probable that I shall hear further tidings of his condition in a few hours, and it is very likely that I may go down to the Park this evening."

"Am I to consider myself free to communicate to Mr. Linaere the extraordinary statements that have been made to me?" asked Farnaby.

"As you remarked, Mr. Farnaby, I did not ask you for any promise of secrecy. But what can you tell Mr. Linaere? Only that I say so-and-so, which, probably, he will not believe. You are at liberty to tell him what you please."

"You say that you shall probably receive tidings of the Earl's condition in the course of the day. Your own proposed interview would perhaps depend upon these tidings. Will you permit me, Mr. Garstang, to charge myself with the task of obtaining for you and bringing to you such tidings? I shall easily learn exactly how matters are going at the Park. If you will permit me, I will undertake to bring you here,

by five o'clock this afternoon, the latest news of the Earl's condition," said Farnaby.

Garstang knew in his heart that the motive of his new acquaintance in making this proposal was that he might have a further opportunity of endeavouring to bend his, Wilfred's, resolution as regarded the consummation of the Earl's punishment; and he smiled grimly to himself as he thought how utterly futile any such attempt would be. But, for all that, there was a strange and unrecognised something at his heart that made him not unwilling that Farnaby should come and say to him such things as he expected that he would say. It seemed to him as if his resolution required the strengthening which it would acquire from opposition.

And so the two men parted; Wilfred to go back to the field, leaving word with Margy for his sister and niece that he would not eat any dinner that day, and meditating many things as he walked with his head drooping on his chest, and his eyes fixed on the ground; and Farnaby to descend by the zigzag path to the town.

B O O K VI.



THE BARONESS LINACRE.

CHAPTER I.

The Time is near at Hand.

WILFRED GARSTANG, walking back to the field from the Grange, dinnerless, because his mind was in too seething a state of disorder for it to be possible for him to eat, or to do aught save think, had yet but few altogether new elements of disturbance in his thought to agitate him. This proposal for the hand of his niece was, it is true, a new thing; but even that was not altogether a new thought. Farnaby had pleased him; not, perhaps, the less in consequence of the unshrinking manner in which he had reproved him. He had reason to think that this man's intimacy with the Henningtrees and with Miss Senhouse was a stronger recommendation than he would be likely to meet with easily in any other case. And he felt it to be very desirable that a girl placed as his niece would be should be wooed and won irrespectively of her wealth and rank, a circumstance that could, it seemed to him, hardly be guaranteed in respect of any courtship to be initiated after those facts were known. These considerations had all passed through his mind, and had been acted on when Farnaby first made his proposal. And on this point there was little room for further meditation.

It was rather the new view of his old thoughts,—those old companions by night and by day for hard upon twenty years,—that had been forced upon him, and the crisis of his action in the matter that was

apparently near at hand, that he felt the absolute necessity of thinking out alone.

Walter Farnaby, on the contrary, when he turned away from the Grange to walk down to the town, felt his mind tossed in a whirl of thoughts, each element of which was wholly new; and which had come up for meditation and for judgment utterly unexpectedly and with astounding suddenness.

He had sought and had, as he was perfectly well convinced, won the love of the first girl whom he in all his life of forty years had felt that he could love. He was so entirely convinced of the one fact, and so undoubtingly sure of the second, that he had succeeded in blowing to the winds all those so eloquently urged fears and scruples which Linaere had on the previous evening thrown in his teeth. But he had imagined that he, a poor man, and likely to remain so, had been asking a still poorer girl to share his poverty. And now he was suddenly told that this humble maiden was to be a baroness in her own right, and the heiress to heaven knew how many thousands a year. Could he make such a marriage as that? Above all, could he make such a marriage, when the lady's consent had been won under appearances so very different from the true ones? It had been very painful to him to renounce all hope of seeing or speaking with Jenefy again for the present. Yet was it possible for him to have done otherwise? Could he have talked with her having such a secret in his possession which he was forbidden to share with her?

Then, again, that unfortunate Bentham Linaere. What should he, what could he, say to him? He felt fully that it was his bounden duty, having heard such

statements made, to lose no time in communicating them to his friend, whom they so vitally interested. But he was, nevertheless, aware that what Garstang had said might be very true, and that Linacre might refuse to attach any credit to statements so improbable and so unsupported. It was distasteful to him, also, to have to say to him that the individual who was to cut him out of his expected heritage was no other than the girl whom he, Farnaby, had asserted his intention of winning, and had, indeed, won, in despite of Linacre's hopes and efforts in the same direction. It was another and a more serious repetition of the old "cutting-out" which, in old days, it had been so frequently Bentham Linacre's fate to experience at the hands of Walter Farnaby, in the matter of school prizes, scholarships, fellowships, and the like. Nevertheless, there could be no hesitation about it. As soon as ever he should come to speech of Linacre he must tell him what he had heard. But, above all, amid these thronging thoughts, his mind recurred again and again to the almost awestruck contemplation of Wilfred Garstang's vengeance. Offence as grievous as that given by the Earl to these Garstangs had, doubtless, often been requited by hate as strong, and by a longing for revenge as irresistible; but it was the undying vitality of Wilfred's revenge that made it seem so terrible to Farnaby. It was not even the persistent vitality of the unsatisfied passion waiting for the moment when it could strike its blow. For nearly twenty years the Earl had been suffering under the hand of Wilfred Garstang. For nearly twenty years the avenger had been drinking his daily draught of vengeance, and his thirst was not slaked yet. It was the persistence

of the man, the unchangeableness of the fell passions for so long a time that seemed so tragically shocking to Farnaby. And, then, the popular rumour as to the unsoundness of mind which marked these people recurred to his thought; and he told himself that such a master-passion so ruling could assuredly have maintained its dark and solitary way for so large a portion of a lifetime in no healthy mind.

And, with all his reprobation and detestation of the passion which could thus terribly make a man its slave for twenty years, Farnaby yet felt an immense pity and compassion for this man. Doubtless, he had received very hard measure at the Earl's hands. In speaking of Lord Linacre's offence, he had not condescended even to allude to his ejection from the land which his family had held for centuries. And, no doubt, this great evil had shrunk in his mind to quite unimportant proportions in face of that greater cause for hatred which had supplied the fuel to Wilfred's master-passion for twenty years. Doubtless, also, the state of isolation in which he had lived,—the terrible lot, which Farnaby felt would have been more than he could have borne for a tenth part of the time,—the destiny that had condemned him to live his life uncheered by the sound of a friendly voice from year's end to year's end,—to feel that, although his hand was not against others, every man's hand was against him, and to know himself a pariah and an outcast,—all this, too, was, with more or less of truth, attributed by him to the same cause. He had been an unfortunate and most unhappy man. And the fatal passion which had, like a monstrous and noxious growth, sprung up in his heart, and drawn to itself all the vigour of the soil,

and monopolized all the strength of the organism, had at the same time contributed to the darkness and to the misery of his life. How much less he would have suffered, how much more capable of standing up against and struggling with the misfortunes of his life he would have been, how infinitely brighter and wholesomer his life would have been, if he could have risen to the moral attitude of forgiving the trespass against him! What a thing to gain it would be, if that poor, dark, suffering mind could be brought to forgive its enemy even now at the eleventh hour!

With such meditations chasing each other through his mind, Farnaby reached the inn, and immediately asked for Mr. Linaere. Mr. Linaere was absent with Mr. Barnwell. Dr. Hathaway, from Billiford, had been seen riding fast up the avenue through the Park. He was still there; and it was rumoured in the town that the Earl was sinking. This was the report in the little town; but Farnaby was very desirous of ascertaining with somewhat more accuracy what the real state of the case might be. He had promised Wilfred that he would return to the Grange at five in the afternoon; but, if the rumours in the town were well founded, it might be very desirable that he should do so sooner.

Inquiring, therefore, for the address of Dr. Bartram, he went out with the intention of trying what reliable information he could pick up as to the Earl's condition. And it so chanced that he found the old Doctor just returned from the Park, and on introducing himself as a friend of Mr. Linaere, perfectly ready to be communicative. The time had been when Dr. Bartram would not have been at all disposed to show much civility in Billmouth to Mr. Linaere or any friend of his. But if

a living dog be better than a dead lion, how much more evident was the greater importance of the living dog, who was on the point of becoming the lion, when the original noble beast should have breathed his last!

