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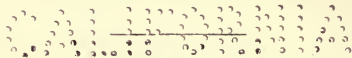
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PEERS AND PARVENUS,

A NOVEL.

BY
Catherine Grace Frances (Moody)
MRS GORE,

AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS," "STORY
OF A ROYAL FAVOURITE," ETC.



“Ce gros Suisse ayant apporté dans sa cabane un panier rempli de grenouilles, dont il comptait me régaler, mes valets de bouche lui montrèrent qu’il s’y trouvait mêlés des crapauds.”

“‘Ma foi,’ répondit-il,—‘tant pis pour eux.’”

MEMOIRES DE MONTLUC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MAIN



PEERS AND PARVENUS.

CHAPTER I.

Welcome, Immortal!—welcome to thy grave.—BUTLER.

AN unusual degree of stir and bustle was perceptible one Midsummer day in the household at Hillingdon Hall, a fine old seat in Lancashire, belonging to a fine young lord, who derived both his title and income from the property. Housemaids and lady's-maids were seen scudding, with an air of importance, along the corridors; and a chaise, with jaded and smoking post-horses, was drawn up near the offices. Some event of considerable importance was evidently in progress.

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The butler stood on the steps of the grand portico overlooking the park, exhibiting his broad red face and broad white waistcoat; while, with an outspread hand overshadowing his eyes, he peered out upon the distant domain, in hopes of obtaining a glimpse of my lord, who had sauntered out after luncheon with his dogs. But no Lord Hillingdon was to be seen! Divers menials of the house, from the standard footman in his plush and tags to the stable-helper in his fustian suit, were vainly despatched in search of him; and it was not till his return two hours afterwards, at the summons of the dinner-gong, that his lordship was apprized by a portly dame, arrayed in dimity and valenciennes, that he was father of a son and heir, and that my lady was "as well as could be expected."

"My lord" expected, apparently, that she should be as well as usual; for instantly rushing to her apartment, without regard to

the admonitions of the nurse or the warning of closed window-shutters and muffled doors, he signified in his usual robust and sportsmanlike tones to the invalid his joy that all was over, and his gratitude at being blest with a boy.

Lady Hillingdon was too languid either to remonstrate or reply ; but the stately dame in dimity hastened to conduct him into the adjoining chamber ; where, attended by half-a-dozen smiling, chattering ladies of the bedchamber, the new-born babe, half smothered in lace and cambric, lay nestling in a costly crib, as fine as silk, gilding, and rosewood could render the first receptacle of a creature of clay, newly struggled into a world of care and tribulation.

All made way for the happy father ; who was requested to admire his own dimple on the chin of his little son, and my lady's sweet smile upon lips which were just then distorted by a recent dose of physic into an

expression of considerable distaste for the ways of this world. But Lord Hillingdon, if less enthusiastic than the nurses, was too much gratified by the birth of an heir to his estate to care about its claims to the personal beauty of either parent. The village bells were about to be rung and bonfires to blaze in the park, though the dimple in the chin might be apocryphal, and Lady Hillingdon's sweet smile decidedly supposititious.

The value of this acquisition to the family was, in fact, exceedingly enhanced by having been four years waited for. Lord Hillingdon, after succeeding to the family title and estates in early boyhood, and going through the usual aristocratic routine of Eton and Oxford, had fallen desperately in love at the first ball of his first season in town, with the sweet face of a certain Emma Corbet, displayed there for the express purpose of being fallen in love with; the daughter of

parents of moderate fortune, ambitious of forming good matches for their children. They had made a dash beyond their means, in order to introduce the lovely Emma into society ; and thought themselves sufficiently rewarded for their risk when, within a week of his first introduction, young Hillingdon made proposals in form ; and, within six, was honoured with their daughter's hand at the altar.

So fashionable a wedding naturally called forth the comments of the newspapers and the envy of many of their readers. Mr and Mrs Corbet, though they could give no fortune to the bride, chose to dazzle the eyes of the world by a splendid trousseau ; and Emma, the appliances and means of whose vanity had hitherto been limited, was justified in the inference that the grand object of matrimony is to exchange tiffany for velvet, and jacconot for brocade. During the month that preceded her nuptials, she

was continually summoned from the side of her adoring Hillingdon, to try on dresses or decide upon the comparative shades of a satin. She heard of *nothing* but finery!—and the point lace of her wedding-gown was far more voluminously discussed in her hearing than the duties of the holy estate into which she was about to enter.

Her mother exulted loudly, indeed, in the excellence of the match, while her father protested that Emma was a devilish lucky girl; but as no mention of Lord Hillingdon's personal qualities entered into their enumeration of the advantages of the connexion, the bride was left to conclude that the chief part of her good fortune consisted in the coronet embroidered on her cambric handkerchiefs and pin-cushion covers, and the case of family jewels reported to be resetting for her use.

Emma Corbet was not yet eighteen; and her first season in town, which was to be her last, had not destroyed the simplicity of mind

arising from the previous seventeen passed almost exclusively in the dull school-room of her father's obscure residence at Hindon Manor. Drilled into a prodigious waste of useless knowledge and a thousand trivial pursuits, by a governess selected by Mrs Corbet on account of the slightness of her salary, the young girl welcomed her introduction into society as the means of escape from Miss Rickets; and even rejoiced in the prospect of her aristocratic alliance, chiefly as relieving her from all chance of a return to Hindon, where three younger sisters were being persecuted according to the utmost rigour of the law of governesses.

The Corbets were people who did nothing to conciliate the confidence of their children. Their main object in life was to appropriate a small income to the best advantage; and enable their offspring to push their own way in the world, and take as early a flight as possible from the parent nest. They were pleased

to find their children, like their partridges, strong on the wing.

But although it is the custom to portray all persons whose affections are neglected in early life, as having a prodigious fund of unbroached sensibility ready to lavish on the first person ambitious of their love, there cannot be a greater mistake. The heart requires almost as much education as the mind. People accustomed to see no importance ascribed to the exercise of the affections, become gradually inaccessible to their influence; and Emma Corbet knew nothing of the happiness derivable from the gentler sympathies of human nature. The only misery she had ever heard bewailed, was poverty; the only possessions she had ever heard coveted, were equipages, jewels, a good house in town, and a fine seat in the country. It was but natural, therefore, that she should behold in Lord Hillingdon, the "fortunate accident" that was to confer these blessings on herself;

rather than a frank, reckless, warm-hearted, good-humoured young man, who, overlooking her want of fortune and connexion, and worshipping her beauty, was eager to place in her keeping the honours of his future life.

Mr Corbet complained grievously of the indifference evinced by Lord Hillingdon towards the progress of his new carriages, and the terms of his new settlements ; and Mrs Corbet was often indignant at his exactions upon Emma's time and attention, to the detriment of the rival claims of milliners and mantua-makers. But Emma was too accustomed to find her girlish errors magnified into crimes by her parents, to feel alarmed by their accusations against the volatility of her future lord ; and accompanied him eventually to St George's Church, satisfied that it would be no very difficult matter to be happy as the wife of a peer of the realm, with twenty thousand a year, such a profusion of fine jewels, and so hearty a laugh.

Released from the durance of an unhappy home, she soon gave way to the exuberance of her girlish spirits. The united ages of the bride and bridegroom did not amount to forty years; the hereditary legislator and dignified peeress being in fact nothing more than an ill-educated girl and boy, intent upon the pursuit of selfish enjoyment.

Still, wherever they went, they made a favourable impression. Both were young and ingenuous;—Lady Hillingdon pretty in her person, and Lord Hillingdon gentlemanly in his manners. Emma, who persevered in her intention of keeping as far as possible away from Hindon after her marriage, made the *amende honorable* to her parents by inviting her next sister, Sophia, to pass the following season with her in town, and promoting her interests in life by exhibiting the charms of a new Miss Corbet at balls, operas, and déjeuners; while her lord, as keen a sportsman as he had been an impassioned lover, rendered

Hillingdon Hall the pleasantest and most hospitable seat in his native county ;—accepted the mastership of the hounds, and converted his home into an hotel for the benefit of all the fox-hunters of his acquaintance.

Thus engrossed, the husband by country sports, the wife by London pleasures, they had no leisure to regret the want of children, during the first three years. But hounds and hospitality,—opera-boxes and fêtes—create inroads into a larger income than that of Lord Hillingdon. On the fourth season after their union, though the Corbets (with two unmarried daughters to be quartered upon her) represented the impossibility of Emma's remaining all the year round in Lancashire, Lord Hillingdon represented with equal firmness the impossibility of engaging a house in London; and it was then that her ladyship began, for the first time, to fancy that a nursery might form an amusing occupation for her leisure. Lord Hillingdon, absorbed in

field sports, could no longer be reckoned upon as a companion; and the neighbourhood being a London-going neighbourhood, Emma had no one, during the session or season, to whom she could display her finery or unfold her gossip.

No sooner had she formed a wish for children, than destiny, which seemed to take delight in favouring her ambitions, announced the prospect of an heir. Her lord, who had begun to look with animosity upon a certain Frank Joddrell, his cousin and heir presumptive, congratulated himself on the change of family politics; and in due time, midsummer brought the promised olive-branch to Hillingdon Hall, and the jaded postern the family physician, to delight the young couple with prognostications that the babe would be the finest in the county, and an honour to their ancient house.

CHAPTER II.

Though the same sun, with all-diffusive rays,
Blush in the rose and in the diamond blaze,
We prize the efforts of his stronger power
And justly set the gem above the flower.

POPE.

ON the same midsummer afternoon that witnessed the birth of an heir to the house of Hillingdon, a day labourer who was assisting to get in the hay of farmer Hobbs at Bilston, was arrested by a ragged little girl of eleven or twelve years old, with an entreaty that he would hurry home, because "Mother was poorly."

The helot was, of course, too conscious of his duty to hurry home, or anywhere else, while the farmer's hay-cart was waiting in the

field, and the sky threatening over head. A thunder-storm was evidently impending; and the roar of old Hobbs's indignation would have mingled with that of heaven's artillery, had Richard Cleve presumed to leave his work two hours before the appointed time. The poor man desired his little girl therefore to go and fetch neighbour Grabbin and the parish doctor; entertaining no doubt that on his arrival at home, after his work was done, the event, of annual occurrence in his family, would have yielded him a seventh child to provide for, in addition to the half-dozen already extant. He seemed to work the harder on farmer Hobbs's account, in consideration of the increasing wants which such an augmentation of his family must entail upon himself.

Very little did poor Cleve anticipate that the crisis which rendered him again a father, was to render him a widower! As evening came on, and the big drops of the storm fell

silently and heavily like tears from the sullen sky upon the fragrant haycocks collected in huge heaps in the meadow, there came a second messenger—one of his own ragged boys—inviting him (in a message from neighbour Grabbin, rendered almost incomprehensible by the breathless haste of the child) to lose no time, for “the good ’oman was badly.” Five minutes afterwards, as he was anxiously waiting the arrival of the farmer in the meadow to obtain the leave of absence which the coming rain rendered a matter of so much moment, the rusty suit of the parish doctor suddenly exhibited its professional grimness at the gate; where, having beckoned the husbandman from his toils, he added to the intelligence that “all was over”—the apostrophe of “God’s will be done:—”

The sable practitioner seemed to fancy that by this pious figure of speech he had intimated the worst to Richard Cleve.

“But Margery, sir?” persisted the poor

man, doffing his straw hat to the man scientific, in spite of the thickening rain-drops,—“Margery?”—

“Your wife, my good fellow, is at rest.”

“The best thing as could hap to her,” responded Cleve, believing the doctor to announce that his patient was enjoying a comfortable sleep; “and if so be we *was* to lose the babby, why we’ve children enow already;—and, as your honour says, God’s will be done.”—

“Hasten home, then, to the house, my good friend,” added the doctor, gratified to find the surviving moiety of his deceased patient reconcile himself so readily to his loss. “Neighbour Grabbin is sorely put to it for help; and the children are crying round her for their mother.”

Released from all fear of his employer by the doctor’s injunction, Cleve trudged away to his hovel, completely led astray by the metaphorical genius of the too fine-spoken

apothecary. But on its very threshold, alas! he was startled by the frantic outcries of his bereaved family; and the first object that met his view within was poor Margery, lying with closed eyes upon her bed of anguish, insensible for evermore to the wants and troubles she had confronted with so brave a spirit. The kisses of her younger children, who had climbed up to wake her by their endearments from that unnatural sleep, produced no change upon that death-cold face; and new-born twins, who were venting their feeble cries on neighbour Grabbin's lap in the adjoining shed, afforded a wretched exchange to Richard Cleve for the kind, frugal, industrious wife who had been a blessing to his necessitous home.

He saw how it was. In the flurry of the unexpected event, the nurse and doctor had been intent only on the preservation of these two wretched infants! Had *he* been there, things would have been otherwise. The tender

wife,—the valuable mother, would not have been neglected. Had *he* been there, Margery might have been saved. But it was too late: and, weak as a child and pale as ashes, the strong man sank on his knees by the bedside; and took into his hard, sunburnt hands the cold hand which daily labour, unremitting from the cradle to the coffin, had rendered almost as callous as his own.

Had an intruder of high degree sought shelter at that moment in the cabin from the storm that was raging without, he might have moralized upon the destinies of one whose childhood had never sported,—whose youth had never smiled,—and whose maturity had been a perpetual struggle with the common wants of nature, not only in her own person, but in those of the beings she had brought into a world of woe.

But Richard Cleve was happily less comprehensive in his philosophy. *He* looked upon her as she lay, calm and with an un-

wonted smile upon her care-worn countenance ; and invoking her as the best of wives, mothers, daughters, neighbours, Christians, felt that the tears were wiped for ever from her face,—that her probation was past,—that she had entered into her rest,—that she was crowned with her crown of immortality. It was only himself that he pitied ;—himself and the eight motherless children who were moaning around him for comfort and for bread.

But what is called “the luxury of woe,” is no luxury for the million. It was not a moment for sensibility. The dead and the living alike claimed attendance ;—the motherless, foodless infants,—the mother beyond the reach of hunger or pain. Throughout that stormy night, while the thunder roared, and the blue lightning, flashing through the casement upon the face of the dead, overpowered the fleckering rushlight burning between the bed of death and the wooden cradle wherein the two helpless innocents

were alternately placed, Richard Cleve forgot his own sorrows while exerting himself for the sake of those who had now no other friend in the world.

At daybreak, he set forth to the workhouse to ask a parish coffin for the good woman whom, in her lifetime, his own labours had not sufficed to maintain; and to settle with the overseers that on the morrow she should be hid in the dust. For the poor, who resign so much of which we take no account, are denied even the solace of mourning. The crowded cottage of the day-labourer is no safe shelter for the ashes of the dead; and it was a relief, even to those who loved her, when Margery Cleve was deposited in the grave, and her survivors left at leisure to bestow their whole attention upon those she had left motherless.

CHAPTER III.

As those that are born to estates neglect industry and have no business but to spend, he, being born to honour, believes himself to be no further concerned than to consume and waste it.—BUTLER.

THE exclamations which, day after day, were destined to delight the convalescence of Lady Hillingdon,—that her babe was the sweetest of babes, her boy the most promising of boys,—were more founded on fact than is generally the case where the infant is clothed in purple and fine linen, and the mother, the lady of a lord.