So on Farnaby's making himself known to the Doctor as the friend and travelling companion of Mr. Linaere, old Bartram was quite disposed to put whatever knowledge he had entirely at Mr. Farnaby's service.

It was very true that the Earl's state was extremely precarious. He, Bartram, had left him only for a few hours, for the purpose of attending to his other patients, and leaving Mr. Hathaway, of Billiford, with him. (The two practitioners always spoke of each other as *Mr.* Hathaway and *Mr.* Bartram, though the *vox populi* dubbed them both Drs. The real and acceptable flattery would have been to have accosted either of them thus:—"Dr. Bartram, Mr. Hathaway says so and so.") Yes; there could be no doubt that the Earl was sinking. It was hardly on the cards that he should get over the present attack. Mr. Hathaway was more sanguine, perhaps. But he, Bartram, knew the Earl's constitution, sir, as another man could not know it, having enjoyed the Earl's confidence for more than a quarter of a century. And he, Bartram, told Mr. Farnaby that the Earl was sinking. The fact was that nothing but the most assiduous care and treatment—treatment, sir—had kept him alive so long. The fact was that the vital forces were expended, the constitution entirely worn out. Well, as to time, it was very difficult to say. His own impression was that the Earl would never see another sun rise. Lucid! Lord bless you, sir, as lucid as you or I. In fact his mind did not

seem to have been touched at all. Nor was he suffering any pain. The vital forces were sinking, just quietly sinking; death would ensue just as a lamp goes out when the oil is all burned. Dr. Bartram did not think it probable that the end would come before night-fall. His own impression was, if he had to give an opinion on the point, that his lordship would last through the greater part of the night, but probably expire a little before the dawn. Dr. Bartram had observed that in cases of gradual sinking the end often came about that time.

Upon the whole, Farnaby determined that he would at once return to the Grange. He would have liked to see Linaere before doing so; but as he was absent, and had left no word when he would be back at the inn, he determined that he would see Wilfred Garstang again without waiting for him.

Wilfred, unable to settle to his work, had lounged in again from field; and Farnaby found him at home, pacing up and down the stone kitchen, with folded arms and a moody brow.

"I promised you that I would return at five o'clock," said Farnaby, who had used the knowledge he had already acquired of the ways of the house, to enter the front door by lifting the latch for himself, and had, on knocking at the door of the kitchen, been told by Wilfred to come in; "but the information I have obtained as to the Earl's condition has led me to think it better to come to you at once."

"Do you mean that his end is so near?" asked Wilfred, shooting a sudden glance at him.

"It *is* in all probability near. I have seen the medical man who is in attendance on him, and his opinion

is that he will not outlive the coming night. His mind is perfectly lucid, and he is free from pain. Under these circumstances, and knowing what I know of your purposes, Mr. Garstang, I thought it best to return to you at once, without waiting for the hour I had named."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Farnaby. I am sorry that you should have had so much trouble," said Wilfred, evidently with the air and manner of a man who is taking leave of another—or one might almost say dismissing him.

But let Garstang intend as he might, Farnaby had no intention of suffering himself to be thus dismissed.

"I judged it best," he said, "that no time should be lost in letting you know exactly how matters stood, in order that the visit you proposed paying to the Earl might not be delayed. His mind, this doctor told me, is at present perfectly clear. But when the strength of the body is rapidly sinking, it very commonly happens that the powers of the mind become enfeebled also, and that not infrequently very suddenly. It is clear, I think, that any man who would wish to speak with the Earl on matters of importance should lose no time in doing so."

"It is not my purpose to lose more time than can be helped," said Wilfred, drily.

"If so, you are intending to go down to the Park at once. Will you allow me to walk with you?" said Farnaby, with a kind of gravity in his tone that made it very evident to Wilfred that it was the settled purpose of this man who had by some strange means already obtained an ascendancy over his mind to do so. Why did not Wilfred tell him to mind his own busi-

ness, and leave him to his? He could not have told why; it was a quite new and perplexing phenomenon to him, severed as he had been for so many years from almost all human intercourse, the influence which he was conscious this all but stranger exercised over his mind. He did feel tempted to meet Farnaby's proposal with a surly and repellant answer. He felt sure that his object in walking with him was to combat his, Wilfred's, purpose, as regarded the Earl. And yet it seemed as if he were bent on making it sure that such an interview as he (Wilfred) proposed should take place before the faculties of the dying man should be too far enfeebled to make it available to any purpose. He felt that he would rather have walked down to the Park alone with his own thoughts. He would rather do so; and yet, by a strange sort of contradiction, he was anxious to hear what this stranger could wish to say to him. There was undoubtedly something appalling in the task he had for so many years appointed for himself to do, in that hour which had now arrived. And though still fully purposed to go forth and do what he had said to himself he would do, he felt as if, in refusing to allow Farnaby to accompany him in his walk, he should be irrevocably kicking away the plank which yet remained between his boat and the shore;—as if he should be casting off the last—and nearly the first—friendly hand that had ever been held out to him;—and he had not at that moment the courage to do this.

“Certainly; if it is your pleasure to do so,” he replied, therefore, to Farnaby's suggestion. “I shall be ready to go in less than five minutes. Will you kindly wait for me here till I return?”

And so saying Wilfred left the kitchen and went to his own room, the door of which he carefully locked behind him on entering. Then taking from a secret repository the coffer which he once before produced on the night when his unhappy sister-in-law came to hide her head, and to die at the Grange, he took from it a couple of written papers, which he placed in an envelope, and then consigned to the inner breast-pocket of his coat, which he carefully buttoned over his treasures.

And then he and Farnaby started on their way to the Park, walking side by side.

CHAPTER II.

Wilfred in the Presence of his Enemy.

THEY,—Wilfred Garstang and Walter Farnaby,—had walked down the zigzag path slowly and in close conversation. They had passed along the beach towards the East Rock Cottage, instead of going through the town, in order that their earnest talk might be less interrupted by meeting with other passers-by; and they had reached the lane leading from the east end of the town to the Park gates when they saw Mr. Linacre coming towards them.

“There is Linacre. But I think our talk has reached its conclusion, my dear Mr. Garstang,” said Farnaby, putting out his hand towards Wilfred as he spoke.

Garstang took the proffered hand in his, and grasped it with such force that Farnaby felt as if his fingers were in a vice.

“But do not leave me,” he said; “do not leave me. Walk with me to the house. Say no more, but stay with me, or who knows but the devil you have driven out may return? Ah, Mr. Farnaby, if I could have you always with me! But you will not leave me to my own thoughts now in this hour?”

“I will remain with you till you go into the Earl’s chamber, Mr. Garstang. Shall we tell Mr. Linacre now?”

“Not now; not till I am safe. Do not let us talk now, or maybe—— You can tell him as you think best, as soon as I have gone in to speak to the Earl.”

“Very well; so be it. Are you not a happier man this minute, Mr. Garstang, than you have been for many a day?” said Farnaby.

“For many a day, and many a year,—such long, long years! Always alone, Mr. Farnaby; always alone! Happier? I don’t know how I feel. I feel as if I was drunk. But I am afraid of my own thoughts. Do not leave me till the last minute.”

“Never fear. Linacre, we are going to the Park. Of course you have the latest news of the Earl?”

“I saw Mr. Hathaway just now. He tells me that he cannot last out the night. Are you going to the house, Mr. Garstang?” said Linacre, in some surprise, turning to walk with them.

“Yes, Mr. Linacre, I wish to see the Earl,” said Garstang, in rather a hurried nervous manner, which was very unlike his usual way of speaking.

“To see the Earl!” repeated Linacre, lifting up his eyebrows. “I fear you will hardly find that practicable.”

"I have been told that his mind is still quite clear, and I hope that he will not refuse to see me."

"Yes, Hathaway says that he is quite himself. But—— *You* are not bound on the same errand, I suppose, Farnaby?" said Linaere, with just the slightest possible flavour of a sneer in his tone.

"No, hardly that. I have merely walked down from the Grange with Mr. Garstang," replied Farnaby.

"It was your second visit to the Grange to-day, was it not?" said Linaere, in a tone of subacid ill-humour.

"It was so, Linaere. But I did not go for the purpose of seeing, nor did I see, any person except Mr. Garstang. Have you any intention, Linaere, of seeing the Earl before he dies?"

"No, indeed. To what good purpose could I do so? I think you will find that he will decline to see anybody. I should feel very unwilling to intrude myself upon his last moments," said Linaere, in the same tone, but still continuing to walk with Farnaby and Garstang towards the house.

They found a servant in the hall who told them that there had been no apparent change in the Earl's condition during the last few hours; and to this man Wilfred addressed his request that the Earl should be told that Mr. Garstang of the Grange wished to see him for the space of a few minutes.

The man, who was not acquainted with Wilfred by sight, looked exceedingly amazed, and glanced from one to the other of the other two visitors with a look that very plainly asked whether Garstang was to be considered a madman or not. But as his look obtained no answer, and as the madman, as the servant con-

sidered him, had come there together with the heir to the earldom, the man replied that he did not think that it was possible for anybody to be admitted to the Earl, but that he would go and send Mr. Atkins.

Mr. Atkins made his appearance almost immediately; and was beginning to assert the absolute impossibility of admitting anybody to his master's presence, least of all people coming on such business as brought Mr. Garstang there, when Wilfred interrupted him by asking on what business Mr. Atkins supposed him to have come.

"A happlication for to be put back into the Bishops-croft farm, I should say," replied Mr. Atkins, very severely.

Wilfred was about to reply to this, but Farnaby interrupted him.

"It is assuming a very great responsibility to undertake to exclude any person from the presence of a dying man in the full possession of his faculties, without consulting him on the subject. The Earl can refuse to see Mr. Garstang if he wishes to do so. But surely it would be well to give him the choice," said he.

Mr. Atkins looked from the speaker towards Mr. Linacre, and not seeing in his face either adherence to or dissent from this doctrine, he shrunk from taking it altogether upon himself to refuse to carry Mr. Garstang's message to the Earl, and turned on his heel, saying,—

"Well, I will tell his lordship as Mr. Garstang wishes to talk to him, and then you will see——"

In a very few minutes, however, he returned, with

a very chapfallen look, and the announcement that the Earl would see Mr. Garstang immediately.

"I will wait for you here till you come back, Mr. Garstang," said Farnaby.

"I shall be very grateful to you if you will do so," said Wilfred, turning to follow Mr. Atkins, and leaving Farnaby and Linaere in the hall together.

He was ushered into the room where the old nobleman—the man whom he had for so many years hated with so bitter a hatred—was dying. Hathaway, who had ridden back to Billiford in the middle of the day, to give directions about the attendance on his own patients, had returned, and was now sitting at the head of the bed. It was a large room, with a large bow-window, from which all blinds and curtains had been withdrawn at the dying man's desire; and the light of the sun, which was beginning to descend the western sky, sent its beams right on to the pillow on which his head was propped.

It was a venerable-looking old head, mild and gentle in the expression of the features, as Wilfred now saw it, and differing very widely in that respect from what he remembered to have seen in the face on other occasions. Such, he thought, was the effect of the near approach of the great end-all: the consciousness that conflict and anger were over. But whatever the state of the Earl's heart and mind might have been in those respects, Mr. Atkins could have given a more authentic account of the remarkable alteration in the expression of his features. The fact was that the old man had for many years worn a complete set of false teeth; and when they were on duty in their places, the expression of the face, and specially of the mouth, the most tell-

tale feature in it, was very hard and fiercely defiant. When they were removed, the whole meaning of the face seemed to be entirely altered. And on this occasion Wilfred Garstang for the first time saw his old enemy without his teeth. Who can say how far his feelings towards him might have been modified if he had been accustomed to see him usually under the same circumstances!

His head was lying back on the pillows, exactly facing the light from the window, but the eyes were closed when Wilfred came into the room. Nevertheless, it was evident that he was not sleeping. Hathaway got up from his chair, and coming forward with a silent step to meet Garstang, said in a whisper,—

“The Earl wished to see you, and you are the only person whom he has been willing to admit. You may perhaps be aware, Mr. Garstang, of his reasons for wishing to speak to you; but I think it right to tell you, not only that his hours are numbered, and that they are very few, but that it would be extremely improper that he should be agitated or excited. I could not answer for the result. It might be immediately fatal.”

“Is that Garstang of the Grange, Hathaway?” said the dying man, in a very weak voice, without opening his eyes.

“Mr. Garstang is here, my lord. He has just entered the room,” said the Doctor.

“Leave us together then, if you please, Hathaway,” said the Earl. “Stay; just prop me up a little on the pillow, will you, before you go, and give one sup of the cordial.”

Hathaway did as he was bid; and then, whispering

to Garstang as he passed him to remember what he had said, and telling him that he should remain just outside the door, so as to be at hand at a moment's warning, glided out of the room.

Wilfred stepped up to the head of the bed, and said at once, in a hurried, nervous sort of manner,—

“It is a long time, Lord Linaere——”

“Yes, it is a long time, Mr. Garstang,” said the Earl, interrupting him with a feeble motion of his hand. “Have the kindness to stand on the other side, in the light, where I can see you, and let a dying man have his own way. I want to speak to you; and I want you to hear me without interruption.”

Garstang moved to the other side of the bed, as the old man had asked him, and remained silent, though not a little surprised.

“You have come to ask to be reinstated in the Bishopseroft farm——”

“My lord——” interrupted Garstang. But the old man again signed to him imperatively to be silent.

“I beg to be allowed to speak,” he continued. “I wish to say that I am glad that you have come. Perhaps if you had done so at an earlier day I should not have remained—not have refused you. I shall leave orders—or at least a request—that you be reinstated. I have done you much evil. But, Mr. Garstang, I have been a broken-hearted man; and to such much may be forgiven. I trust I have your forgiveness.”

“My lord, my lord,” said Wilfred, much and painfully moved, “my lord, I have been a broken-hearted man;—not because of poverty, not because of the farm, my lord,” he continued hastily and eagerly, “that is nothing. But heaven knows, my lord, that a more

broken-hearted man than I lives not this day. If much may be forgiven to such an one—see you, my lord, whether you can forgive me? For, indeed, Lord Linacre, I have come here this day not to forgive, but, if it is possible, to be forgiven.”

“Of all that the less said the better,” said the Earl. “I do not deem,—I never deemed,—that there was much for me to forgive to you personally. Let bygones be bygones. It is sufficient if we can both say to the other that no remnant of anger, hatred, or malice, remains between us.”

“Oh, my lord! my lord!” said Wilfred, with a deep groan, and covering his face with his hands.

“Is it so difficult then, to lay aside enmity against a dying man? I would fain have left the world in charity with all men!” said the Earl.

“My lord, it is now for you to hear me say what I came here to say to you; and I pray to God that when you have heard it you may still be able to forgive me the evil I have done! My lord, I will ask you to hear me to the end, that I may trouble you as short a time as possible with my confession.”

“Never mind your confession, man! If you can forgive me I can forgive you all the past, and no more need be said between us; and you shall go back to the Bishopscroft farm. Won’t that make it straight between us?”

“My lord, craving your pardon, it is very important to you to hear the story I have to tell—the terrible confession I have to make. I came here, not to speak about the Bishopscroft farm, nor thinking of it. I came here to tell your lordship what it is most important that you should know; and—to see whether

—it is possible that your lordship should forgive me—when you have heard my story.”

“Is there much to hear?” said the Earl, wearily.

“It is much in importance, my lord. I will be as short as I can,” replied Wilfred.

“Give me a sup out of that bottle there, then:—good,—now I will listen to you as well as I can.”

“My lord, when my brother George died—as you know—I felt very angry against your lordship.”

“You could not lay his death at my door!” said the Earl.