Master Joddrell had been already baptized by the then regal name of George ;—baptized, not christened ;—for the christening of an heir to a noble house is a matter of too much moment to be hurried over at a moment's notice, with only the parish priest to officiate,

and the family to witness the officiation. Though Mr Lechmere might do very well to *baptize* the Honourable George, a bishop must solemnize the rite where royalty was sponsor.

Ten months afterwards, therefore, when the probability of a second accession to the family, in the midst of the session, determined Lord Hillingdon to engage for one more season a house in town, the 'Morning Post' was authorized to announce the grand celebration, crowned by a banquet and ball, which rendered the boy a Christian, and his nurse the proudest of nurses.

On the point of becoming again a mother, Lady Hillingdon lavished on this memorable occasion all the fopperies and fineries which maternal vanity could suggest; and, whether in St James's square or at Hillingdon Hall, was careful to render the boy as much a source of expense to his family, and trouble to those who had the care of him, as the eldest son of an aristocratic house has a right divine to be.

It was astonishing, indeed, that such a supererogation of pains rendered him neither sick nor sorry, for a finer little fellow was never seen; and when, at six years old, he bestrode a Shetland pony, of which the mane and tail swept the fashionable dust of Hyde park, every knowing groom and coachman of May-fair turned round to applaud the ease and spirit of Master Joddrell's seat, and predict that he would turn out the right thing, and become "a good 'un" in time.

But, while the heir of the house of Hillingdon was thus progressing, the house itself exhibited considerable dilapidation. Ten years of ill-assorted matrimony had deteriorated the very nature of Emma and her husband. Their uncultivated minds, like other desert spots, were throwing up weeds and thistles. At eight-and-twenty, Lady Hillingdon was a flirt and a coquette, given over to vanity and folly: while, at thirty, Lord Hillingdon allowed his sportsmanship to degenerate into

a profession. His lordship was now on the turf. Tattersall's and the Jockey Club had made him a London man, though Parliament and the Corbet family could *not*. His days and nights were now wasted in clubs and betting-stands, training-stables and gunsmiths' shops; and every twentieth phrase that proceeded from his lips included a bet.

If misery make a man acquainted with strange bedfellows, horse-flesh makes him familiar with still stranger. Hillingdon, at the period of his marriage so gentlemanly in his deportment, so select in his acquaintance, was now the associate of grooms and scamps. He had not courage to shrink from contact with vices to which his follies were so miserably akin; and in pocket, as in reputation, he was considerably out at elbows. His income was dipped,—his estates mortgaged. The fine ancestral oaks of Hillingdon Hall were gone; and (as Mrs Corbet often remarked to her husband in the frequent

bursts of indignation at the disregard with which they were treated by Lord and Lady Hillingdon,—the old house was beginning to look like a manufactory,—standing alone in the centre of the naked park. There was something, indeed, almost amounting to exultation in the tone in which she compared its manifest degradation with the flourishing prosperity of Shrub's Hill, the seat of the thriving merchant by whom their second daughter, Sophia, had been raised to the presidency of one of the most high-gilt mansions of Portland place, and one of the snugest properties in the money-growing county of Surrey.

“What are you going to do with yourself, this autumn?” demanded Mrs Corbet of Lady Hillingdon, on the eve of departing for Hindon Manor, after a season spent in attempting, on a reduced scale, for her two younger daughters, the system of London manœuvring which had succeeded so well for their elder sisters.

“ I hardly know,” was her ladyship’s languid reply; “ Hillingdon is off to the moors. From thence, he will proceed to Doncaster, and the October meeting. So I think I shall get through my time at Cowes, till it is time for Brighton.”

“ You have no idea, then, of going into Lancashire this year ?”

“ Neither this year, nor any other, so long as I can avoid it. The place is so dull, and the people so discontented ! One never hears of anything at Hillingdon but distress !”

“ Distress which, if on the spot, you might perhaps alleviate !” retorted her mother.

“ I have no pretension to set up as a redresser of national grievances. I prefer Cowes. The children want bathing, and Lady Ursula Wainwright will be there (Captain Wainwright has just got into the yacht club); after which, we all remove to Brighton for the winter.”

“ Not yet tired of Brighton !” was Mrs Corbet’s peevish rejoinder.

“On the contrary, I like it better every year. Where is one half so well amused, in the way of winter residence? Hillingdon will be at Melton, and I must divert myself during his absence as well as I can. Besides, I want to put George to school;—George is growing the plague of the house!”

“And of every other he enters!” added his unmerciful grandmamma. “But I would not give much for the improvement he is likely to derive from a Brighton preparatory school.”

“Everybody’s eldest son goes to a Brighton preparatory school now; and what else could I possibly do with him?”

“Send him at once to Eton. George is eleven years old,—and ought——”

“To run the risk of being killed by way of being made hardy?”—interrupted Lady Hillingdon. “No, no! Mr Dawdle’s is just the place for a boy fresh from the hands of the nursery governess; and, two years hence, when he is a little more advanced (for at

present, thanks to Mademoiselle Mathilde's inattention, he scarcely knows how to read),— it will be time enough for Eton. He has a capital seat, and was out on his pony, with the buckhounds, several times last year ; and, I quite agree with Hillingdon, that it is time enough for all the rest of his education.”

Grandmamma, if of a different way of thinking, avoided useless contention by holding her peace. But the principles of the Reverend Dickinson Dawdle so thoroughly coincided with those of the mother of his new pupil, that George Joddrell found the silver rule of the preparatory school quite as supportable as that of Mademoiselle Mathilde. He learnt no more than he liked, and he liked to learn nothing at all. His half holidays were converted into whole ones ; and his holidays, semi or entire, being passed at home (where he rode on the downs with Captain Wainwright and danced through the juvenile fêtes of a Brighton winter, which lasts from Sep-

tember till May),—at thirteen years of age, when sentenced by his father to Eton, George had managed to forget, under his fashionable tutor, the little learning previously acquired under the thread-paper government of the nursery governess.

But George had been imbibing, in the interim, other lessons than those conned in a primer or gradus. While his sisters Mary and Agatha remained immured in the school-room, the son and heir was a guest at his father's dinner table, a loiterer in his mother's boudoir; where that worldly knowledge which never can be attained too late, had become as familiar to the man-boy as to the most experienced loungeur of St James's street. The dissoluteness of his father's boon companions was not only fully unveiled to him, but all the shabbiness of the prodigal—all the mean evasions of the *roué*. George was accustomed to hear it made a matter of wonder, how such a fellow "got on"—how such another

would "get off;" — and to admire by what paltry shifts men with five hundred per annum achieve the expenditure of five thousand, without forfeiting their life to the laws, or (which was accounted of more importance in the circle in which *he* moved) their place in society.

But while thus indulging in excesses beyond his scope of enjoyment, the life of the pampered child was far from happy. The home of an embarrassed family is distracted by a thousand feuds, and rendered comfortless by a thousand discrepancies. It was not alone the negligence of servants and impertinence of tradespeople which demonstrated that scarcely a fourth of Lord Hillingdon's nominal twenty thousand a year remained at his disposal, to meet the expenses of his original establishment. The father, a disappointed gambler,—the mother, a faded coquette,—destitute of resources in their own minds to meet the reverses of fortune their imprudence

had created, were peevish and resentful, even with their favourite child. His boyish faults were either disregarded or resisted with undue violence ; and he was alternately caressed as a toy, worshipped as an heir, and spurned as the scape-goat of indigestion and discontent.

His mind corrupted, and his heart hardened by such a system of education, the boy had long ceased to care for anything but himself. While catering for his pleasures as cunningly as an egotist of five-and-thirty, he was a scientific epicure at an age when other lads are susceptible of only hunger and thirst ; and on arriving at Eton, was welcomed by acclamation into the most exclusive coterie of the 'juvenile exclusives, and degraded to the lowest post of juvenile duncehood. Though a child, he was noticed by the "Eton men." But among the Eton boys, he passed for a sad blockhead.

CHAPTER IV.

To know, and by knowledge lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying of its own divine essence, is the grand object of learning.—Sir P. SIDNEY.

THE life of Richard Cleve and his family, meanwhile, was a perpetual struggle. Even with parish help,—for to parish help the father of eight hungering children is forced to have recourse,—it was a hard matter to bear up against the winter's cold, the summer's necessities. The difficulty of supplying even the scantiest food and raiment to so large a number, was an anxiety that would have kept the husbandman's pillow sleepless, had not hard labour relieved its own exertions by yielding untroubled rest. Nature stood the poor man's friend. He lay down on his flock bed when the night time came, and in five minutes was

asleep; dreaming of summer sunshine, green pastures, fertile corn-fields, plenty and peace;—undisturbed by the nightmare and restlessness entailed on Lord Hillingdon by his French cook and half-dozen *entrées*;—and ready to rise and devour, with renovated appetite, the morsel of home-baked bread constituting his frugal breakfast.

But Cleve's household, humble as it was, was regulated with decency. A widowed sister, poor as himself, had taken up her abode with him to bring up his motherless children; an industrious woman, who, if unable to render much assistance to their learning, did wonders for their moral education by teaching them to suffer with patience, labour with diligence, and exercise the first great social duty,—to bear and forbear. Scanty as was their food, they were instructed to consider it a blessing worthy of thanksgiving; hard as was their bed, it was consecrated by a nightly prayer for the protection of heaven.

It was not often that Cleve or aunt Morris grew impatient with the children. Cleve felt he had no right to visit upon his orderly, submissive family, the poverty they had no voluntary share in creating. A warm-hearted man, he loved the little harmless souls that looked up to him for bread; and hard as it sometimes was to provide it, would have lamented the loss of one of those curly-headed ragamuffins from his board, as truly as any parent able to lavish the good things of this world upon a petted favourite.

There were two, however, among his offspring, who afforded a considerable addition to the cares and crosses of aunt Morris:— Dick, the eldest boy, who, in spite of all her admonitions, displayed an uneradicable propensity to idleness and truancy; and little Jervis, the youngest of poor Margery's fatal twins. Providence had relieved the needy household of the still more weakly brother; but Jervis struggled on, — puny, fretful,

miserable,—a burthen to all,—a comfort to none. A sickly child is a grievance even in the most prosperous household. What is it in the crowded hovel of the labouring poor?

Time, however, did its worst and best for the family. Three years after his mother's death, Dick Cleve, after being apprenticed by the parish to a shoemaker less indulgent than his father, took his final departure from Bilston, leaving behind no blacker stain on his character than that of being an incorrigible idler; while Jervis attained sufficient strength of body and intelligence of mind, to dispense with the unremitting personal attendance of one of his sisters. The two eldest were out at service with neighbouring farmers. There remained at home, besides the sickly twin, only his sister Jane, a year older; and Jack and Jem, two lads of ten and twelve, who assisted their father in his task-work, and were not more troublesome than they could help to the rest of the family.

Jervis and Jane were thus left to enjoy together such pastimes and pleasures of childhood as are within reach of the penniless. But these are perhaps more numerous than the many-pennied take into account. Cleve's cottage was situated at the base of a ridge of chalky downs, just where a green platform of verdure, rising above the margin of a rapid brook, afforded space for the site of a small compact village; of which an ancient flint-built church formed the apex, and Cleve's miserable tenement, with its garden sloping towards the brook, the humble base. A ragged copse skirted the village towards the east; while westward, between the churchyard and the precipitous hills, lay a small green,—the holiday-home of the village,—fringed on one side by the lime-trees of the churchyard; and ornamented by a single spreading oak-tree, apparently coeval with the church itself; somewhat staghorned indeed, but extending the massive shade of its

lower branches halfway across the green, as if to protect the sports of the village children.

But Bilston Green was not the favourite resort of the little Cleves. Conscious of his feebleness, poor Jervis was not fond of con-sorting with the hardy throng; and no sooner was he of an age to roam unheeded, than he prevailed upon his docile blue-eyed Jenny to abandon the old oak and smooth grave-stones of the churchyard for the open downs, or the furzy, heathy paths of Bilston Copse. Never apart, the little ragged wanderers were met at all hours, eager and sprightly, in these lonely ways. For with a wood and a brook, abounding in birds, insects, fishes, wild flowers, wild fruit, fine air and liberty,—what child has not wherewithal to be happy?

But while Jervis Cleve found sufficient occupation for a summer's day in watching the nest in the sloe-bush, the gossamer wings flitting among the water-weeds, the bul-rushes in blossom, the blind mole at his

work, or the wild bee at her pastime,—his father predicted evil days in store for the sickly child. His wan cheeks and feeble gestures rendered it apparent to the hard-working parent that “they should never make a man of him;” that is, a man according to the appreciation of the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Neither Richard nor aunt Morris regarded the poor child they had reared with so much care, the less for his infirmities; nor was the pity evinced towards Jervis by Jem the cowboy, and Jack the hedger and ditcher, overpoweringly tinged with contempt. Still, they admitted within the boy’s hearing and elsewhere, that “Jervy would never earn his livelihood,—that there was nothing to be done with him,—that if his father were taken from him, he must away to the poor-house with little Jane;” and Jervis was already aware that he was as unavailable to the sole purposes of existence with which *he* was acquainted, as the blear-

eyed old women and drivelling old men whom he saw tottering occasionally out of the hateful gateway marked by village reprobation as the place where pauper bread is grudgingly doled out to the useless classes of the community.

But though humbled, the little fellow was not *humiliated* by the fact. He knew that his sickliness was an infliction, not a fault; and as the mighty will which condemned him to be a cripple, was the same which bestowed upon him the golden summer with its glories, the atmosphere alive with the song of birds, and fragrant with the breath of flowers,—he trusted he had a friend in his inscrutable chastizer,—that there might be compensations yet in store.—But how were these amended destinies to be accomplished?

At that time, the cry for educating the poor had not gone forth in the land. Like other valuable acts of reform, it is the growth of the present century. Bilston had its dame-school indeed, and the dame-school its dozen

or score of scholars, according to the rise and fall of village prosperity. But the Cleves had never risen to the grandeur of school-goers. From Dick the runaway to poor Jervis, they were guiltless of all learning save what is to be conned in the woods and fields. When lo! just as Jervis attained his tenth year, and forfeited his dearest happiness in life by the necessity that Jane, at twelve years old, should renounce her summer rambles, and lend her aid to the household labours of aunt Morris, Squire Hecksworth of Bilston Hall, a family seat about a mile from the village, brought home with him a wife, who (in spite of the opposition of the superannuated curate representing the pluralist incumbent) thought proper to amuse the leisure of her early married life, by setting up a Sunday School.