“No, my lord. But you thought that the death of your son lay at my brother’s door. My lord, it was not so. It was to please Lord Saltash, and not to please my brother, that the man was rescued from the press-gang. But all that *is* bygone. You, my lord, thought differently, and we thought, my lord,—I thought, that when my brother was doomed to die, you rejoiced at his condemnation.”

“I *did* rejoice; being myself very sore and broken-hearted. I ask God’s forgiveness and yours!” interrupted the Earl.

“And, my lord, the sight of that rejoicing in *your* heart, at that moment, put the devil into *my* heart; and in revenge for what you then made me suffer, I have purposely caused, or at least grievously increased your misery during all the years since that time. My lord, you have all these years grieved over the dishonour of your daughter—”

“Man, man, be silent!—be silent, or you will make it impossible for me to forgive!” gasped the Earl.

“Oh, my lord! there was no such dishonour to be

forgiven! no dishonour worse than the marriage of your daughter with the son of Garstang of Garstang Grange!"

"Marriage!" shrieked the dying man, starting up to a sitting posture in his bed, with a sudden spring, which the medical men would have declared to be impossible to him.

It was a terrible and strange sound,—that shriek forced by intense emotion from the failing energies of the old man. It brought Hathaway, who had heard it outside the door, running into the room. To his extreme surprise, he found the Earl sitting up in the bed, with his dim and hollow eyes relighted up, and glaring eagerly out of their deep sockets, and his two hands clenched.

"Go back; leave the room, Hathaway! I will call you if I want your help. Mr. Garstang will call you!" said he, in a stronger voice than Hathaway imagined could have ever come from his lungs again; and motioning to the Doctor to leave him with an imperious gesture.

"Marriage, my lord," repeated Wilfred, as soon as Hathaway had left the room; "a regular and duly solemnized marriage, of which I have the authentic evidence here, and which I can satisfactorily prove and establish any day," he added, placing his hand emphatically on the pocket in which the certificates were placed, as he spoke.

"Oh gracious and merciful heaven!" exclaimed the Earl, letting himself fall back on the pillows and remaining silent for a minute or two; though his lips kept moving all the time.

“And her child? She left a child?” he added at length.

“She left a child who is now alive and well;—a child, the daughter of my brother, and of your daughter, my lord.”

“But the child—man, man, man, why don't you say?—the child?—born?—when born?” said the Earl; and as he spoke his thin shrivelled hands quivered with intense excitement and anxiety as they lay on the sheet of the bed.

“Born in wedlock, my lord. Nothing ever occurred between my brother and the Lady Juliette which ought not to have occurred between an honest man and a virtuous lady;—save that their marriage was secret;—and save that she was your lordship's daughter, and he but a Garstang of Garstang!”

“But the child!—man, you are talking of what you know nothing;—that child is my granddaughter;—my legitimate granddaughter;—and the heiress of my name, and title, and of this property.”

“Yes, my lord, I know that. I am aware of all the truth,” said Wilfred, with a strange mixture of pride and contrite humility.

“And gracious heaven! why then have you not proclaimed this marriage, and the rights of your brother's child?” said the Earl, staring at him with wide and eager eyes.

“Because——” said Wilfred, returning the Earl's stare with eyes as haggard, and trembling from head to foot, while his features worked terribly,—“because——”

He struggled with an effort that seemed to shake his whole body to utter the words that should have

followed. But the words would not be uttered. And swaying for a moment to and fro, like a tall tree before it falls, Wilfred fell heavily to the floor.

CHAPTER III.

The Earl's Punishment is Over.

THE heavy fall of Wilfred to the ground had been both felt and heard by Hathaway, who had remained waiting outside the door, not a little surprised at the duration of the interview between the Earl and his former tenant. He came hurriedly into the room, followed by Dr. Bartram, who had just come up from the town, and by the servant, who was ushering him to the sick room, and found the Earl sitting up in the bed, and stretching his arms eagerly towards the place near the foot of the bed where Wilfred Garstang was lying. The latter was not visible to the medical men, as they came in at the door; because the bed was between them and the fallen man.

"Is he dead? Is he dead, I say?" said the Earl, shaking with nervous anxiety.

In obedience to the pointing of his outstretched arms, they hastened round the foot of the bed, and saw the prostrate form of Wilfred lying insensible. He was breathing heavily and stertorously, and it was evident to the medical men that he was suffering from a sudden seizure of the heart.

"No, my lord; not dead," said Hathaway, hastening to the bed-head, while Bartram and the servant raised Wilfred from the floor; "not dead! It is a slight and partial paralysis of the heart."

"Are you sure he will recover?" asked the Earl anxiously.

"Doubtless he will, my lord. I make no doubt he will recover in a few minutes from this attack. It may be that more serious seizures of the same sort may follow," said Hathaway, marvelling much at the extreme anxiety manifested by the Earl, and speaking of Garstang, and the chances of his life and death, as unconcernedly as if there had not been the smallest possibility that the latter might hear him.

"No; put him on that sofa, there. I won't have him taken out of the room," said the Earl, very peremptorily, as Bartram and the servant were about to carry Wilfred, who was still insensible, out of the room.

"It may be necessary, perhaps, to bleed him," said Hathaway, under his breath to the Earl; "it may be some hours before he is in a condition to speak to your lordship.—Had we not better——"

"No; I will not have him taken out of this room. Let him be bled here, if it is proper to bleed him. Put him on the sofa there; I insist upon it, Hathaway, that he does not leave this room," said the Earl, with a vigour and a force of decision that quite surprised the Doctor, who, an hour before, would have sworn that the dying man was much too far gone for such an effort to be possible to him. Very much puzzled were both Hathaway and his colleague at this determination of the Earl not to lose sight of a man whom for the last twenty years, or near it, nothing could have induced him to see. But the Earl was thinking of those papers, precious to him beyond all else in the world, which Wilfred had declared to be on his person; and

which, if indeed Garstang were about to die, he—the Earl—would have caused to be taken from his pocket, and recognized by other witnesses, before he himself should breathe his last.

So Wilfred was placed on the sofa, under the Earl's eyes; and in a short time began to recover his consciousness. The pulse returned to its normal action, and the two doctors declared that the seizure had not been a violent one; and that in a short time their new patient would be able to resume his conversation with the Earl.

Meantime Bartram had slipped out, and returned to the hall, where, on passing through it, he had left Mr. Linaere and Mr. Farnaby.

"Hathaway got a fright just now," he said, addressing Mr. Linaere. "It seems the Earl had desired him to leave him with that man, Garstang. What there can be to be said between them, heaven only knows. Hathaway kept watch outside the door, of course. And presently, bang! he hears a great fall on the floor. Poor Hathaway had not presence of mind enough to remember that it could not be the Earl who had fallen, seeing that he can't leave his bed. He thought something had happened. I reached the room at the same moment, and there we found Garstang in a fit on the floor, and the Earl sitting up in bed, and speaking as strong as if he had a month's life in him, and swearing that Garstang should not be taken out of the room on any account. Very extraordinary, Mr. Linaere. I can't help thinking, for my part, that the Earl was giving him a bit of his mind about that unhappy business of the Lady Juliette, you know, sir.

Ah! he might well fall down in a fainting fit, or anything else, I am sure."

Here Hathaway came out to the hall begging that Bartram would go to the door of the Earl's chamber, and keep watch there for precaution sake, not entering unless he were summoned. Garstang, he said, had recovered himself so far as to be able to continue his conversation with the Earl; the latter was speaking with a wonderful degree of strength and energy, and had desired that he and Mr. Garstang might again be left together.

Meantime, this was what was passing in the Earl's chamber.

"You were going to tell me, Mr. Garstang, when you were taken ill," said the Earl, as soon as they had been left alone together,—“you were going to tell me why you have abstained till now from setting right before the world the name of your brother's wife, and asserting the rights of your niece, who is my granddaughter."

"I am about to answer that, my lord. But the pain and the shame of doing so were too great for me. I kept the truth concealed," continued Wilfred, speaking with effort, and in slow and low accents, "because I knew that the belief that your daughter had disgraced herself and her family, and that your lineage was extinct, would embitter your life and make your days miserable. And I determined thus to avenge your rejoicing over the condemnation of my unhappy brother. This I did, and have continued to do, for nigh upon twenty years. It is for your lordship to say now whether it is possible for you to forgive me."

And Wilfred stood at the foot of the bed, between

the Earl and the red light streaming in from the setting sun, with his hands folded on his breast, and his head dropped upon them.

The Earl was silent for awhile, and heaved a deep sigh before he replied.

“As I hope to be forgiven,” he then said, solemnly and reverently bowing his white head forwards as he lay propped up with pillows, “so do I forgive. But oh, man! rarely, I think, has any man inflicted on his fellow-man so much anguish as you have inflicted on me in all these miserable years. Yet, doubt it not, that I do fully and freely pardon and forgive you. I did deserve some evil at your hands. And, thanks be to God, it is all the easier now to forgive, that you have brought me at this eleventh hour a very great—an infinite joy.”

“And for that, my lord, I deserve no thanks or gratitude whatever at your hands. My confession is not yet complete, and I would fain complete it. My lord, not only have I rejoiced in the affliction which, by my act, you have suffered from for twenty years; but I had, in the bitterness of my vengeance, determined that you should die without the knowledge that the wrong done to your daughter and your granddaughter should ever be remedied. I intended to inform you, when your life should be drawing near to its close, that *my* hand had poured out all this misery upon you; that in *my* hand it lay to restore your daughter to her good name, and your granddaughter to her rightful position, and that because of the evil you had done to me and mine, I would never do so. I intended this consummation of my vengeance, my lord;

and I intended it when I rose from my bed this morning. Now, my lord, I have confessed all my sin."

"I thank God, Mr. Garstang, and you have great reason to thank him, that your heart has been changed, and that you have opened it to better thoughts," said the Earl solemnly.

"I trust, my lord, that *I am* thankful. But in honesty I must needs tell your lordship how this change was wrought in me. I left my home this day to come here with the full purpose in my heart, all dark and black, to do as I have said. A man walked with me—would walk with me—would not be shaken off. Never before, my lord, has any man spoken to me as that man spoke. To him it is wholly due that when I reached the Park I reached it with a changed heart. To him your lordship owes aught of happiness that that change may produce to you."

"But how could such a purpose as yours, Mr. Garstang, be otherwise than a secret from all men? How could the person of whom you speak turn you from your purpose unless he knew it?" said the Earl, with shrewdly inquiring eyes.

"My lord, my purpose has been my secret for these twenty years. It has never been breathed to any man, save this one, and to him only this day. My lord, he came to me seeking in marriage the hand of my niece, your granddaughter, in entire ignorance of her position as your lordship's heiress; and, seeing that no human power could force me to divulge the proofs at the marriage against my will, I thought it well that he should know the truth with regard to her whom he sought to marry. When I told him what I had done, and what

I intended to do, he rested not till he had changed my purpose."

"And this man seeks to marry the heiress to the title and estates of Linaere?" said the Earl, after some moments of silence;—"had sought her hand before he was aware of her expectations? Who is this man?"

"His name is Walter Farnaby, my lord, the son of a clergyman of this county, of a good old Sillshire family. He is a fellow of Silchester College, at Oxford, and he saw my niece where she was placed for her education in Silchester. He came here, not knowing at all that he should find her here, in the company of Mr. Bentham Linaere."

"So Mr. Bentham Linaere is here too," said the Earl, not with any lowering of the brow indicative of displeasure, but a sort of half peevish, half malicious twist of the upper lip, in which might have been read no small amount of satisfaction at the discomfiture that was awaiting that obnoxious individual. "Ay, ay. So Mr. Bentham Linaere has come down. Trust him for being in at the death. But he is not going to have the brush after all. Ho! ho! ho! Give me another sup out of the bottle there, Mr. Garstang. I declare I feel as I could live a little longer, to see my poor child's memory properly cleared, and my heiress married. So Mr. Bentham Linaere is here, is he?—waiting till the breath is out of my body. Wait a bit, wait a bit, Mr. Bentham Linaere. The last time we met you gave me a heavyish back fall. Now we shall see if I can't throw you, and win the match after all," said the old Sillshire man, who had in his young days patronized many a struggle in the favourite sport of his county.

"I ought to tell you, my lord, that Mr. Bentham Linaere himself, also in ignorance of the legitimate birth of my niece, on seeing her here, made proposals for her hand," said Wilfred, drily.

"I daresay. So that's the way the cat jumps! And you imagine that he had no inkling—Hum! I tell you that there is nothing those lawyers don't get to know somehow. And pray what did you say to Mr. Linaere's proposal, sir?"

"My lord, I and all my family have very grave reasons for entirely objecting to the marriage of one of our race with a cousin," said Wilfred, speaking very gravely and even sternly; "and, as your lordship sees, Mr. Linaere is the cousin of my niece by the mother's side. Nothing would induce me to consent to such a marriage."

"Nor me," said the Earl, nodding his head.

"And, moreover, it seems that Mr. Farnaby has already succeeded in winning the child's love. There would, as I judge, be difficulty in inducing her to entertain the idea of any other marriage," said Wilfred, gravely.

The Earl remained buried in silent meditation for some minutes.

"You see, Mr. Garstang," he said, at length, "that my granddaughter would, in the nature of things, look higher for a mate to share her fortunes—there are few of any rank in the land who would not jump at the chance of obtaining for their eldest son the hand of the Baroness Linaere in her own right, and heiress to all the family property. But—Mr. Garstang, we owe—we both owe this Mr. Farnaby much—very much—more than any gratitude or any earthly advantage

whatever can repay. The man is a gentleman. I know the name very well—a very good old south Sillshire name. And you say that the child has already learned to like him?—His father was a clergyman, you say; what is the gentleman himself?”

Happily for the Earl's prejudices, Wilfred did not happen to know that Farnaby had been called to the Bar. So he told all that he did know of his occupations, saying that he “was a poet.”

“A poet!” said the Earl, with a queer grimace. “A poet! Well, Surrey was a poet. It is just as well that my granddaughter's husband will not need to earn his bread. And now, Mr. Garstang, as my time is short they tell me—although, I must say that I feel much more as if I had still some life in me than I did an hour or two ago—do not let us lose any of it. I must see my grandchild—the latest, but not the last, I trust, of her race—before I die. If I disappoint the doctors, and live some few days longer—who knows?—you can understand that there will be much I shall want to hear from you—many things anent this marriage—poor child! poor child!—but now, what presses most is that I should see my grandchild.”

“You would wish her to be brought to you here at once, my lord? She is now at the Grange. It would be best that I should at once go there for her.”

“Pray do so. Take a carriage to the foot of the cliff, and let it wait for you, and bring you back thence. That will be the quickest way. And if you will send somebody to me, as you go out, I shall be obliged to you, Mr. Garstang.”

And so the interview, which made everything on earth different to both of these men, which changed

entirely their own hearts, and enveloped all the world in a new atmosphere of a different quality of light, came to a conclusion.

CHAPTER IV.

Waller Farnaby and the Earl.

WILFRED, passing out of the Earl's chamber, had found Dr. Bartram outside the door; and the latter waited for no request to do so to glide into the chamber as the former quitted it.

"I trust your lordship has not been overfatigued by the man who has just left the room. I trust that there has been no excitement," said Bartram, coming up to the bedside with a cat-like step.

"Well, yes, to tell the truth, Bartram, he has excited me a good deal," said the Earl.

"It is perfectly inexcusable, when he was warned how prejudicial—I hope that your lordship does not feel——"

"My notion is, Bartram, that he has done me more good than all you doctors can do."

"Ah, light-headed," thought Bartram to himself. "Just what might have been expected."

"Indeed, my lord, you must endeavour to be calm. A little ice to the head perhaps——"

"Is Hathaway in the house? If so, just ask him to step here, will you, Bartram?"

"Mr. Hathaway, the Earl is asking for you," said Bartram, coming out to the hall, where the Doctor was still chatting with Mr. Linaere and Mr. Farnaby. "I am afraid that that man has done him mischief. It is

very much to be lamented that he should have obtained access to his lordship. If I had been consulted——”

“Is he still there?” asked Hathaway.