Mrs Hecksworth was an amiable young woman, disposed to do her best in this world, in the hope of enjoying her best in the next:

as yet undamped in her ardour for improvement by the disappointments awaiting all reformers of existing abuses. But like most young people, she required a too immediate fruition of her labours. She allowed no time for the working of her system. No sooner was her school-house built, and supplied with master, mistress, and horn-books, than she expected that the orchards of Bilston Hall would cease to be robbed;—that there would be no more playing at chuckfarthing in the churchyard, — no more pelting of Farmer Hobbs's ducks in the pond!—

But unless so desirable a consummation could be accomplished by the mere exterior of the four-and-twenty well-varnished, calf-bound testaments, which the squire's lady had sent for from town to await the future scholarship of her protégés, it was difficult to imagine on what she grounded her expectations. At present, nothing was accomplished by her attempt but to render

a couple of dozen happy village-children sulky and discontented. The path of learning, even when rolled and watered, rarely proves attractive to the feet of ingenuous youth; still less, the peremptory charity school, with its briery, miry ways. Poor Mrs Hecksworth, while presiding over the weekly catechism, prepared to meet with grateful smiles and prompt intelligence, was grievously harassed by the sullenness of the dirty, stupid, ill-conditioned brats she had undertaken to train into Newtons and Hannah Mores. The boys scratched their heads when she addressed them; the girls trod on her toes when she caressed them; and instead of the picturesque position the inexperienced matron had proposed to herself, after the model of some Pietà by Vandyke, or marble effigy of "melting Charity" by Roubilliac, she was revolted by the nastiness of her cherubs; and actually fainted one sultry Sunday in July, oppressed by the unsavoury vapours of her rural Lyceum.

It happened that the little urchin whose ready zeal supplied his benefactress with a cup of water on this ominous occasion, was the same pale-faced child, whose mild dark eyes she had so often found fixed upon her own, when administering reproof or exhortation to the class. For, while Mrs Hecksworth shrank from contact with the squalid practical misery she had summoned around her, her own graceful person, and rich attire, exercised a spell of enchantment over the children. Some wondered at her, — some envied her, — some almost hated her for her supernatural elegance. But Jervis Cleve worshipped her, as the patriarchs may have worshipped those angel guests who walked with them side by side upon the earth. Imbued with that passionate love of beauty engendered by early and undisturbed contemplation of the works of nature, the lovely and refined woman was to him as a revealed divinity. He sometimes crept near enough to

touch the hem of a garment, which, as poor Hood describes it,

Seemed wove of lily leaves,
It was so pure and fine ! —

He even followed her footsteps at a distance, as she crossed the green, on her way to the fine carriage drawn up in the shade, to inhale the perfume of violets emitted by her dress ; and when he saw her turn so deathly pale and sink back in her chair, the tears gathered in his dark eyes as he flew to his father's neighbouring cottage, to obtain from aunt Morris the only restorative within his reach.

From that day, Jervis Cleve became a favourite with Mrs Hecksworth. His father was spoken to. He was employed on week days to weed the garden at the Hall ; and the lady occasionally stopped there in her summer evening walk, even after that walk was accompanied by a lovely infant of her own, to bestow a kind word upon

the sickly boy, for whom she had provided the sole occupation for which he was capable. At one time, she proposed to take him into the gardener's house, as a permanent servant. But here, the squire wisely interfered ; reminding her, not only that young Cleve would never attain sufficient strength to fulfil the harder tasks of such a calling ; but that the reading, writing, and ciphering he had acquired with such remarkable facility, might hereafter qualify him for a higher as well as more appropriate vocation.

“ Tomlinson the schoolmaster tells me the lad is a wonder for his years,” observed Mr Hecksworth—“ he seems to have run away with the faculties of the whole village ; for a stupider little set of oafs than your scholars, my dear, I really never saw.”

“ It is not the education bestowed upon

them that has rendered them so," replied his wife, pettishly.

"Nor is it Tomlinson's teaching which made your infirm boy a genius."

"It has made him fitter to support the calamities of his condition," remonstrated the lady.

"I doubt it. But no matter! I am not going to fight our battles over again upon that point," said he.

"And pray what battles have you and Maria been fighting?" inquired Mrs Hecksworth's brother, Sir William Davenport, who during the foregoing discussion had been absorbed in the perusal of the morning paper, as they all sat together in the library at Bilston Hall.

"Education, or no education."—

"Education of the poor? Ay, ay!— Maria's a theorist;— Maria's an enlightenment-arian!—Much good may it do her!"

cried Sir William, a stanch Tory of the times when Toryism and darkness were over the land.

“ It *will* do *her* good !—I never doubted the good which Maria *herself* would derive from the exercise of her charitable impulses,” observed the squire, in fond vindication of his pretty wife ; “ the question is what good it will do the poor children she is cramming with accomplishments. In my opinion, you might as well stuff a green goose with pearls ! We’ve got a poor sickly lad here in the garden, whom the schoolmaster swears is a genius ; and who, some day or other, no doubt, will be borrowing Simson’s Euclid off the shelf yonder without leave ; and forgetting to return it, instead of watering her geraniums.”

“ You conceive, then, that reading the Bible will undermine his principles ?”

“ The Bible was read to him, from the

pulpit, from the moment he had ears to hear. But I question whether——”

“Did you not promise, just now, not to fight over again that often fought battle?” interrupted his wife with a smile. “Nothing you can say will induce me to believe that I have injured my protégé; and if, in the sequel, he should prove competent to hold a situation more fitted to him than the day-labours beyond his strength——”

“Pray how old’s the boy?”—abruptly inquired Sir William Davenport.

“Nearly fourteen.—He is one of seven children of a hard-working day-labourer, a pains-taking, quick-witted little fellow, of excellent disposition. No one has a word to say against him, except that he is puny and undersized.”

“In that case, Maria,” interrupted the blunt baronet, “I shall have a presentation next month for Fairford free school,—

as far as learning goes, as good as Eton or Harrow. If I'd a son of my own, I wouldn't mind sending him there,—capital foundation, exhibitions to both universities! and if you've a mind to go to a trifle of expense in fitting out your protégé, the presentation's yours. I'd nobody in my eye for it but one of my butler's sons—a sad lout,—not likely to do me or himself credit; and by good luck, I've never dropped a word to Corkscrew of my intentions."

Such an offer was only to be accepted with gratitude. The heart of Mrs Hecksworth rejoiced, not alone for charity's sake, but in the hope that her sick boy's advancement would tend to support her theories against the inconvincability of her husband; and on the morrow, the squire's lady proceeded in state to the village, to announce the good news to the Cleves.

But for the second time in her career of beneficence, Mrs Hecksworth was fated to dis-

appointment ! Instead of finding her proposition received with ecstasies by the boy, and thankfulness by the whole family, aunt Morris listened unmoved to the recapitulation of the advantages awaiting him, while Jenny retreated into the darkest corner of the cottage, to dry her eyes with her apron. Even Jervis seemed in despair.

“ You see, my lady,” faltered aunt Morris, when at length she recovered her surprise sufficient to command her powers of utterance,—“ this last lad be all the comfort poor Richard’s got left in the world. Dick, what runn’d away, has never been heard of. Jack be gone a-hedging in the low country, and Jem be working at the mill at Bewchester, a matter of four mile off. Both lasses be in sarvice in Lon’on town ; and not a soul have we got about the place, to do a turn for us, but poor Jervy ! Jervy looks to the garden, at odd times, and does what mendin’s wantin’ to the furnitur’. Brother’s

never chose to set his face again schoolin' and the like, — first 'ecause 'twas got for nothing, and did no harm to nubbody ;—and next, 'ecause we never lost sight of the lad. But as to sending him two days' journey across the country, to a factoring town like Fairford, — to lose his health, maybe, and get out of sight of work——”

Again, Mrs Hecksworth condescended to inform her that Fairford was only distant forty miles from Bilston.

“ And that's a two-day *foot* distance,” interposed, aunt Morris, contemplating only her own occasional visits to her favourite nephew. Even the worldly advantages contingent on the purposed presentation, recapitulated by the benefactress, were Hebrew-Greek to the old woman ;—nor could Jenny, who stood listening afar off, bring herself to understand how languages no longer talked on the habitable globe were to be made available to her poor brother.

Even Jervis Cleve, when admitted to the conference, began to struggle visibly with contending emotions.—The lad's attachment to his native village partook of the passionate nature of his temperament. Bilston, with its woods and waters, was to him as the very breath of his being. For him, there was no world elsewhere ! He could conjecture no other brook than the clear stream rattling over the shallows below their garden-hedge ; no other copse than the wilderness of golden furze and birch and maple bushes, skirting that brawling stream. Nothing in the wide world could be so beautiful as Bilston ; and as to Fairford, he had heard of it as a region of smoke and filth, whose grim-visaged inhabitants scarcely resembled the human kind.

The boy was not at present susceptible of the master-workings of ambition. The seed of emulation was not yet sown. He knew nothing of worldly distinctions. He

knew not even the extent of his own ignorance. Reading and writing constituted in his estimation the height of mental accomplishment. All the poetry he wot of lay in the hedge of hawthorn, and the hyssop on the wall ; and Squire Hecksworth's head-gardener was in *his* eyes as great a man as the Archbishop of Canterbury in those of the grey-headed curate.

The only thing to reconcile his mind to his good fortune, was the fact that it emanated from Madam Hecksworth. But then, it was to exile him from the presence of his benefactress, and deprive him of the honourable preferment of weeding her garden ! It was plain, the squire's lady regarded him with ill-will ; or she would not drive him forth from her garden of Eden !

For a moment, indeed, she felt almost inclined to exile him from her presence in right earnest.—The impenetrable stupidity of the whole family was *too* provoking ! Still,

allowance must be made for their ignorance of the good intended ; and when, at length, Richard Cleve plodded home from work, to give ear to the lady's arguments, and understand just so much as that Jervis was to be no further expense or trouble to his family, but to be put in the way of earning good bread for himself and *them*, he issued his paternal decree ; and lo ! five weeks afterwards, young Cleve laid his throbbing head and swollen eyes upon the truckle-bed of the college dormitory of Fairford School.

His foot was on the first round of the ladder of preferment !

CHAPTER V.

Hee knowes no manne that is not generally knowne. His wit, like the marigold, openeth with the sunne, and therefore he riseth not before twelve of the clock. Hee putteth more confidence in his wordes than meaning; and in his pronuntiation than in his wordes. Hee followes nothing but inconstancie, honours nothing but fortune. Loves nothing. The sustenance of his discourse is newes; and his censure, like a shot, depends upon the charging.

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

“UPON my life, Sophy, your nephew seems to be going it at a famous rate!” observed Mr Clutterbuck, of Portland place, to his wife, one morning at breakfast, as he laid aside the ‘Morning Post,’ which, among other “fashionable movements,” was pleased to chronicle the doings and misdoings of the Hon. George Joddrell.

“What has he been doing *now*?” inquired Mrs Clutterbuck, little suspecting how much importance was imparted to the young *roué* in

the estimation of her two daughters, Emma and Caroline, by these recitals of his wild exploits.

“Oh! nothing particular,—nothing worth speaking of;—only smashed the carriage of the Dean of Buckingham, in driving the Oxford mail into town, along the Uxbridge road.”

“No great harm in that!” said Mrs Clutterbuck, coolly. “In *his* rank of life, one can’t expect him to grow up a milk-sop!”

“By all accounts, brandy-sop would be nearer the mark!” replied Mr Clutterbuck. “Lord and Lady Hillingdon have a world to answer for, in the way they have reared that young man! Though their recent accession of fortune has set them afloat for a time, we all know it can’t last; and then what’s to become of this hopeful of their’s? He is fit for nothing—absolutely *nothing*—but to drive mail-coaches; and will scarcely choose to get his living in *that* line of business!”

“Get his living!” echoed Mrs Clutterbuck, shrugging her shoulders. “What an expression! *Who* would suppose, my dear, that you were alluding to the heir of one of the most ancient peerages in the kingdom?”

“I wish his ancient peerage were likely to give him salt to his porridge!” retorted the husband.

“At all events,” said Mrs Clutterbuck, pettishly, “if Lord Hillingdon’s fortune *should* be a little injured by the turf——”

“The turf and every other species of wanton extravagance,” added Clutterbuck.

“He will be able, at any time, to provide suitably for his son. Nothing would be easier than for Lord Hillingdon to get him a diplomatic appointment.”

“And nothing more difficult than to persuade his son to accept it!”

“Necessity would soon *compel* him to do something for himself.”

“Just now, my love, you maintained that

no necessity existed! But granted even that Lord Hillingdon applied to government, and that government felt obliged to requite the slavishness of his vote for the last ten years, what place is this idle, ignorant, flighty, useless, young man, in any way qualified to hold?"—

"My cousin George speaks Italian and German like a native!" interposed Emma Clutterbuck.

"And because he can parrot a few phrases, caught from his courier, do you fancy him fit for an ambassador?"—retorted her father. "I will answer for it, the scurviest pen-mender in the Foreign office would put his inefficiency to the blush!"

"Emma does not mean that George's abilities *alone* would obtain him preferment," persisted mamma. "She has seen in the instance of your brothers, her excellent uncles, that abilities alone, unsupported by connexion, are a mere drug in the market. But she

justly supposes that with George's pretensions and distinguished appearance, he is likely to make some figure in the world."

"His *pretensions* I never disputed. As to his getting on in the world, I fancy it will be exactly at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, and on a coach-box."

"I know not why we trouble ourselves about his progress," cried Mrs Clutterbuck, with kindling eyes. "George is in no want of *our* patronage. He does not come near the house above once in six months."

"He might double the length of his absence without *my* missing him!" rejoined her husband. And when his daughters presumed to side with their mother, in defence of their fashionable cousin, he peremptorily ordered them out of the room.

There was certainly little beside the bond of kindred blood to promote a good understanding between George Joddrell and his rich and vulgar relations.

Once or twice in his summer vacations, indeed, when cantering along Portland place to keep an appointment with some Life Guards' chum in the Regent's park, he had recalled to mind that certain of his mother's kinsfolk had pitched their tents in that stony desert, and condescended to *bait* a quarter of an hour in the house; enchanting his aunt by his air of fashion, and his cousins by his tone of superlative impertinence.

Still, there was something in George that even Clutterbuck himself, the sturdy uncompromising monied man, could not treat with personal slight. The edge of the glittering article of fashionable hardware was too keen to be trifled with. The substance might not be deep, but the surface was polished into a mirror that reflected the defects and peculiarities of others so vividly as to make them turn away abashed. Insolently satirical, the easy assurance of his sarcasms did but increase their bitterness. Not a person upon earth of

whom he stood in awe! It is an afflicting result of the misconduct provoking the contempt of children towards their parents, that the first great duty of filial respect being infringed, no after-deference can be called into existence. Nature provides, for the good order of society, that unlimited veneration shall be testified by the child to the parents; and the child who has once felt itself *superior* to the author of its being, feels thenceforward superior to all the world! After despising his father and mother, a man will scarcely even “fear God,” or “honour the king.”

This contempt of all things, human and divine, was an evil which the Hillingdons themselves had entailed upon their son. It was not in the nature of things for the young man to look up with reverence to the gambler and horse-jockey, whose soul was engrossed by his club and stud;—a man whose word was disputed by all whose incredulity was beneath the convincing arguments of a duelling pistol;

and whose embarrassments he heard sneered at in places of resort where father and son should never meet or be named together!

Nor was it possible to regard with much filial affection a woman who left every sacred duty of nature unfulfilled;—who was no wife to her husband,—no mother to her daughters,—no mistress to her family; whose extravagance had doubled the embarrassments of Lord Hillingdon, and whose levity diminished his respectability. Young Joddrell had every pretext that a man not right-minded can entertain, to look down upon his parents. Even the sort of boyish predilection which, in spite of all, he *did* cherish for his mother, originated in admiration of her elegance and a recognition of her foolish indulgence of his follies, rather than in any worthier sentiment.