“No; but he has only just gone. Whatever he has been tormenting the Earl about, it has put him into a state of exaltation and fever, I am afraid. Will you come to him?”

In a few minutes both the medical gentlemen returned to the hall, and gave orders that Mr. Atkins should go to his master directly.

“Tell Atkins to come here for a moment before going in to him,” said Hathaway. “I’ll tell you what,” he added, addressing Linacre and Farnaby, “I shouldn’t wonder if he were to rally yet, and last a little while longer. He is certainly better, wonderfully better, and has no more fever than I have.”

“You will observe, Mr. Hathaway, that when I spoke of the possibility that fever might have supervened, I had not had an opportunity of consulting the patient’s pulse,” put in Bartram.

“I know, I know. Well, he has no fever now. It is one of those rallies of nature that one sometimes sees. Atkins,” he continued, as the valet came into the hall, “your master wants some nourishment. Go to him. He may have a basin of good strong beef-tea, and a glass of sherry. And let it be got ready for him with as little delay as possible. I say, Bartram, will you bet that the Earl don’t see this day six months? I don’t mind staking a five pound note that he does.”

“I put it to these gentlemen, Mr. Hathaway, whether it would not seem to them, as I think that it would to most people, a very grievous impropriety that

a medical practitioner should wager on the unfavourable termination of a case in which he is engaged," said Bartram, with much pomposity.

"Pshaw! Will you bet he lives, and I'll bet he dies, and leave the case altogether to you?" said Hathaway, with a horse laugh.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Atkins, returning at that moment again to the hall, "the Earl has been asking me if I knew where to find a gentleman of the name of Farnaby, who is, as he has been told, at Billmouth. If he can be found the Earl would be glad to see him as soon as possible. I did not say that Mr. Farnaby was in the house, thinking it better to speak to you, sir, first," said Mr. Atkins, turning to Hathaway.

"Um!—— I have no objection to his seeing Mr. Farnaby. I should have said that he had enough with that fellow who was with him so long, and took it into his head to make a scene by going off in a fainting fit. But really he seems so much better that perhaps it is better to comply with his wish," said Hathaway.

"But how on earth could he have heard that you were here—have heard your name even, Farnaby?" said Mr. Linaere. "Do you know, Atkins?"

"I have said nothing to his lordship, Mr. Linaere; and unless that man from the Grange have aspokten to Mr. Farnaby's being here, I am sure I can't guess."

"Isn't it odd, Farnaby, that he should have left the house, without coming back to you?" remarked Mr. Linaere. "I thought that your whole errand here was to accompany him?"

"Perhaps he may be coming back again," said Farnaby.

All this time he had been annoyed at being so

long in his friend's company without having communicated to him anything of the extraordinary and important facts which he had that morning learned from Wilfred Garstang. It had been his purpose to do so at the earliest opportunity; and he felt as if there were something treacherous in keeping the knowledge of such circumstances to himself. But no such opportunity had arisen. He could not speak on the subject in the presence of Messrs. Hathaway and Bartram. And one or the other, or both of them, had been with him ever since he and Mr. Linacre and Wilfred had reached the Park together. And now he was called away by the Earl. That Lord Linacre should wish to see him was not so utterly inexplicable to him as it was to all the other persons present. He knew—or hoped that he was not mistaken in supposing that he knew—what had been the nature of the interview between the Earl and Mr. Garstang. It seemed likely enough that such a conversation as he supposed to have passed between them might have led to speech of Miss Garstang, and that thence might have arisen a mention by Mr. Garstang of the fact of his pretensions to the lady's hand.

And thereupon the Earl might have wished to speak with him.

In what sense? Was it not likely that the successful efforts he had made to induce Wilfred Garstang to change his mind and purpose towards the Earl,—to bring him to put aside his vengeful enmity and approach the old man's bedside with words of contrition and forgiveness,—was it not likely that those efforts would bring about the destruction of his hope to make Jenefy Garstang his wife? Garstang was content to

accept him as a suitor for the hand of his niece. But would the Earl of Linaere be content to accept him as the husband of his granddaughter and heiress? Would not the proud old nobleman be eager for some more distinguished alliance for his long-lost and newly-recovered heiress? It seemed terribly likely to Farnaby, as he turned to follow the servant to Lord Linaere's chamber, that such would be the case. And if it were so, how could he reconcile himself to the idea of availing himself of the chance meeting which had thrown this great heiress in his way at Silchester, to achieve so high a fortune for himself by entrapping the affections of a girl of seventeen? How, indeed, in any case, could he make up his mind to build his fortunes on such a foundation?

With these thoughts chasing each other through his mind, Farnaby entered the Earl's chamber.

He had just finished his basin of beef-tea, and was insisting that his one glass of sherry should be filled to the brim, while Mr. Atkins stood at one side of the bed-head and Dr. Bartram on the other.

"Mr. Farnaby, my lord," said the servant who had preceded him to the chamber.

"I ought to apologize, Mr. Farnaby, for the liberty I have taken in thus calling you to a sick man's bedside. But there are matters that should be spoken between us, and I could not wait on you, you see."

"Oh, my lord!--I am very glad that I chanced to be so near at hand, as to be able to obey your lordship's call without loss of time."

"Now, Atkins, you may go. Mr. Bartram, will you have the kindness to leave Mr. Farnaby and me together a little while. You need not look as if I was

going to commit suicide. Don't you see how much stronger I am?"

"Now, then, Mr. Farnaby," continued the old man, as soon as they were alone together; "what I want to say to you may be said in a very few words—though I should not rest in my grave if I died without saying them. Few men have owed another more gratitude than I owe you, Mr. Farnaby."

"My lord!" said Farnaby, with genuine astonishment.

"Yes, it's true. That unhappy man—he has been a very unhappy man—has told me all—has told me how I was doomed to die in misery and despair if *you* had not rescued me from it. Give me your hand. What is your name, Mr. Farnaby?"

"Walter—Walter Farnaby, my lord!" he replied, giving his hand to the old man as desired.

"Walter Farnaby," said the Earl, taking his hand in both his, and drawing it towards him, so as to press it to his bosom,—“Walter Farnaby, I pray God to bless you. I believe, as I lie here, shortly to be in the presence of my Maker, that, by your good thoughts and good words, you have saved two souls. For my heart and my soul were very black, very full of bitterness and despair. What the difference is to me—what the discovery that has this day been made, is worth to me—you can guess without my saying more about it. Believe me, sir, I am grateful to you.”

"I fear you overrate the value of anything I have been able to do, my lord. I did strive, as any other man would have done, to induce Mr. Garstang to lay aside his animosity towards you; and it is a great pleasure to me to have succeeded," said Farnaby.

"Well, and now what shall I give you in return for the good you have done me?" said the Earl.

"Give me, my lord!" re-echoed Farnaby, in an accent of great surprise.

"Yes, to be sure. Is there nothing you want that I could give you, or help to give you, at all events?" said the Earl.

"My lord—I—I—" stammered Farnaby, who, from the last words, began to guess the old man's meaning.

"Yes; Garstang has told me all about that, too. You have asked my granddaughter for her hand."

"My lord, I asked Miss Garstang to marry me, it is true, thinking that I, a poor man, was wooing a poor girl. Since I have been made acquainted with the real circumstances of the lady's position, I have not seen her. Of course I am aware that your lordship's granddaughter and heiress may—nay, ought to look for a different alliance from one with the son of a poor clergyman," said Farnaby.

"Rector of Barcomb-in-the-Moor, in the southern half of the county, your father was. I know all about you. I have met your father in Silchester in old times. Farnaby! It is a good old Sillshire name, and a good old Sillshire stock. I had rather have a Sillshire gentleman's son marry my granddaughter than the son of another, let his rank be what it might. Mr. Farnaby and the Baroness Linaere! And your son will be Lord Linaere of Linaere, my great grandson in the direct line. And, I'll tell you what, Farnaby—why should not the earldom be restored? In such case, if you manage your affairs well, the Crown is not likely to be very difficult on such a point. We shall see; we shall see—that is, you will see," added the old man,

in a sadder tone, after a pause. "I absolutely forgot that I was lying here on my death-bed. 'Thank God, I can now go to my rest in perfect charity with all men. And observe, Farnaby, it is my special wish and request that Garstang should have the Bishopscroft farm—on advantageous terms, you know—on advantageous terms; and a lease, too, if he wishes it, when I am gone."