For, amid various indiscretions, the passion of Lady Hillingdon for her son remained predominant. She would have done anything

on earth for George, except deny herself the smallest selfish indulgence. Glorifying in his personal distinctions, and the singular shrewdness which enabled him to evade the well-merited stigma of ignorance, she looked upon him as destined, in spite of mortgaged estates, encumbered property, and rustication at the University, to retrieve the fallen credit of the family.

Her daughters, meanwhile, though past the usual age for being introduced into society, had not yet been presented:—Lady Hillingdon making the delicacy of her health a pretext for avoiding the glare of the great world, to which she did not choose to exhibit her altered face and tarnished splendour.

But the girls never repined. Mary and Agatha Joddrell had been so fortunate, while languishing under the neglect of their parents, as to fall into the hands of a governess qualified to supply the place of the best of mothers, and incited by heartfelt

compassion to perform towards them more than the ordinary duties of her calling. She made them not only accomplished, but good and happy. Born to better prospects in life, Mrs Fairfax had been schooled by the bitter lessons of adversity; and foreseeing for the girls under her charge a destiny more checkered than usually awaits the daughters of a peer of the realm, had prepared them to meet undismayed the storms of life, rather than to remain undazzled by its sunshine.

It is true that, during the reign of Mrs Fairfax in the school-room, prolonged by the inertness of Lady Hillingdon till Agatha was eighteen years of age, she was frequently reproached by her ladyship with incompetency for the task she had undertaken. Lady Hillingdon complained that Mary was far from a first-rate performer on the harp; that Agatha was unequal to take part in an amateur performance of Rossini's 'Barbiere,' got up at Brighton by some *dilettante* duchess; and

that neither of them displayed the least genius for tableaux or charades.

But when thus taxed with neglect of their education, Mrs Fairfax was never known to defend herself at the expense of the girls. *She* complained neither of their incapacity nor the obstacles she had encountered; the chief of which, by the way, was the difficulty of reconciling the lessons of virtue and wisdom she inculcated, with the example of their own family.

There was but one member of it, indeed, by whom her system of education was upheld. Mr Corbet, the grandfather of the girls, had become keenly sensitive, in his declining years, to the evils of the very different principles instilled into his own daughters. Deeply wounded by the conduct of Lady Hillingdon, and conscious that he was reaping the whirlwind where he had sowed the wind, he rejoiced to know that his granddaughters were reared in a different school; and when grand-

mamma announced one day at Hindon Manor that "thank God! the Hillingdons had dismissed their governess at last," her husband responded in a subdued voice—"Poor girls! they have lost their best friend!"

Such, however, was not their brother's view of the case.

"So, girls! you have thrown over your dragon, eh?" said George, stretching himself luxuriously on the sofa of his sisters' morning-room, the day after his arrival on a visit to Lady Hillingdon, immediately after his rustication at Oxford.

"Mrs Fairfax left us at Christmas," replied Agatha.

"And high time, too!—I fancy the governor would have cashiered her, years ago, had it been convenient to book up her arrears. Who ever heard of a girl of nineteen in leading strings! And you know, Mary, you *are* nineteen. You can't deceive *me*."

“ You deceive yourself, brother, I am twenty,—a year younger than yourself.”

“ True—I shall be of age in June. Who knows it better than I,—except perhaps the governor, who wants me to help him to square his accounts, by cheating myself of my birthright.”

“ And *shall* you assist my father ?” inquired Agatha, who, since the departure of Mrs Fairfax, had heard of little else from her mother but her father’s embarrassments, and the impending ruin of the family.

“ I shall assist *myself*.—There is no way I fancy of getting *my* debts paid, but helping the old boy to pay off his own. For though mine amount to hundreds where he will have to book up thousands, it would be the deuce of a thing, you know, to crush my own credit my first season in town. So to clear off old scores, and commence new ones, I shall give a lift to Lord Hillingdon.”

“ Thank heaven ! ” ejaculated Mary, who had been grieving bitterly over the intelligence of her father’s humiliations, tauntingly communicated by his wife.

“ But I can tell him, ’twill be the last time,” added George. “ The Hillingdon rent-roll will be as much reduced as I can afford to let *him* reduce it. That is the worst, you see, of having a father of forty-two, when one comes to be one-and-twenty. Lord Hillingdon has five-and-twenty years of folly before him ; whereas it would particularly suit my book to monopolize on my own account (now I am come to years of discretion) the extravagance of the family.”

“ In order that at forty-two *your* son may call you ‘ the old boy,’ and talk of you as an object of charity ? ”—remonstrated his sister.

“ No, Miss Mary ! ” said George, raising his handsome face from the sofa-cushion

on which he was lounging, and turning it with a smile towards his prosy sister ; “ I never intend to have a son. I am too poor to marry for love, — too proud to marry for money, — and too much attached to myself to throw myself away. By the way, I must tell you something supereminently capital. Those Clutterbuck people found me out last week, during the two days I spent in town on my way from Hillingdon hither, and insisted on my dining with them. Conceive that stupid woman ‘ Joddrelling ’ me the other night at the opera, while waiting for her carriage, as if afraid that any one in London should remain ignorant of the relationship between us.”

“ And why should they ? ” quietly interposed Agatha.

“ You will understand better, when you have passed a season in town ! I doubt whether my mother will even allow you

to visit her sister,—at least, I shall strongly advise her against it.”

“*You* have always been acquainted with the family?”—observed Mary, in an inquiring tone.

“Oh! a man may be acquainted with all sorts and conditions of people, without compromising himself,—more especially before he comes out. Aunt Sophia used to tip me five guineas at Eton, when she came down every year to Ascot races. *Such* relations were not to be despised by a schoolboy.”

“Not even after he has come out,” said Agatha, coolly, “if he have any sense of gratitude.”

“Do not come Mrs Fairfax over us!” said George, languidly. “I have promised to spend a week at Brighton—pray do not render it more disagreeable than necessary. But to return to the Clutterbuck people! I am convinced my good aunt’s civilities tend to nothing less than to secure me

for one of her daughters! In days of yore, schoolboys were easily barley-sugared into falling in love with a pretty cousin, during the holidays. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela!*—and the moment I found the good lady insinuate that her dear Caroline and Emma would have a hundred thousand pounds a-piece, and had been reared to become an ornament to the highest society in the land, I made her my best bow, and rattled off my cab from Portland place, as if all my Oxford duns were at my horses' heels."

"Are my cousins pleasing girls?" demanded his sister Agatha.

"That depends upon *whom* is to be pleased. They would not please you; they would not please Madam Fairfax; they would not please my mother; and they don't please *me!*—But they are beautiful, highly accomplished, and amazingly admired in their own set."

“And what fault have you to find with them?”

“That they are under-bred, and do too much of everything.”

“My dear brother!—what can you possibly mean?” exclaimed the simple-hearted Agatha.

“That they dress in the extreme of the fashion; are overloaded with ornaments, enthusiastically musical, passionately fond of dancing, careful to be seen on showy horses or in a showy carriage in the park, and in a glaring double box at the opera!—In London, that species of publicity is fatal in a case like theirs, with a name and in a position of which the less said the better. They ought to have kept as quiet as dormice.”

“Is there anything against the family, then?” demanded Agatha, with a look of consternation.

“Everything!—Joseph Clutterbuck *is* a city-man. What he *was*, I trust he knows;

for he will then prove himself to be a wiser man than any one else. Don't look so innocently alarmed, child. I mean only that he is a man without connexions, or hereditary distinction of any sort or kind."

"How did you leave my father, and how is dear Hillingdon looking?" inquired Mary, beginning to see through the empty flippancy of her brother's strictures.

"Dear Hillingdon was looking naked, cold, and dull, as usual; and Lord Hillingdon nearly as dull as his house! Hunting is over, and at the close of the season, the governor feels that, for the next six months, his occupation's gone. Now he is obliged to give up Newmarket, and that his I. O. U.'s are not worth their weight as waste paper, he has grown sick of London. But I can't fancy he would find a spring spent at Hillingdon much more amusing. Such a barrack as the place looks! Since the execution, seven years ago, there have been only half-a-dozen rooms

re-furnished, just enough to entertain a few fox-hunting squires, who are content to take bachelor's fare, plain roast and boiled, venison and claret. You've no notion what a wretched table he keeps! Martyn, the old housekeeper, goes moping about the place like the tame raven in the garden,—too much accustomed to it to live elsewhere, though sick at heart of everything passing around her."

"Poor Mrs Martyn!—how good she used to be to us when we were children," sighed Agatha.

"Even now, I'm persuaded the old goose is twenty times fonder of us than my father or mother," said George. "She *would* insist upon showing me the family pictures in the gallery (which are heir-loom), and all but fell on her knees to implore me never to sanction their being sold off."

"Poor dear old Martyn!" sighed the girls.

"She was even silly enough to tell me my lord was welcome to her own savings, sooner

than part with the precious pictures she has been exhibiting with so much pride to visitors, for the last forty years! Martyn was housekeeper, you know, to my grandfather."

"But *are* the pictures likely to be sold?" inquired Agatha Joddrell, with a grave face.

"Why not?—They produce nothing. Much better part with *them* than with the Wiltshire estates, which bring in two thousand a year! Besides, Hillingdon is good for nothing, but a hunting seat, in its present dilapidated state; and who in the world would lock up Guidos and Raphaels in a hunting seat? If *my* opinion goes for anything with my father, he will bring every canvas of them to the hammer! I intend to make two provisos before I sign away the entail. He must break up the Hillingdon gallery, and take a good house in town for the season."

"I should be sorry to see papa do either,"

said Mary. "The pictures were collected by my grandfather, at a cost that will never be repaid."

"And which commenced the embarrassment of the family affairs!" added her brother."

"And as to a house in town," continued Mary, accustomed to hear her maiden aunts enlarge upon the indispensability of such an appendage to the family possessions, that her nieces might be properly presented, "I assure you neither Agatha nor myself are ambitious of appearing in the world."

"What has *that* to do with it, pray?"—demanded the affectionate brother. "Is the governor in the habit of consulting *you*, Mary, on such points?"

"He has not spoken six words to me for the last two years!"—said Mary with a sigh.

"Nor to any one else, except his head groom and the groom porter!"—answered

George. "I dare say it would suit *him* to keep on his *pied-à-terre* in St James's place, and let you and my mother vegetate here. But it won't do for *me*! A fellow of moderate means launches better in London when his family is well-established there; and I shall make it a *sine qua non* of helping the lame dog over the stile, that his lordship lends a hand, in return, to the lame puppy.

"Pray do not speak in that way of papa!"—cried Agatha, growing impatient of his impertinence; "it is a thing we are not accustomed to hear."

"Then why favour *me* with a sermon, which is a thing *I* am not accustomed to hear?" replied her brother. "So now, good bye!—I must go and have my morning squabble with my mother!"

"I believe mamma is engaged with her friend Lady Ursula Wainwright," said Agatha.

"Her *friend*!"—retorted George; adding,

in a muttered voice, as he quitted the room,
“Commend me to the strange *liaisons* and
crooked sentiments which pass current in
this wicked world, under the name of
friendship!”——

CHAPTER VI.

Fools are often united in the strictest intimacies; as the lighter kinds of wood are the most closely glued together.

SHENSTONE.

GEORGE JODDRELL had some excuse for marvelling at the term friendship, as applied to the intimacy subsisting between Lady Hillingdon and Lady Ursula Wainwright.

Sir Charles Wainwright, when a Captain in the Guards, was the man whose attentions to the pretty Emma had first provoked the animadversions of society. At that period, Lady Ursula and herself were constantly together; connected by the same frivolous pursuits, the same vacuity of mind. They shared an opera-box, drove together, rode together, lounged at the same milliner's, and ran in

debt to the same jeweller;—at the end of the summer, repaired together to Cowes for yachting; and at the end of the autumn, to Brighton, to yawn away the winter in each other's company.

As usual, inseparability between two handsome women was precursive of a sudden outbreak of hostilities. They quarrelled.—Some said Lady Ursula was jealous of her husband, some of her lover, some of a new archery dress surreptitiously got up by her rival.—Certain it is, that a paper war was followed by a sullen amnesty; nor was it till after an accidental encounter at a Dover regatta, ten years afterwards (when, if not wiser, both were colder than of yore), that a permanent peace was signed and sealed between the belligerents. The mutual confidences which at four-and-twenty bound them together, and afterwards disunited them, had all been *couleur de rose*. But at four-and-thirty, with children growing up, and fortunes and fame

diminished, life was assuming a more sombre hue. Each was in need of a sympathizing companion on whom to bestow her grumblings; and mutual pity was less likely than envious rivalry to beget commotions in the state.

From that moment, accordingly, Lady Ursula and Lady Hillingdon became sworn companions. Each maintained to the world that the husband of the other was the greatest brute in creation, and his wife the most to be pitied of her sex; and the world pronounced in return Lady Ursula and Lady Hillingdon to be exemplary in the stanchness of their friendship.

The progress of time, in short, while it rendered these two useless individuals less important to society, rendered them doubly important to each other. They mutually understood each other's aches and pains, and appreciated each other's grievances. No one but Lady Ursula Wainwright would have affected

to believe, while looking through Lady Hillingdon's rouge at her prematurely wrinkled face, that she rarely slept by night and never rested by day; no one but Lady Hillingdon would have made even a pretence at credulity when Lady Ursula, between the rare pauses of her unmeaning merriment, declared that peace was a stranger to her bosom. But thus essential to each other as listeners and sympathizers, they continued to meet daily while inhabiting the same city, and to correspond weekly when doomed to separation, saying alternately the sweetest and tartest things to each other. Engrossed by the exactions of this grand tie upon her time, Lady Hillingdon overlooked the fact that her daughters were growing into young women while *she* had subsided into an old one.

“So Lord Hillingdon has actually engaged a house in Hill street for you?”—cried the confidante, shortly after George's departure from Brighton.

“How did you hear of it?”

“There is a paragraph on the subject in the ‘Morning Post,’ promising fêtes and hospitalities.”

“And, for once, telling truth!” observed Lady Hillingdon, with an air of unusual importance. “I had a letter yesterday from Hillingdon, who wishes us to be in town by the 24th.”

“And you are *really* going to give dinners and fêtes?—Now, my dear Emma!” remonstrated the bosom friend,—“you know there *can* be no motive for deceiving *me!*”

“None on earth—George has joined with his father in raising the supplies. My son has promised to set us free from all our difficulties on coming of age; and chooses us to pass the season in town.”

“Why what good can your being in town possibly do to Mr Joddrell?” exclaimed Lady Ursula. “You have not been there (except a few days now and then at an hotel)

these eight years past; and your connexion is totally broken up. It would require a far more brilliant entertainment, my dear, than you are likely to give, to startle the world into recollection."

"It is impossible to guess what line my son intends to take," observed Lady Hillingdon, somewhat piqued at the freedoms of her friend. "George is to regulate our proceedings; and no one better understands the way in which things ought to be done."

"The way of paying for them is chiefly the question."

"I told you before, that Joddrell had joined Lord Hillingdon in raising money."

"Ah! if it is just to be a dash, for a single season—"

"I'm sure I don't know what it is to be, —except a thorough break-up of my comfort!" sighed the indolent Lady Hillingdon, taking refuge, as was her wont, in affectation, when she found herself on the point

of being brought to reason. "I am now so little used to exertion—so accustomed to a quiet home, and having my little comforts about me,"—(and she glanced as she spoke from Chloe's bamboo kennel to her rosewood medicine chest,) "that I detest the thoughts of giving myself up anew to the heartlessness of the world."

Lady Ursula prudently forbore to smile.

"Besides, what am I to do in town with those girls?"

"Bring them out, of course,—which is, I suppose, the object of Mr Joddrell's pressing you to pass the season there."

"I fancy his solitudes are chiefly for himself. He knows very little of his sisters."

"He knows, at least, that Agatha, at one-and-twenty, ought to be presented."

"One-and-twenty!—no—my dear love! Against that sort of ill-nature we are trebly guarded. Miss Joddrell's age is easily ascertained by the peerage."

“ Considering that you have taken care to send their names without dates——”

“ At all events, every one knows that George is the eldest of the family, and that had he been of age we should not have been vegetating all this time at Brighton!” interrupted Lady Hillingdon, vexed out of her pretended indifference.

“ You always declared you were so fond of Brighton!”—interposed the provoking bosom-friend.

“ And so I am, in moderation ; but one may have too much of even the best of things.—Only conceive, my dear Ursula, what it will be to wear myself out as a chaperon, night after night, for the next three months; a fixture on a sofa, near a steaming wall, with wax dropping on my shoulders, between two old dowagers in tinsel turbans, with *miroité* velvet gowns!”

“ I dare say you will find means of amu-

sing yourself. Lord Charles will be in town, you know."

"But when did he ever show in a ball-room? *He* likes to spend a sociable evening where he dines; and never goes to parties. The very thing he used to like in our house, was being sure of his quiet whist, without music, noise, or young people. He will shun me like the plague, when involved in the vulgar vortex of a chaperoning mamma."

"At least, you have consulted his taste by postponing your duties till the last decent moment," retorted Lady Ursula; "and if you dash away at the rate you intend, a single season may perhaps get rid of the girls."

"You say that to vex me! You know I have not the least chance of such a blessing! Neither of them has the slightest air of fashion,—the least particle of distinction. It is all that horrid Mrs Fairfax.

When I wrote to mamma to get me a French governess, fifteen years ago, I never could make out why she sent that stupid precise piece of goods to Hillingdon Hall. And yet, between one difficulty and another, I could never afterwards get rid of her."

"Admit that she took a wonderful deal of trouble off your hands, and never bored you with so much as a glimpse of the girls."

"Very true; but then the unfinished state in which she left their education! They will never make the figure they ought; and I shall probably have them left on my hands, just as poor dear mamma has got Harriet and Charlotte."

"For *your* sake, then, my dear, I rejoice that they are somewhat more tractable than your sisters. It is scarcely likely there should be *two other* women in the world so cross-grained and snappish as the Miss Corbets; but certainly Mary

and Agatha are good inoffensive girls, as times ago."

"We must try what can be done with them!" said the lady mother, shrugging her shoulders, as in despair. "I have given Lord Hillingdon and George plainly to understand that I will not undertake the thing, unless they afford me the means of introducing my daughters in a manner becoming the station of the family. I will have no bailiffs in the house, as there used to be, whenever we had a party staying at Hillingdon. I will have no job-horses,—no occasional boxes at the opera.—It is of the greatest importance to George, that everything about us should be in the best style."

"And to the girls, pray?"—

"The girls care about nothing of the kind. I quite tremble at the prospect of having to rub off their *mauvaise honte*, and get them on."

"Pretty girls get on of themselves."

“Not without fortune or fashion.”

“In a certain set, perhaps not ; but is that set the safest for you ? Might you not marry your daughters better by starrng it in a less pretending circle ? Your sister, Mrs Clutterbuck, might introduce you into her wealthy Portland-place line of connexion.”

“Thank you!”—cried Lady Hillingdon, completely out of patience. “I should like to hear you make the same proposition to George!—No ! my dear Lady Ursula,—surprising as it may seem to you, I am likely to live in a style becoming the wife of Lord Hillingdon. I am only sorry that we are to lose your society. It would have given me such delight to invite you to pass the season with us. But unluckily, George, (by way of securing himself against the intrusion of his aunts,) has made it an express condition that we are to have no inmates in Hill street.”

“Mr Joddrell is quite right ! Your sisters

would have been a sad tax on his comfort. With respect to myself, had you not made arrangements for a house in town, I intended to offer you a *pied à terre* in mine. Sir Charles has bought a little bijou of a thing at Grosvenor gate. We are to be there next week."

"Settle in town?—after all Wainwright's protestations?"—

"What man's consistency is to be relied upon! The creatures have enough to do to keep their word to their constituents."

"But Wainwright used to detest London!"

"To detest *parties*! But since the establishment of these myriads of clubs, the face of society has completely changed. A man may amuse himself without setting his foot in society. Besides, my dear, at our time of life, people want to settle;—and after all, poor dear Brighton is but a watering-place."

Such were the domestic projects with which Sir Charles and Lady Ursula Wainwright and Lord and Lady Hillingdon took possession of their new houses in town!—

CHAPTER VII.

Drudges, who take from our reluctant hands
 What Burn advises, and the Bench commands.

CRABBE.

We wisely strip the steed we mean to buy;
 Why judge in their caparisons of men?
 All the distinctions of this little life
 Are quite cutaneous!

YOUNG.

NEARLY two years after Jervis Cleve's inauguration at Fairford, the Hecksworths came to spend a week or two with Sir William Davenport, at the Grange.

The squire's lady had more than once condescended to inquire, in the interim, of aunt Morris, (who, now a martyr to the rheumatism, hobbled to the garden-gate when madam went by, to tend her a double polyanthus or a bunch of carnations, according to

the season,)—concerning the progress of poor Jervis. But though the answers received of “Pure well, madam, the Lord be thanked!” or “most a man grown and a fine scholar now, thanks to your ladyship’s goodness and the blessing of heaven,”—satisfied her that all was right, it conveyed no definite impression of the progress of the object of her benevolence.

One day, however, when driving in Sir William’s phaeton through the grimy town of Fairford, having inquired the nature of a curious old red brick pile, nearly as quaint and mean-looking as St James’s Palace, which she had noticed every time she visited the place, but never before with sufficient interest to prompt an inquiry,—she was told that it was the “College,” a free-school of high renown and ancient foundation. And lo! her Bilston protégé recurred to her recollection.

“Why that is surely the school to which you gave little Cleve a presentation for me?”

she demanded ; “ the sick child, you know, whom we thought not strong enough for a life of hard labour ? ”

“ Exactly ! I have never thought to inquire about him since. I wonder how he has turned out ? Had he done anything amiss, however, the board would have let me know.”

“ Supposing we inquire, as we are passing the place. I should like to have a nearer view of those old cloisters and the yew-trees.”

“ Better put it off till another day ! The Ravenswells dine with us. 'Tis near five o'clock. We shan't get home till six,—then we have to dress,—and Ravenswell is such a punctilious fellow ! ”—

“ Nearly five ?—only four, I assure you ! ” said Mrs Hecksworth, peeping into a Breguet watch, which she extracted from the bosom of her satin pelisse.

“ I hope you don't expect me to be guided by a watch the size of a butter-cup ? ” said

the bluff baronet. "I'd as soon trust the cuckoo-clock in the first old woman's cottage we pass on the road !"

"Trust your own eyes, then !" said his sister, pointing to a venerable dial inserted above the gateway of the principal entrance to Fairford College ; and lo ! the hands pointed distinctly to four. Sir William sat convicted. There was no denying the fact, —there was no evading the consequences.

Bringing up his phaeton knowingly therefore before the rusty gateway of the old court, whose pavement, cracked, worn, and uneven, afforded scope for a tolerable crop of grass, with an occasional patch of groundsel and chickweed, the outriders advanced to possess themselves of the reins, and Sir William alighted and crossed the court with Mrs Hecksworth on his arm.

But, as might have been inferred from the pastoral aspect of the court, the principal entrance, which the aristocratic visitors had

arrogated to themselves, proved to be condemned and closed up; and it was only by a side wicket they eventually made their way into the dingy cloister, towards a chocolate coloured door, painted in large white letters with the name of "Mr Peter Parmenter,—Master."

The aspect of the spot was cheerless enough. A peculiar air and atmosphere, by the way, seems to environ our ancient schools of learning,—from the dingy quadrangles of Cam and Isis, to the humble foundation-schools of many a county town; a savour of musty leather and sapient periwig, of which the Bodleian may be cited as emitting the concentrated essence.

A preternatural and echoing silence, however, pervaded the place, calculated to subdue the mind to a mood of abstraction highly favourable to philosophical reverie; and Mrs Hecksworth felt satisfied, as she paced the

glum, fusty, cloister of Fairford College, into which it was difficult to peep from the school-house through its narrow, diamond-paned Gothic windows, that it must be Jervis Cleve's own fault if he had not studied himself into a world of wisdom in so secluded and dispiriting a retreat; for it was the very spot to convert monks into saints, and dunces into philosophers!—

The lady of the Hall, meanwhile, had almost forgotten Jervis. Her patronage of the sickly child had been a freak of benevolence, the impulse of a restless nature, rather than the suggestion of a far-thoughted charity. The most she expected to learn of him was, that he had turned out a good boy; versed in testament and catechism, with perhaps a sufficient sprinkling of classical learning to entitle him, at some future time, to become usher to a hedge school.

But on lifting the latch, so awful in the

eyes of the Fairford collegians, of the renowned Mr Peter Parmenter, she was to be impressed with other notions.

P. P. (the hour of four being ex-collegiate,) was sitting at an ancient bureau covered with ragged rusty black leather, and surmounted by a rusty black tea-board, sipping small tea also purporting to be black, and dipping into it sippets of bread and butter, purporting to be brown. Brown too was his all but hair-bare caxon,—brown his coat;—brown even his puckered visage, and the lean lank hands which, for forty years past, had wielded the ferule of Fairfordian authority.

On the entrance of strangers, Peter rose perpendicularly from his horsehair chair, till he stood six feet two in his shoes and buckles; impressed with all the awe compatible with his inches and learning, on finding himself in presence of so grand a lady. But when he ascertained that the gentleman by whom she was accompanied was not only a Sir William,

but an hereditary Governor of Fairford College, his awe increased almost to trepidation.

Though both his visitors had complied with his request that they would be seated, he still kept urging them to take a chair; nor was it till five minutes wore away in preliminary explanations, that he could be brought clearly to apprehend the object of their visit, or rationally to reply to their inquiries.

Once fairly apprized, however, the pedagogue's vein of communication flowed freely; for the Jervis of whom they spake was his favourite, his hobby, his prize tulip. He could never say enough of Jervis Cleve! The chart framed and appended to the wall behind his high-backed chair, and by its cleanly blue-white surface affording so strange a contrast to the smoke-dyed wall, was the work of Jervis. A half-bound marble papered volume of MS. which he produced from a neighbouring desk, contained the collected themes of Jervis. Jervis was already the wonder of

Fairford; nor did Peter Parmenter entertain a doubt that he would eventually become the wonder of the world.

“Upon my life, Maria,” cried Sir William, addressing his sister as he turned over the leaves, “this boy will prove a credit to us. He writes a capital hand. Who knows?—some day or other, Hecksworth may find him useful as a steward.”

“*Steward?*” echoed Peter Parmenter, in a tone as scornful as he dared address, even in a side-wind, to an hereditary Governor of Fairford College. “*Steward?* The youth is the first Grecian of the sixth form!”

“Don’t you think,” observed Mrs Hecksworth, addressing her brother, after a careful examination through her eyeglass of the chart of Arctic Discoveries adorning the wall, “that you might, at some future period, get him made parish surveyor?”—

“*Parish surveyor!*”—reiterated Peter Parmenter, with a frown as reprehensive as he

dared inflict upon the sister of a baronet. "The youth is the first mathematician in the county!"—

"You find him, I hope, a well-disposed lad?" demanded Sir William Davenport, in the lofty tone of a patron.

"Exemplary in morals as in his scholastic duties!" replied the pedagogue.

"And tractable and amiable?" added Mrs Hecksworth.

"Mild

*As zephyr blowing on the violet,
Not wagging its sweet head!"*

quoted the rhetorician.

"I should like to say a word to him before I go," said Sir William; and Peter Parmenter, fancying that the worthy baronet (all baronets being worthy in print,) was feeling in his pocket for his purse, intent upon a tip, shuffled off in search of his juvenile Crichton.

While he was gone, Mrs Hecksworth had leisure to summon before her mind's eye the

improved edition of Jervis Cleve, which the munificence of her brother might be said to have called into existence. Fancy portrayed the inspired boy as pale, thin, intellectual-looking; his large dark eyes animated by the fire within his frame gently bowed under the pressure of uneradicable disease. Sir William Davenport busied himself on the other hand in examining the worm-eaten furniture of the magisterial chamber; the defaced flogging block; the college inauguration chapter-book chained by a brass chain to a small walnut-wood reading desk.

For some minutes, Mrs Hecksworth kept her eyes fixed upon the door through which this second Blaise Pascal, this new Jean Jacques Rousseau, was to make his appearance; and the door being at length flung widely open on its creaking hinges by the long arm of Peter Parmenter, there appeared, in a long-tailed blue coat, with leather shorts, grey worsted stockings, and on his head a dark blue woollen

crumpet, having a bordering of red ferret, a lanky, sallow, long-haired, long-eared, lad of sixteen; his knees knocking with terror, and his ears ringing with nervousness.

The lady's disenchantment was instantaneous! Had she been conscious of beholding as great a scholar as Parr or Porson, her disgust would have been equally invincible. Nothing but an overgrown charity boy was at present discernible in Jervis Cleve.

Nor was Peter Parmenter's mode of recommending him to her notice likely to do away with her unfavourable impression. On recovering from the reverie into which she had fallen at the unsightly apparition, Mrs Hecksworth found poor Jervis stammering through an harangue which she should have pronounced gibberish, had not the pedagogue condescendingly informed her that it was a favourite passage from Thucydides, which he had required his admirable Crichton to recite for her entertainment.

Though almost as cruelly disenchanted as when she found dirty noses and shock heads, where she had looked for blue eyes and flaxen ringlets, among her innocents of the catechizing class, she humanely resolved that her uncouth protégé should not pay the penalty of her unreasonable expectations. Bestowing upon him a golden guinea, to which Sir William Davenport good-naturedly added a second, she promised to send him, on her return home, a present of books adapted to his improved capacities; and had made her parting salutation to his admiring pedagogue, and was even across the weedy court of honour, the rusty gates of which were opened by Peter Parmenter in person on the lady's especial account, before poor Jervis had sufficiently subdued the agitation of his frame, clearly to see, hear, or understand what was passing around him.

To the credit of Mrs Hecksworth, be it admitted, she was as good as her word.