"I hope you may grant it to him, yourself, my lord. Why not? You do not seem to me like a dying man," said Farnaby.

"And between ourselves, I do not feel like one, Farnaby. I did this morning; and the doctors all seemed to think it was high time I went off the hooks; but, upon my word, I feel so much better, so much more life in me, that I should not wonder if I gave them the go-by yet."

"Mr. Hathaway was expressing his strong opinion just now, my lord, that you would recover and 'get about again. He said that the change in your state for the better was most extraordinary," said Farnaby.

"Ah, he did not know what sort of a cordial, what an *elixir vitæ* I have had administered to me while his back was turned. Did you see Garstang as he left my room?"

"No, my lord, I was in the front hall with Mr. Linacre; and I believe he left the house by a different way," replied Farnaby.

"Linacre! Mr. Bentham Linacre. Is he in the house too? He is rather too much in a hurry," said the Earl, with a sneer.

"His being here, as well as my being here, my lord, was occasioned by Mr. Garstang's coming. I was

walking from the Grange, as you know, with the latter, and we fell in with Mr. Linaere, and he joined us in our walk," said Farnaby.

"And has he been informed—does he know—is he aware that the title and estates descend to my granddaughter?" asked the Earl, with some anxiety.

"I am sorry to say, my lord, that he does not. Of course, my first wish on becoming acquainted with the circumstances was to inform him of them; but when he met Mr. Garstang and myself together, I felt that it would be very difficult to speak on the subject under those circumstances. I waited for an opportunity of speaking with him alone. Then, ever since, one or other of the two medical gentlemen here has been with us; and I could not speak before them on such a matter."

"Poor Mr. Bentham! It will be a very terrible disappointment to him, I am afraid. And I suppose he does no more with his law business than he used to?" said the Earl.

"He has for several years held the position of Inspector of parish apprentices——"

"Inspector of what?" said the Earl, in much astonishment.

"Inspector of parish apprentices, a recently established appointment under the Government, my lord. It is not a bad appointment—and it is most probable that he might never have got it if it had not been believed that he was the heir to an earldom."

"Good gracious! Inspector of parish apprentices! What is it that he inspects concerning them?" said the old-fashioned peer.

"Their general treatment, their food, lodging, &c.,

&c. He takes a great deal of interest in his work, I assure you, my lord."

"I am very glad of that. But I should not like to be one of the apprentices," said the Earl. "I suppose they won't take the place away from him, when it turns out that he was not heir to the earldom," he added, after a minute's thought.

"Oh, no, my lord! nothing of the kind, unquestionably. He is a very excellent civil servant," said Farnaby.

"Well, we shall have to tell him all about it presently. Pray, Mr. Farnaby, are you aware that he also is a candidate for my granddaughter's hand?" said the Earl, with a sly look at Farnaby.

"Yes, my lord, he told me as much himself. But he had at the time never, or scarcely ever, spoken to the lady. And I know that Mr. Garstang entertains the very strongest objections to such an union, on the ground that Mr. Linaere is connected by blood with Miss Garstang."

"Well, poor fellow! he will have another disappointment to bear there. You don't think it possible, Mr. Farnaby, that he should have obtained any inkling—eh?—any idea of the real state of the case, eh?"

"I am quite persuaded that he has not the remotest idea of the kind. He saw Miss Garstang, and was, naturally enough, much struck by her; and partly also seemed to think that it would be a good thing to—to heal old sores, so far as might be done by such an union," said Farnaby.

"Hum—poor Mr. Bentham! I shall be glad to die in charity with him also. It's not my fault that he has been deceived all this time by false expectations.

Mr. Garstang, you say, left the house without seeing you. Do you know, Mr. Farnaby, on what errand he is gone?"

"No, my lord. How should I guess even? I did not know that he was gone on any errand. I thought it odd, considering the way in which we had come here together, that he should have left the house without speaking to me again."

"He is coming back again. It will not be many minutes, I suppose, before he is here. They told me a few hours ago that I was dying, though, in truth, I don't quite feel now as if I was. Can't you understand that the first wish of my heart would be to see the granddaughter who has been restored to me, and in whom my name and lineage is to be continued, before I die?"

"You mean, my lord, that Mr. Garstang has gone to bring Miss Garstang here."

"To be sure he is. And I can hear the carriage-wheels on the drive. In another minute the young lady will be here," said the Earl, eagerly.

"Perhaps I had better leave you, my lord. It would be more agreeable to you that—that a stranger should not be present at—at—on such an occasion," said Farnaby, feeling his own position to be a difficult one.

"Not at all. You are not to be a stranger in this house, you know. Besides, this is your work. Pray stay by me, and see it out."

"My lord, here's that man from the Grange come back, and a young lady with him. Are they to be shown in here?" said Mr. Atkins, appearing at the

door, and allowing his extreme astonishment to appear very plainly in the tones of his voice.

“Yes, Atkins, bring them here, and that without losing any time about it. Now for it! I do so hope I shall like the look of her. Come you round, Farnaby, and stand by the head of the bed on this side, and stand close. Now then!”

CHAPTER V.

The Earl recovers the lost Branch of the Family Tree.

“GREAT Heaven! how like! It is her mother over again,” exclaimed the Earl, putting his hands before his eyes as Jenefy, looking very much scared and frightened—and all the more like her poor timid and constantly-scared mother in consequence—was led to the foot of the bed between her grandfather and the light.

“Poor Juliette,” said the old man, as a tear gathered in his eye, “it is herself come back again—her figure, her carriage, her bearing. And yet,” continued he, shading his eyes with his hand, and gazing intently at the blushing girl, who had to stand his scrutiny as best she might, “Juliette was not quite so tall, nor her hair so dark, nor her eyes. Can you forgive an old man, my dear, for making you pass the ordeal of such an examination? I should apologise, too, for asking you to come and see me in my bedroom thus. You know who I am—what I am to you, I mean, my dear?”

“You are my grandfather, sir,” she said, in a barely audible voice.

"And you are my granddaughter Jenefy. I like the name; it is a good old Sillshire name. Come up here to the head of the bed, my child, and give me your hand. Ay, ay," he went on, as Jenefy did as he bade her, "you have your poor mother's own hand—a long slender paw. A very pretty hand, little lady. You may say an old man told you so. Well, now, Jenefy, my dear child, you know that I am your grandfather; very good so far. What else do you know about me?"

"Nothing, sir,—I think," said Jenefy, almost in a whisper.

"You have told her nothing of—of—of our discoveries this morning, eh?" asked the Earl, looking at Wilfred, who had remained standing near the head of the bed nearest the door, where his niece was also now standing, and consequently out of sight of Farnaby, who was hidden by the curtain on the other side.

"Nothing, my lord. I left it to your lordship to tell as you should think proper," said Wilfred, in an almost equally low voice.

"Well, then, Jenefy, I must tell you all about it. Listen! You have been told that I was your grandfather. Well and good. But you were told, I suppose, that there was something wrong about it in some way, so that I did not care to see you, or you to see me. But now all that has been found out to be a mistake. Partly by my fault, and partly by the fault of your uncle, we have been all playing at cross purposes. But now—this day—it has all been made clear. And you are not only my granddaughter, but the heiress to all I possess, and to my title—at least to one of them. When I die you will be Baroness Linaere in your own

right, and the possessor of all the estates that I now hold. And all this has been found out and made clear to us all by somebody that you never saw or heard tell of. Here he is. Come out, sir; come out from behind the curtain there, and blush to find your good deeds fame. Come out into the light, and let the lady have an opportunity of thanking the man who has been the means of restoring her to her rightful position."

Thus addressed, Farnaby stepped forward, and a sudden irrepressible "Oh!" escaped from Jenefy's lips before she had time to think of repressing it.

"Why, one would think that you had seen the gentleman before," said the Earl. "You may well cry 'Oh,' little lady. I can tell you that but for that gentleman there—things would all have been very different from what they are."