She did not suffer her precipitation from her stilts to injure the innocent cause of her fall. On arriving at Bilston Hall, she dispatched an order, and a five-pound note, to a London school-library, eminent for the cheapness of its classics and durability of its calf, and enabled occasionally to lose money by the publication of a flashy quarto of travels, got up with plates of green and purple landscapes, or a duodecimo of aristocratic poems empty even of plates, by the vast diffusion of juvenile knowledge promoted by its shelves.

The selection of this experienced bibliopole was bespoken, by Mrs Hecksworth's letter, for a rising scholar of sixteen ; but as there happened to be a surplus just then in the mathematical department of his stock in trade, the classics were dispensed with in executing the lady's order, as works of supererogation in an atmosphere of practical learning such as Fairford College ; and, by this trivial chance, the

youth of parts was destined to become a man of figures!

To such incidents are often attributable the powerful influences which control a human destiny! A molehill was instrumental in annihilating an anointed sovereign of the realm; and the redundance of Messieurs Omnitypes' Bonnycastles was destined to sway the future fortunes of Jervis Cleve! Both the pedagogue and himself regarded the peculiar selection of the books bestowed upon Sir William Davenport's protégé, as indicative of the career to which he was destined; and from that day, Peter Parmenter's efforts were directed, as far as was compatible with college routine, to create a second Newton in his favourite.

Had Mrs Hecksworth suggested the study of Sanscrit or the acquirement of Anglo-Saxon, or any other dry or unavailable pursuit, the lad would have been equally submissive. But, fortunately, the choice of his benefactress squared with his own inclinations; and when, two years afterwards,

young Cleve, endowed with his exhibition, and all the appliances and means of maintenance to which the foundation of the college could promote so promising a disciple, proceeded to Cambridge, his fame soon circulated through the university as the first mathematician of his day. Within six months, Jervis acquired among the heads of colleges, and other elders and dignitaries of the seat of learning, the specific title of The Fairford Youth.

But while his reputation was gathering strength, and his renown echoing through the quiet quadrangles of Alma Mater, at humble Bilston this proficiency was far less noted. The Cleve family was vaguely aware that poor little Jervy was grown a wonder of book-learning. But while they saw him return home twice every year, from Fairford, arrayed in the same badge of nothingness—the long-tailed coat and leather shorts,—the grey stockings and blue crumpet with ferret binding,—aunt Morris and his father

could not bring themselves to believe that the boy was advancing in the world. The two elder girls, Mary and Kitty, had each in her turn visited Bilston, arrayed in as much patent lace and pink ribbon as the bargain-shops of Soho could furnish in exchange for their earnings ; and Jem, who was now a man in office, as second waiter at the Crown Inn, Birmingham, had strutted home in a second-hand bottle-green coat, with a scarlet waistcoat and white corduroys. But Jervis, with all his vaunted scholarship, seemed to have achieved little more than his stupid brother Jack, who, being still a cowboy, plodded in a smock-frock.

Even the half-dozen guineas which, in the course of his four years at Fairford, were at sundry visits bestowed upon him by his patrons, and forthwith transmitted to the cottage, pleaded little in his favour as indications of future greatness ; for he would have earned twice as much by weed-

ing madam's garden, at his original salary of one shilling a week!

It was not till, at the close of his first academic year, the Fairford youth made his appearance in an *uncustomary* suit of solemn black, his trencher-cap of woollen exchanged for a hat of beaver, and his highlows for Wellington boots, (vastly like the hero of a frontispiece illustrating the fable of "The Poet and the Rose" in Mr Omnitype's edition of Gay,) that aunt Morris expressed her opinion that "the dear boy was now something like;" while old Cleve avowed a hope that "som'hat might maybe come on him a'ter all."

The hopes of his sister Jane, the hand-in-hand companion of his childhood, if equally vague, were still more sanguine. For Jane, though as incapable as her father and aunt of appreciating the extent of her brother's victories or the nature of his prospects, relied upon the instinctive as-

surances of her heart that Jervis would live to be a great man.

During the week he spent with his family, the vacation after taking his first degree, she listened indeed with patient admiration, while the grave scholar attempted to expound the mysteries of college preferment. But it was all in vain! Jenny's notions of academic honours were limited to a belief that scholars might, if they liked, become parsons; and that parsons, if virtuous and clerkly, were provided by the law of the land with tithes and a parsonage. Nay, the wings of her ambition had now so far sprouted, that she had very little doubt of her learned brother's succession to the curacy of Bilston, with its fifty pounds per annum, and the tenancy of the little vicarage, if Madame Hecksworth would only interest herself to procure it for him, at the death of the incumbent.

She enlarged accordingly to Jervis upon

the beauty of its glebe, which afforded pasturage for a cow and donkey ; and the superior merits of a Catherine pear-tree, trained to cover the gable end of the house. But Jervis seemed insensible to all. Neither the pear-tree nor the cow-feed inspired him with the slightest ambition for a curacy ; and even had he been clerically inclined, the situation of his benefactress was such as to preclude all possibility of intruding upon her for the furtherance of his worldly interests. The family vault in Bilston church had been recently opened ; and Mrs Hecksworth was weeping away her widowhood in strict seclusion at the Hall, with the three lovely girls now co-heiresses to the estate.

It afforded, in fact, no small mortification to Jervis Cleve, to discern the impossibility of enlarging the views of his family to the scope of his own. He did not experience the slightest humiliation in

returning to his father's cottage, from its wicker chair and spinning-wheel,—its meal-tub and salt-box, — or the blackbird's-cage that darkened the casement window. The perfect simplicity of heart of aunt Morris—the blameless life and uprightness of purpose of the old labourer, who had passed his contracted life in toil and privation, as if conscious of fulfilling the purpose of his being,—dignified them in the eyes of the high-minded young man ; while his pretty Jane, gay as a bird, and bright as a flower, delighted him with her girlish beauty and sisterly tenderness.

But it *was* vexatious to discover the total want of sympathy in his fortunes, necessitated by their ignorance of the world. They knew him to be book-learned ; but *they* would never be able to appreciate the sphere to which his knowledge extended. At Cambridge his name commanded universal respect. At Cambridge, the wisest and great-

est could not conjecture the limits to which *his* wisdom and greatness might attain. At Cambridge, they could pre-figure the Fairford youth as a professor of the university, or even as a bishop on the bench. But at Bilston, he was only Jervis Cleve ; a lad who had been spoiled for weeding gardens by the acquirement of heathen languages and useless knowledge!

Even when, on his second visit to the village, after the monopoly of university honours and prizes, and having sat at meat with the principal of his college, he was summoned to attend at the Hall, it inflicted a pang upon the pride of one who was esteemed a gentleman everywhere but at Bilston, that Mrs Hecksworth should bestow upon him, through the hands of her eldest girl, a pocket-book containing a ten-pound note. That she should receive him standing, and offer him no seat, did not strike him even with surprise; for in the presence

of his benefactress, he still felt as in that of a superior being. But the money was a grievance; and the deep blush with which Lucy Hecksworth stepped awkwardly across the room to drop the note-case into his hand, depressed his spirit with the consciousness that the whole family had united in the act of charity.

Still, to refuse was as impossible as to accept with becoming gratitude; and all he could do for the assuagement of his wounded spirit was to enjoy the gratification with which his old father accepted the same offering from *his* hands, to be devoted to the purchase of a few household comforts.

Aunt Morris, indeed, hailed this first realization of her nephew's golden prospects with a degree of exultation that a thousand-fold increased his vexation. It was a death-blow to the ambition of the poor young man, to find at how low a rate his position had been hitherto appreciated.

There was still, however, a neutral ground between the humiliations of the village and the triumphs of the university, where consolation was in store. A short visit to Fairford, on his way back to Cambridge, renewed his aspirings and comforted his self-esteem. To the arms of Peter Parmenter, he was welcomed as a more than disciple;—and to the veneration of the college and even town of Fairford, as an honour to its name. The mayor happened to have a booby son studying for his degree, by whom the triumphs of Jervis Cleve had been wonderingly reported; and as much was known and thought of the poor college-boy thrust upon them by Sir William Davenport, as could be expected in a town blackened with the smoke of factory chimnies, and deafened by the whirring of engine wheels.

But it was to the college only, with its dull cloisters so deteriorated in his admiration by recent familiarization with the state-

lier arcades of the university, that his visit was addressed; and, seated beside the well-known black tea-board of Peter Parmenter, the grateful scholar and the pedagogue overflowing with graciousness, sat conversing of studies past, and honours to come; of the seed sowed by the master and the fruit to be reaped by the pupil. It might be perhaps, —(for in what human nature riseth not the leaven of human frailty?)—it might be that the pupil had been dearer to the master while his person was disfigured by the badge of college servitude than now, in its spruce, black, lustrous suit of independence; and that, hateful as were the woollen crumpet and leather shorts in the eyes of Mrs Hecksworth, custom had rendered them lovely as the wedding-garment of the parable, in the eyes of Peter.

But he soon overcame the petty weakness; and was as willing to unfold to the Fairford youth his theory of the art of rising in

the world, as he had been to develop to Jervy Cleve the Principia of Newton, or the philosophy of Plato.

Unluckily, his classical proficiency was the more eminent of the two. Destined to drudge through life, from grammar-school boy to grammar-school usher and master, the object of Peter Parmenter's devouring ambition, from his youth upwards, had been academic distinction. To inscribe himself "Graduate of a university" was to *his* thinking to be enrolled in the chronicles of immortality; and on the title-pages of his favourite works, the initials M. and A. affixed to the names of the authors, were to *him* a sufficient characteristic of the man of letters. But for his own want of such distinctions, he might have written himself clerk instead of schoolmaster; or, in place of his brown studies and brown suits, have figured in a cassock and band, in pulpit and parsonage, as a reverend because learned divine.

That the scholar of his creation should affect any other road to distinction, appeared to Peter impossible; and his greetings and congratulations were followed by a remark that, in a couple of years, Jervis would probably be holding a curacy,—perhaps at Bilston, perhaps at Fairford; and a hint that his patron, Sir William Davenport, was possessed of church patronage to the amount of two thousand per annum!

“Which, for three reasons, Sir, will never be available to *me!*” observed Cleve with a smile. “In the first place, it is very unlikely that he would give a family living to a person of my condition in life; secondly, it is his son, Mr Davenport, (to whom I am a stranger,) who now regulates all such matters at the Grange; and thirdly, I have not the smallest desire to enter the church!”

“No desire to enter the church?”—cried Parmenter, setting down his tea-cup in dis-

may. "My dear boy!—of what are you thinking?"

"Of my future respectability in life. Were I a young man destined from childhood (as I know many, sir, at Cambridge) to administer to the ecclesiastical portion of their family property as their elder brothers are educated to administer to the temporal, I should submit to the appointment of my family. But I am conscious of no vocation to take orders. I feel more disposed in matters of divinity to be taught, than become a teacher; and though I hear of little else at Cambridge but the value of livings and the certainty of being provided for in embracing the clerical profession, I would not attain my loaves and fishes at the cost of my conscience. Should I be so happy as to justify the expectations formed of me, I mean to try for a travelling fellowship. I wish to visit the continent."

"Happy youth!" involuntarily ejaculated Peter Parmenter. "Perhaps the country of

Ovid and Virgil!—Nay! it appears a not unusual aim of modern enterprise, to perform a pilgrimage even unto Athens itself! You will, peradventure, taste at their fountain head the waters of Helicon; or pluck a leaf from the sacred laurels of Virgil's tomb!"

"My ambition extends still further," observed Jervis, modestly. "I am anxious, sir, to visit the New World."

"To cross the vast Atlantic!" exclaimed Peter, who did not accomplish above once in eight days the task of crossing the weedy court-yard.

"And perhaps," added young Cleve, nothing daunted by the amazement of his sometime preceptor, "I may at some future time enlarge the limits of modern discovery, by a journey into the interior of Africa."

"Enrich the world's contemporaneous mind,
And amplify the picture of mankind!"

ejaculated Peter, with uplifted hands and fitting emphasis; glancing from his cracked teacup towards the chart upon the wall; which,

though now jaundiced by smoke, accredited the early aspirings of the future geographer.

And as he gazed upon the intelligent countenance of the young scholar, and listened to these gigantic projects, the old man, if proud of his pupil, felt prouder of himself; as a goose might feel, which, having cackled over an eagle's egg, beheld the first sunward flight of its fledgling!

“But your country, my dear boy, your family,—Fairford,—Bilston!”—demanded the old schoolmaster, when at length sublunary considerations broke palely in upon his visions of glory.

“Few young men of any condition of life are able to give their early years to the comforts and affections of home,” said Jervis. “As a soldier, as a sailor, I should be stationed, perhaps, in India or some western colony. My own brothers, though their humble callings are pursued in this very county, do not above once in a twelvemonth visit my father's hearth; and I conceive that, out

of my allotted income, I might set apart as large a portion for the benefit of my family as, in the other case, duty would allow me to subtract from the stipend assigned to support my respectability as a minister of the Gospel. But there will be time enough, dear sir, to consult you on these points, before I am compelled to make my election. I have still two years before me of rigorous application."

It was not, of course, in the simple nature of Peter Parmenter, undeveloped by ties of human tenderness, to conjecture the mortifications experienced by his pupil, at Bilston; or the sort of moral isolation in the midst of his nearest connexions, which suggested the self-purposed banishment of the young scholar. He beheld Jervis Cleve depart to pursue his academic career, secure only that the principles of his young friend would render it an honest and an honourable; and humbly trusting that the protection of Providence and the Muses might render it happy and prosperous.

CHAPTER VIII.

Riches, the wisest monarch sings,
 Make pinions for themselves to fly ;
 They fly like bats on parchment wings,
 And geese their silver plumes supply.
 No money left for squand'ring heirs,
 Bills turn their lenders into debtors,
 The wish of Nero now is theirs
 That they had never known their letters.

SWIFT.

It is surprising how much more sedulously we note transitions in national costume than in national customs; and in national customs, than the moral influences from which they are deduced. Changes of dress are carefully recorded in our books; changes in decency or decorum very rarely. We are fond of expatiating upon the wonderful fact that our grand-sires should have worn ruffles, our grand-dames high-heeled shoes; and love to dilate upon the abrogation of hair-powder and

stomachers, pigtails and periwigs. We laugh heartily at the idea of dining at three o'clock, crowning the evening with a hot supper, and the night with nightmare, and are amazed that modern dinners should be postponed till eight; but do not trouble ourselves to marvel that children should have begun to treat their parents as playthings, and parents to show deference, in their turn, towards their own children.

English people, warmer and more sanguine in their character than might be assumed from their deportment, are not only ardent in their repentance of a fault, but apt to run into a contrary extreme. Till the close of the last century, the buckram of English costume extending its influence to our domestic habits, children were kept at arms' length by their parents, and grown up sons and daughters treated as children. But from this fierce extreme we have rushed into another! Armour of steel has been exchanged for the loosest

dishabille, till the rising generation become the legislators of the hour.

Lord and Lady Hillingdon would probably have justified, by a thousand living examples, their weak indulgence of their son and heir; though rarely has the prerogative of eldest sonhood been exercised with greater despotism than by George Joddrell. George had never been a child, and was not now a man; that is, he was devoid of all the generous sentiments of a manly nature. As puppies are dwarfed by early libations of strong potables, his character had been withered from its allotted proportions, by untimely collision with the excitements of life. His passions were all sensual. There was neither tenderness nor truth in his composition.

Portrayed in this harsh relief, such a character stands forth from the canvas only as a warning and example. But though the kite, when nailed against the barn door, may be revolting,—when poised aloft on glossy wing

it is a dangerous bird; and the gay, fluttering, handsome George, amid the giddy scenes of the fashionable world, was not altogether harmless. A finer young man, a man whose manners were more ingratiating, could not be pointed out. His smiles were, when he chose, so engaging, his conversation so amusing, that his family seemed almost justified in the eyes of the world for their deference to the whims and fancies of so fascinating a creature.

“This letter is not for me. Take it to Mr Joddrell,” said his sister Agatha one morning to the butler, soon after the arrival of the family in town.

“How absurd to disturb your brother about a foolish note, when you know his eyes are never open at this time of day!” observed Lady Hillingdon, who was lounging on a sofa at the further extremity of the drawing-room, with a new novel half open, and her eyes half shut. “George will not be down these two hours; François is not allowed to take in his

breakfast till twelve; and then, he has his toilet to go through. Leave the note here, Stratton!" continued her ladyship, who had motives of her own for wishing to examine the hand-writing.

"Mr Joddrell has given orders that his notes are to be delivered only into his own hands, my lady," replied the butler. "The servant who brought this, said it was urgent; I fancy I had better take it to Mr Joddrell's room." And without waiting for a reply, he quitted the room.

"How tiresome!" exclaimed Lady Hillingdon, starting up, forgetful of her nonchalance and her novel. "I am convinced it came from *her*. Mary! go and desire Ma'mselle Mathilde to run and ascertain from the people in the hall the livery of the servant who brought that letter."

To hear such a mother was to obey. But Mary Joddrell, could not help wondering as she went, how mamma could for a moment

suppose that Mademoiselle Mathilde would "run" at any one's bidding, or do anything whatever at *hers!*

"I can't make out George!" grumbled her ladyship, resuming her horizontal position on the sofa, and apparently addressing her lap-dog. "It is very difficult to guess what he would be at."

"Do you really think so, mamma?" replied her daughter Agatha, mistaking herself for the favoured object of apostrophe. "And yet he is so extremely frank!"

"He has the sort of recklessness which people mistake for frankness. But I doubt whether any one ever got at anything which George was interested to conceal."

"Most people have their reserves, I suppose; my brother, surely, as few as any one."

"I don't know. I used to think him open when he came down to Brighton for a day or two, and had nothing to tell worth keeping to himself, or that I cared to ascertain. But

now that I am anxious to understand his *carte du pays*, I can make nothing out of him."

"But could you not ask him anything you wanted to know?"

Lady Hillingdon replied by a glance of compassion. "Ever since we came to town," said she, "I have been attempting to discover whether—but no matter! It is not of the least consequence to you, and very little to me."

Lady Hillingdon had, in fact, a variety of affairs and interests to distract her attention. It was surprising how speedily she had contrived, on settling in town, to expand into the position she intended to occupy in the eyes of the *beau monde*. Endowed with a mind originally flimsy and unstrengthened by cultivation, collision with the world had imparted sharpness to that which wanted force, and placed a rapier in the hand unequal to wield a falchion. During the first ten years of her

married life, when extravagance was followed by embarrassment, the rude shocks occasionally experienced by the pride of the silly beauty had in some degree brought her to herself. In spite of the affectation she had adopted as a resource against utter inanity, she had been compelled to see men and things in clear daylight; to admit that her vacant useless prettiness had lost all attraction in the eyes of her husband, and established for her no influence in society; and thus maltreated by Lord Hillingdon and the world, she had vegetated in peevish selfishness; with only a bosom friend or two, a Lady Ursula and a Lord Charles, as victims of her murmurs, till her son attained the power of replacing her in her former brilliant position.

As the period thus anxiously desired approached, however, Lady Hillingdon's confidence in George's intentions grew less and less. The eager schoolboy, thankful for undue indulgence, was growing up into the cool,

careless young man; and, worse still, his sisters, whom Lady Hillingdon rarely included in her calculations, were encroaching on the influence over his mind which she had intended to monopolize. It was not that he cared *very* much for Mary and Agatha, but he cared more for them than for the calculating egotist who had petted his boyhood into folly, ruined his digestion, and spoiled his temper.

There was every plea in favour of this brotherly predilection. The girls were so kind-hearted, so considerate,—Mary was so mild, and Agatha, when at ease in their little circle, so amusing, that a colder-hearted brother might have been fond of them.

They were pleasant to live with. There was no attempt at display, no straining after effect. They were pretty enough to make an agreeable impression; clever enough to appreciate the cleverness of others. They listened well, admired honestly, felt warmly, decided uprightly; were dutiful daughters to unworthy

parents, and affectionate sisters to a reckless and unamiable brother.

Though they had borne unmurmuringly the seclusion to which their childhood was condemned, believing it the unavoidable result of the embarrassment of their father's affairs, two pretty girls of eighteen and nineteen were not likely to learn without emotion that they were to pass their next season in town, surrounded by the advantages to which they had hitherto been strangers. Nor were the explanations so minutely imparted by Lady Hillingdon to her bosom friend extended to her daughters; and, ignorant of the ruinous arrangements made by George and their father, they were prepared to enjoy their pleasant prospects with all the ardour of youth and experience. The mighty talisman called ready money had prepared the way. A good house had been engaged, a good establishment set up, and the surface of things was without spot or blemish.

In a place where principle and consistency maintain so little influence as in western London, it is difficult to calculate beforehand upon the station any individual is to assume in the throng. Fashionable society is subject to as many and as unaccountable transitions as that grand atmospheric enigma, the English climate. Sunshine and east wind enter sometimes into fatal combination; and the day that commences with a bitter frost scorches our eyes out with its meridian blaze, to subside anew into utter chilliness towards evening. Even as regards the more serious point of character, opinion is often determined by the gust or jest of the hour; and an epigram or caricature may sink a reputation which had previously defied the typhoons of a legal tribunal.

Now Lady Hillingdon's reputation, among other casual commodities, had been nearly whispered away in early life. At the period when her husband, having deserted her for

Newmarket, Lord Charles Grantingham was occasionally seen to enter her house, and less occasionally to leave it,—Lord Hillingdon's stiff relations and her own dear friends, instead of flying to her with advice and remonstrance, stood aloof and shook their heads. In place of accusing her of being a bad mother—which was a fact undeniable,—they reviled her for being an indifferent wife,—a point on which the person best qualified to decide, uttered no accusation; and by repeating in all directions that they hoped—they *really* hoped and trusted—there was no harm in her,—raised a supposition that there *was*.

Lady Hillingdon's fair fame might, however, have defied these passing clouds, had the star of her fortunes been still resplendent. Possessed of a good establishment in London, a good cook, good equipage, good opera-box, good everything but principles, Lord Charles might have come still oftener into her house, and left it still less frequently, without pro-

ducing an unsatisfactory impression on the public mind.

But when the gay world understood that Lady Hillingdon had sunk beneath low-water mark,—that her pretended necessity for sea-bathing was occasioned by a real necessity for retrenchment,—they decided that she was “really too bad!”

They did not strike her name out of their visiting lists indeed, for she was not likely to return to her post and profit by her privilege; but her ostracism was silent, contemptuous, and complete.

Had she, after this, crept her way back again to indulge her taste for dissipation by a few weeks' sojourn at an hotel without the possibility of entertaining the world to excuse her pretensions to being entertained, her presumption would probably have been requited by total neglect. Nay, even with her capital house in Hill street and all the rest of her present attributions, she might have been

taught, as the mere mother of daughters, the precariousness of her position.

But her safeguard was in her son,—her only son,—her son and heir ! Lord Hillingdon's estates were encumbered, but unalienable. George Joddrell would succeed to a property as handsome as his person. Already, his Eton and Oxford fame had preceded him ; already, George was the fashion. The honour of his smile conferred distinction ; the honour of his hand would confer a peerage. Mammās and chaperons accordingly got up a prodigious show of hands in his favour ; and the first exercise of these was to bestow several rounds of applause upon the *début* of Lady Hillingdon and the Hon. Misses Joddrell. Her re-appearance, in fact, was a welcome event. A squirrel in a cage, which pursues its monotonous round from summer to summer, as though it had forgotten the gay green wood and glorious air of liberty, is not condemned to a more monoto-

nous existence than the fashionable world in the unvarying routine of its amusements; and when a London beauty expands into ecstasies concerning the delights of London to some country neighbour on a foggy autumn day, vaguely alluding to the "countless" pleasures and "diversified" amusements of London, the country neighbour may be assured that the truth is not in her.

Nothing can be more minutely monotonous than the recreations of the really fashionable; monotony being, in fact, *essential* to that distinction. Tigers may amuse themselves in a thousand irregularly diverting ways; but the career of the genuine exclusive is one to which a mill-horse would scarcely look for relief.

London houses, London establishments, are formed after the same unvariable model. At the fifty or sixty balls to which she is to be indebted for the excitement of her season, the fine lady listens to the same band, is

refreshed from a buffet prepared by the same skill, looks at the same diamonds, hears the same trivial observations; and but for an incident or two, the growth of her own follies, might find it difficult to point out the slightest difference between the fête of the countess on the first of June, and that of the marquis on the first of July.

But though twenty seasons' experience of these desolating facts might be expected to damp the ardour of certain dowagers and dandies, who are to be found hurrying along the golden railroad year after year, it is not wonderful that the young girls their daughters should be easily allured from their dull schoolrooms by fallacious promises of pleasure. Agatha and Mary Joddrell, who had rarely been tolerated for an hour or two in presence of Lady Hillingdon's conferences with Lady Ursula, without hearing the bosom friends recur to dear London and its pleasures as to a forbidden Eden, were naturally

delighted to find their mother's table in Hill street covered every morning with cards and notes of invitation. For the point once decided that Lady Hillingdon was to be visited, Lady Hillingdon soon contrived to make herself the fashion. Her quiet, ladylike girls were far from a drawback on her popularity; and after their first fortnight in London, they were as much sought as guests and partners as if they had been able to assist in private theatricals or play in charades.

“So, children! you were at Lady Reigate's last night!” was their brother's morning salutation, an hour or two after Lady Hillingdon had interfered to secure him from disturbance. “Were you horribly bored!”

“*Bored?* On the contrary, it was a charming ball! Agatha danced seven quadrilles, and I six!” replied Mary.

“Seven quadrilles!—A sister of mine!—Pray do not let me hear of your degenerating into dancing young ladies, ready to snatch at a

partner before his 'May I have the honour' is half out of his mouth!—Two quadrilles and a waltz is the utmost I can allow between you in the course of an evening."

"But mamma would become tired of us if attached to her side the whole evening. She and Lady Ursula generally sit together in some out-of-the-way corner."

"Sit with them, for the future."

"I am sure they would not like it."

"Sit with some other person, then."

"At present we know so few people in town," remonstrated Agatha.

Involuntarily her brother glanced at the pile of cards waiting for inscription in their book.

"Yes, we *visit* all the world; but who introduces anything but partners, to girls like us?"—

"There is the governor's sister, Lady Newbery, who would be delighted at having two new misses to inflict upon her friends."

“I doubt whether she is on good terms with mamma. We have seen nothing of her.”

“Nor of my aunt Sophia!”—added her sister. “Is it not strange?”

“The Clutterbucks belong to another world. There was no occasion for you to see *them*. In fact, the less you know of them the better.”

“But our cousins are said to be such charming girls! I recollect hearing from a Mrs Smith, who brought us letters from aunt Sophia to Brighton, that——”

“Oh! spare me your Mrs Smithisms! The girls may be as charming as you please, but there is and ought to be, nothing in common between you.”

“Did you receive your letter, George?” inquired Agatha.

“What letter?”

“One that Stratton said he was to deliver to your own hand.”

“Where is her excellent ladyship this morning?” suddenly demanded Mr Joddrell, who was in the habit of voting his sister’s questions frivolous and vexatious.

“Mamma is gone to order our plumes.”

“Ay, by the way, you are to be at the drawing-room on Thursday. The Honourable Agatha and Mary Joddrell — by — let me see! Who is to present you?”—

“I really have not heard,” said Mary, looking inquiringly at Agatha.

“And really have not *asked*?”

“I concluded it would be mamma.”

“Not having been to court during the present reign, she must be presented herself.”

“Then I should think it would be Lady Ursula Wainwright.”

“I should imagine *not*!—I should *hope* not!—Lady Hillingdon would not so completely trifle with *my* opinion! My mother ought to know, by this time, what I feel towards Lady Ursula.”

“ But, my dearest George, you do not imagine that mamma would think it necessary to defer to your whims on such a point?” said Agatha, with surprise.

“ Mary, my dear, come and bring me the quilted pillow from the other sofa,” said Joddrell, stretching himself; “ I’m quite knocked up this morning!—I was not at home till five.—*There!*—put it under my head.”

“ Up till five,—yet you never came to Lady Reigate’s. We were so disappointed.”

“ I have already warned you not to expect me in any ball-room this season. I abhor balls. I hate to see a woman tricked out in silks and satins. I detest heat, and glare, and dust!”

“ And what *do* you like?” inquired Agatha, gravely.

“ Melton, from November till April; Paris, from April to June; Cowes, from

July to August; the moors from August to September; and during September and October, any fellow's place in the country, where the claret is tolerably light and the game-book tolerably heavy. By the way, Agatha, I caught a glimpse of you the other night at the opera, going out on the arm of Dick Davenport. His father died last winter; and I'm told his preserves are the best in the county. I beg you will make yourself agreeable to the country baronet, that he may make himself agreeable to *me*."

"I should think he would find it difficult to be agreeable to any one," replied Agatha; "I never saw a less attractive person! Lady Ursula presented him to us at Almack's, which I conclude he resented as an injury; for he has done nothing since but contemplate us with supreme contempt, — contradict every observation we make, — and infer by his remarks on every

creature of our acquaintance, that he considers them and us immeasurably beneath his notice."

"And so you *are*, child!—*You* have no battues to give your friends. What right have you to expect a fellow like Davenport to think your opinions worth listening to? He pays you twice as great a compliment as you deserve, by lending you his arm to your carriage. That is the utmost a miss in her first season has a right to require from such a man."

"But if you were at the opera yourself on Saturday, why did you not come to us?"

"Thank you!—I was better amused. Who dines here to-day?"

"We are all engaged to Lady Clara Heathcote's."

"*All*?—You don't mean to say that you are both going?"

"I should be delighted to give you up

my place," said Mary, fancying that her brother wished to be of the party.

"I am not in the habit of performing penance at family dinner parties, even where Lord and Lady Hillingdon are *not* included," replied Joddrell, with some solemnity.

"Why were you so vexed, then, at the idea of our *both* dining with Lady Clara?"

"Because young ladies have no business at dinner parties. They are either shy and stupid, or talk when they had better hold their tongues. Misses either talk like fools or *ought!*"

"A silent guest," said Mary, "breaks up the cheerfulness of the circle."