Jenefy dropped her eyes to the ground as if they had rested on a Medusa's head, and tried to ensconce herself behind the bed-curtain.

"I'll tell you what, Farnaby," continued the Earl, "it would be very good of you if you would carry out the intention you had of communicating to Mr. Linaere the facts, which it so much imports him to know. He ought not to be allowed to remain in ignorance of them. And perhaps there would be no better way of making him aware of them than by your telling him. Would you mind telling Atkins to show you into my study, and then to request Mr. Linaere to come to you there?"

"Certainly not, Lord Linaere! It is not a pleasant task; but I came here as Linaere's friend; the facts in question were first communicated to me, and i-

thereupon became my clear duty to inform him of them."

"It would be a kindness to all parties. Will you then kindly ring the bell?"

Farnaby did so; and when Mr. Atkins made his appearance, left the room with him to execute his disagreeable commission.

"Now, my dear," said the Earl, addressing Jenefy, "let us speak a few words seriously on a very important subject. You will excuse me if I make them as few as may be, at the cost of seeming blunt and rude, for though I do feel wonderfully better, I was considered to be a dying man this morning, and all—that has passed to-day has tired me. Now listen, you will easily understand that it must be one of the wishes nearest my heart to see you, who are to inherit my title and my property, and, we hope, to transmit them to a new line of the old name,—to see you, I say, settled and well married before I die; or if that may not be, to see you at least affianced to a husband of whom I can approve. Your uncle has told me that Mr. Farnaby has proposed marriage to you. He is a gentleman,—a Sillshire gentleman, and I firmly believe a good—a very good and honourable man. Such a choice would meet with my full approbation, as your uncle here tells me it has already met with his. What answer did you make to Mr. Farnaby when he asked you to marry him?"

"Sir," said Jenefy not a little distressed, yet feeling that the circumstances justified the directness of the inquiry, and demanded of her a prompt and explicit answer to it. "Sir—my lord, I mean—no—grand-papa—".

"Yes, that is best," said the Earl.

"I did not tell Mr. Farnaby that I would marry him, thinking that—that I—my age—I ought not—that it was better not to make such a promise without speaking to my uncle, but—but—I——"

"You let him see, probably, that as far as you were concerned you had no insuperable objection to make such a promise. That is it, isn't it, my dear child?"

Jenefy blushed and hung her head.

"Very well; that is all very well. I do not think you could find a better husband. You are aware, my dear, of what you give him in giving him yourself,—rank—not for himself, indeed, in his own person, but for his children,—and station, and wealth."

"Yes, sir,—my l—, yes, grandpapa," stammered Jenefy.

"You understand that well, my child?"

"Yes, grandpapa. But—do you know, grandpapa, I am sure,—that is, I am afraid—no; I mean, that I think that—if—if—if he had known,—if Mr. Farnaby had known all that, he would not have asked me to marry him," said Jenefy, who standing close by the bed-head, had taken the edge of the sheet between her fingers, and was giving all her attention to rolling and unrolling the hem of it round the slender tips of them.

"At all events he did not know it, and he did ask you," said the Earl with a smile on his lip, and looking up at her from under his shaggy eyebrows.

"Yes, grandpapa, and so, you see——"

"Yes, I see; so it is plain that it was the lady herself, and not all the good things that go with her that

Poor little Jenefy stood quietly by the bed-head, listening to what had been said about Mr. Linaere, and heard the last part of the Earl's speech quite unsuspectingly, not recognizing at all in the "message," thus announced, her suggestion that her grandpapa might himself let Mr. Farnaby know that his suit was accepted.

She was not left long, however, in her tranquil unconsciousness.

"This newly-found granddaughter of mine," he went on, "seems to have a very strong will of her own. When I spoke to her of my earnest wish to see her established in life before I leave it, she declared that she would marry no man on earth save one Walter Farnaby, and I might tell him so."

"Oh, grandpapa! I never did—I never said—" cried Jenefy, speaking as if she was on the point of bursting into tears.

"Oh! if you discredit your ambassador, you must settle the matter between you after your own fashion. Remember, Farnaby, that you wooed and won—yes, Miss Jenefy, he did; wooed and won—a poor girl, and that you have no right to break her heart by allowing any weight to overstrained susceptibilities of your own, on the score of her having been subsequently discovered to be an heiress. So now, as I said, you must settle your matters between yourselves; and come here to me for my blessing to-morrow morning. I am tired now, and want to sleep. Give me your hand, Mr. Garstang. God bless you and them, and the alliance between the Park and the Grange—the Grange and the Park, I should say, since the Grange was first on the dear old

Sillshire soil. And may God bless the first of the new line of Linacre!"

"May God bless you, my lord, and grant me the forgiveness I so much need. My heart is very full of thankfulness—though I am bad at speaking it. And may God send his best blessings on the last of the Garstangs of the Grange," said Wilfred, bowing his head to kiss the old man's hand.

CHAPTER VI.

Conclusion.

THE story of the Garstangs of Garstang Grange has been told; and very few concluding words are needed to let the reader know such subsequent facts in the history of the persons in whose fortunes he has interested himself as he may care to hear. The old Earl, wearied out with the emotions he had undergone during the day, slept, as he said he needed to do—but he never waked again. He passed away quietly in his sleep. The rally, which had enabled him to manifest a vigour and energy so surprising to his medical attendants, had been due solely to the moral stimulus supplied by the great joy arising from the facts that had been communicated to him.

Of what happened to Walter Farnaby, bachelor, and Jenefy Garstang, spinster, it is hardly necessary to say anything.

Mr. Linacre returned to inspecting the parish apprentices with more vigour and industry than ever. Before long he was promoted to be the head of the department under which he had previously served.

And since that day, all the inspectors who own his sway have come to understand that it taxes their utmost industry to satisfy his colossal appetite for reports. He is very frequently a visitor at Linaere Park; where the children, on those occasions, on their own express petition, are excused from making their appearance in the dining-room or drawing-room after dinner; and where every adult member of the family submits to be shown that they are chronically in the wrong, and to be intellectually rolled over and over in the mud of dialectical argument, with the best grace and good-humour that human nature can exhibit under the process.

Wilfred Garstang is also a frequent visitor at the Park,—not, if he can help it, when Mr. Linaere is there; for the latter has not yet convinced him of the absurdity, on every recognized principle of economical and agronomical science, of refusing to sell the Grange and the few ancestral acres still attached to it; and he never fails to renew the attempt to do so on every available opportunity. And Wilfred Garstang finds it more difficult to tolerate the attacks of Mr. Bentham Linaere than his other victims at the Park. He is still, if not a gloomy, a very serious and reserved man, and is from time to time subject to fits of moodiness, during which he is rarely seen outside the walls of the Grange. But, upon the whole, he is a mentally healthier, and, there can be no doubt, a far happier man, than at any other period of his life.

Miss Patience is not a visitor at the Park. Why should she vex her eyes with the spectacle of a lost generation hastening to their perdition? Nevertheless, the Baroness Linaere not infrequently walks up the

zigzag path to the top of the cliff on which the old stone house stands, and in one way or other contrives to make the life of the recluse old woman less naked and forlorn than it would otherwise be.

These things have been written down in the present tense, as supposing the reader to have reached the epoch to which the conclusion of this narrative brings him. But it is many years since any of those with whom he has made acquaintance were within ken of the glimpses of the moon. Since those days the old Earl's ghost has been made happy—if ghosts care about such matters of their former anxiety—by the renewal of the earldom in his lineal descendants. And the only remaining material record of the facts that have been related is the old Grange, which stands on its cliff as stalwart and storm-defying as ever. The house is now the property of the Linacres, and is carefully maintained in good condition by them. It is still regarded with curiosity, and considered a point of interest by the people of North Sillshire. Most of those who visit it, however, are under the impression that they are taken there merely for the sake of the fine point of view. And the few who have heard the legend connected with the house, and who ask the care-taker who inhabits it to be allowed to see the house, and seek the whereabouts of the fatal inscription, are shown the old stone chimney-piece; but are informed that the letters carved thereon were carefully obliterated by the last Garstang of the Grange before his death.

THE END.

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