"Precisely for which reason, you ought to stay at home. A girl has no business to open her lips among reasonable people."

"I assure you the party we met yesterday at Mrs Micklethwaite's were anything

but reasonable people!" said Mary, with some archness.

"The Micklethwaites? You dined yesterday at the Micklethwaites? What could induce them to ask you. I sent them my excuse a fortnight ago: and as the only object they have in your acquaintance is to catch me for their daughters."—

"Oh! George—you really *are* too bad!" cried both his sisters.

"They might have waited till they knew my intentions," concluded George; "poor Mrs Mick has wasted her powder and shot—poor Mrs Mick has thrown away a dinner party!"

"Oh! no;—I have not seen papa in such good spirits since we came to town."

"Why, whom had you?"

"No one I ever saw before;—a Lord and Lady Quebec."

"Oho!"—

“ And Sir Robert and Lady Dashwood.”

“ Aha !”—

“ You forget Lord Charles Grantingham, Mary,” said Agatha.

“ Lord Charles, too !— Mrs Micklethwaite’s plans are more deeply laid than I imagined ! I must be on my guard.”

“ How are you, George ? Good morning, young ladies,” said Lord Hillingdon, suddenly entering the room ; no longer the good-humoured, warm-hearted bridegroom of Emma Corbet ; but a harsh, discontented, man, oldened by the gnawing influence of care ; his cheeks lanky and yellow, his nose tinged with excess, his eyes sunk, his brow wrinkled, his hand tremulous ; redeemed from the disparagement attending vulgar dissipation, only so far as the efforts of the best English tailor and best French valet, still availed to endow him with an *air distingué*.

“ I want to speak a word with you, George,

before I go to the club. When will it be agreeable for you to accompany me to Lincoln's inn?" added he, again addressing his son.

"I can't conceive such an expedition being ever agreeable!" said Joddrell, throwing his person from a recumbent position into a sitting posture, scarcely less becoming and disrespectful.

"Well then," said his father, not daring to take offence, and disguising his vexation under an affectation of jocularitv,—let us amend our motion. When shall you be able and willing to come with me to my lawyers."

"Not to-day, certainly."

"I did not think of to-day. We should not be there till Lattitat's chambers were closed.—But to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, I am engaged."

"On Friday, then?"

"On Friday, Harry Hartopp is to try

some horses for me to Richmond. We shall go early and most likely dine there."

"Sir Harry Hartopp?—have you got into *his* hands? Take care, my dear boy, what you are about!" involuntarily exclaimed the father, who through life had taken so little care of his own pocket or reputation. "Can you oblige me, then, on Saturday?"

"Saturday, I have promised to be at rehearsal. Lumley wants my opinion of a new *coryphée*."

"In one word, George," said Lord Hillingdon, his cheeks waxing somewhat yellower and his nose a shade redder, with rising wrath at such callous insolence,— "it is out of my power to let you have the five hundred you asked me for, unless our business is terminated in the course of the week."

"Oh! never mind,—damn the five hundred pounds! Hartopp will let me have it, and as much more."

"That he may win it back at chicken

hazard, after your dinner at the Star and Garter?" demanded Lord Hillingdon.

"Half a dozen other fellows would accommodate me."

"I must trouble you with five minutes' conversation in your dressing-room," said Lord Hillingdon, changing colour when he discerned that it was the purpose of his son to harass him with delays, fatal to both; and unwilling that the girls should be unnecessarily admitted behind the scenes of their family affairs. And with an offensive gesture of impatience at the proposal and the trouble inflicted upon him, Joddrell sauntered with his father out of the drawing-room.

"What *can* all this mean?" inquired Mary of her sister, as the door closed after them, her cheeks glowing with indignation at her brother's deportment.

"I cannot imagine,—I do not presume even to guess," replied Agatha, with a saddened countenance.

“I wish I dare speak to George!”—persisted Mary. “I am sure he cannot be aware in how disrespectful a manner he addresses my father. It is doubtless the tone assumed by other fashionable young men. But George, who is so clever and so charming, ought to afford an exception to so vile a system!”

Agatha made no reply. She stood listlessly turning over the leaves of a music-book. But the poor girl was in reality concealing the tears called forth by her dawning perception of the hollow state of things around her, and the disgraceful relative position of her father and brother.

CHAPTER IX.

It is a note

Of upstart greatness to observe those trifles

Which noble minds neglect.

BEN JONSON.

To trace circumstantially the progress of an unincidental life may be a curious study to the philosopher, but it is sad dull work for the novelist. The college life of Jervis Cleve was marked *only* by the acquirement of knowledge. One examination foretold another, and one prize certified another. There was no drawback on the brightness of his career. His conduct was as irreproachable as his application was unexampled.

It needs not to have gone through the university to be aware that, to inhabit Cambridge or Oxford for a year or two in the gown and cap of a fellow commoner or a

gentleman commoner, is as essential a mark of caste to such heroes as George Joddrell, as it is indispensable to drudge through them in serge, for the destined member of a learned profession. At rare epochs, perhaps, the drinkers of claret and followers of fox-hounds predominate, but for the most part science assumes her due ascendancy. There are moments too, when the winter sky is illustrated by brilliant comets in addition to its glorious constellations ; and the seats of learning acquire sudden illustration from some Northern light or Macaulay of the minute.

Happily for Jervis Cleve, it was at such a time his period of study was appointed. A member of the university having recently rendered his high college honours prefatory to unparalleled triumphs in the senate, had just then brought learning into vogue ; and no distinction exceeded in influence the distinctions of talent. Cambridge, accordingly, became as proud as Fairford of its "ambi-

tious student in ill-health ;” and was covetous of his fame as participating by reflection in his triumph. The college dons would not have forgiven him, had he disappointed the miraculous promise their vauntings had announced to the world. They were delighted for once to afford evidence, that mathematical proficiency may be united with literary taste and classical knowledge.

From the powers that were, this predilection soon extended to their scholars. For the last thirty years, indeed, literature has been cultivated in England as one of the aristocratic graces. Lord A. writes histories of countries with whose history all the world is familiar ; Lord B. publishes memoirs of a statesman, whose private life exhibits a blank and whose public is as public as Westminster Abbey ; Lord C. indites a most comical tragedy ; Lord D. a most tragical comedy, while

Lord Thomas has written a novel,
A novel of elegant life.

The favour, therefore, which at the close of the eighteenth century, would have been bestowed by Cantab acclamation on a three-bottle man, whose rooms were adorned with foxs' brushes and indecent caricatures, rested during the early quarter of the nineteenth,—the age of Scott and Byron,—upon brows destined for the laurel, and any humble student by whose labours a page was likely to be added to the annals of scientific discovery.

The person of Cleve, of St John's,—Cleve the Fairford youth,—the famous Cleve,—was as well known in the university as that of the Master of Trinity;—and it must be admitted that his person did much to improve the favourable impression produced by his talents. The feebleness of his early years imparted a character of elegance to the delicate organization of the rustic's son. Disqualified for the sterner labours of life, the countenance of the young student,—his fine features,—his almost unnatural paleness,—

seemed to realize one of the intellectual-looking portraits of Raphael or Titian:—to borrow the words of a true poet,

Wisdom looked sweet and inward from his eye,
And round his mouth was sensibility.

The lightest jester among the noble dunces of the university, was never known to vent his mockeries upon Jervis Cleve; whose unassuming manners, and gentle deportment, were more ingratiating than mere forms of artificial gentility.

“Are you acquainted, then, with Cleve?” inquired Herbert Davenport of the young Duke of Attleborough, on perceiving him nod familiarly to the pride of St John’s, as, with their greyhounds at their heels, they passed him one evening on the Trumpington road.

“To be sure I am. A capital fellow!—Not a more gentlemanly man in the university—so unpretending,—so amiable. From his manner, you would never guess that he was

in the slightest degree superior to the rest of us.”

“*Superior?*” exclaimed Davenport, in a tone as ironical as a professed tuft-hunter can venture in presence of a duke. “Why, do you know who he *is?*”—

“To be sure I do; the first scholar of the day,—the best mathematician since Newton!”—

“I don’t mean *that.*”

“What *do* you mean, then.—Your eyes must inform you that he is a devilish good-looking fellow?”

“I don’t mean *that.*—Good-looking?—So is yonder carter in his smock-frock!”

“Has the carter in the smock-frock Cleve’s fine Byronic forehead and graceful manners?”

“*Graceful manners!*—My dear Attleborough, you must be out of your mind!—Cleve of St John’s is neither more nor less than the son of a day-labourer, put forward

by the charity of my late uncle, Sir William Davenport."

"Then your late uncle Sir William Davenport has something to be proud of. It is not often that country baronets are so useful in their generation!—I advise the Davenport family to record the fact upon his tombstone."

"But though you speak so highly of this wonderful scholar," sneered Herbert Davenport, who was on the verge of losing his temper, "I never saw him in your company?"

"I'm afraid because he despises it. I've asked him half-a-dozen times to wine with me,—but he always makes excuses."

"*There*, you see!—*He* knows his place. He is aware that he has no business in your society."

"He is right! I feel your sarcasm. I know I am not up to his mark."

"Now, my dear Attleborough, you *must*

feel sure that I alluded only to his condition of life!"

"My good fellow, Cleve is continually at John Howard's. Cleve is as fond of Howard as Howard of *him*."

"Ah! Lord John aspires only to the society of book-worms;—Lord John is a regular sap."

"A sap I am as proud to call cousin, as you are of your uncle Sir William. Howard will be one of the first men of the day; never perhaps so eminent as Cleve, because Howard will distinguish himself practically,—politically,—among his contemporaries; and I've a notion that the Fairford youth will be heard of by posterity. Lord John offered before *me* one day, to make Cleve his chaplain and librarian at Howard Castle; and give him the fine living of Coleby, if he chose to take orders."

"Then he *is* going into the Church?"

"Not he!—Cleve honestly owned he was

too much devoted to books to make a good parish priest. Though never violent in his opinions, I suspect he entertains as much horror as *I* do of mercenary priestcraft."

Davenport's next attempt at sociability was directed to May-Fly, and Morgiana. But the next time he encountered Cleve, the scholar had all the benefit of a salute, such as is due to the favourite of a duke.

His Grace of Attleborough, however, though competent to appreciate the extraordinary merits of Jervis Cleve, did not apprehend the true motive which drew him into the society of Lord John Howard. It was there the Fairford youth found the only companion to whom he had yet been tempted to concede the name of friend. In the tutor of young Howard, he had at once a monitor and an associate.

Though scarcely past his thirtieth year, Philip Fairfax had been suggested to the Marquis of Wrexhill as private tutor to his second son, (a youth of remarkable promise,

and the heir of a large maternal property,) as much for the steadiness of his moral conduct as for his university distinctions. Yet Lord John, who on his first presentation to his preceptor regarded him as a natural enemy, the chartered foe to all pleasures and recreations, came to regard him in the course of the first six months as a cheerful friend, without any sacrifice of principle or propriety on the part of the gentleman in black.

A more intimate acquaintance did but confirm a friendship honourable to both. For once, a learned tutor was happy in an intelligent pupil, the learned tutor being no pedant, the intelligent pupil no prig. The leading trait in Lord John Howard's character was love of distinction; and born possessed of rank and fortune, political and literary ambition afforded the sole outlet for this ruling passion. Aware of his father's anxious desire to see him launch into public life, the whole course of his studies was directed towards the accom-

plishment of Lord Wrexhill's expectations; and the college-tutor having no immediate relatives to assert a prior claim upon his time, he had several times accompanied Lord John to pass the vacation at Wrexhill Abbey or Howard Castle, to prevent any intermission in their studies.

These visits afforded to Philip Fairfax a valuable insight into the ways of the world. His experience was divided between the obscure home of his early childhood, a musty college, and a House of Lords! Undazzled, however, by the glare of aristocratic life, he exercised his sound judgment upon the attractive scene. He was neither struck blind by the beauty of the noble syrens of the house of Howard, who, concluding all scholars to be poets, intreated the tutor to write verses in their albums; nor dumb by the apathetic stare with which, as part of the family furniture, he was regarded by their husbands and brothers. And the unassuming self-possession with which

he maintained his ground as a gentleman, in the society into which, by no desire of his own, he had been summoned by his patron, ended by insuring him the universal respect of all.

But the glimpses thus obtained, luckily disenchanted his eyes from the spells created by imagination, in her visionary portraiture of the great world.

“Do not suppose,” observed Fairfax to young Cleve, when in one of their quiet evening walks he described the brilliant festivities he had witnessed the preceding winter at Wrexhill Abbey, “do not suppose that the gorgeousness of these scenes has left an agreeable impression on my mind. I depict them for your amusement, as I conceive them to have been seen by others.”

“And why by others, rather than yourself?”

“I am not a fair judge. People who go up in a balloon, and are occupied with the uneasy duty of maintaining their aërial position, have

little leisure for admiring the beauty of the prospect. They may poeticize when they come down upon the glory of the unclouded sun, or the extensive wonders of the developed landscape; but, my word for it, all was lost upon them, so long as their chief care was not to break their necks by a sudden descent!"

"But would you persuade me, Fairfax," argued his young companion, "that your awe of the society at Wrexhill Abbey, prevented you from enjoying the pleasures of the place?"

"Rather, perhaps, my consciousness of *want* of awe; my sense of feeling too much on a par with those who marked their persuasion of superiority by an unconcealable air of patronage."

"Impertinent!"—

"No! there was no impertinence in the case; nothing but good-humoured condescension, purporting to raise me to their level.—Had their notice been insolent, I should have despised them. As it was, I only despised

myself, for entertaining as much reliance on my personal merit, as they on the merits of their ancestors. Both showed weakness;—mine, perhaps, the least excusable.”

“You make no distinction, then, between justifiable self-esteem, and the fatuity of a coxcomb?”

“*Who* is to decide upon the justifiability of self-esteem?”

“The innate conscience and sense of rectitude which every man brings with him into the world!”

“Pho—pho!—a blind guide—an obscure oracle! All I learned at the abbey was that the character of a parasite is the natural growth of such a soil; and that no man of honourable mind, having other means of subsistence, should place himself in a noble family on terms of dependence.”

“Surely, if his position there be specific, it is his own fault if he do not maintain it.”

“*Experto crede*—not *Roberto*, but Philip Fairfax! It is surprising in how many specious ways one may be elbowed off, or seduced off the pedestal, on which one is predetermined to stand one’s ground. We are not, at the moment, conscious of our dislodgment. It is only on reflection one finds one has forfeited one’s self-respect, and the respect of others. Trust me, Cleve! Be a village curate, rather than a courtly chaplain;—be a country schoolmaster, rather than bear-leader to a lord!”

“Yet surely the society of the eminent men to which you are thus introduced—”

“May be bought at too high a price!—A few hours’ enjoyment of interesting and improving conversation, does not repay the insolence of servants and slights of their masters. It is not once in a thousand instances, that a man in my situation meets with the consideration I have received from the Howard family. Yet there have been

moments when I should have preferred being employed to break stones on the King's highway."

Nor was this the only point on which the experience of Fairfax afforded a valuable lesson to Jervis Cleve.

"All this is very well!" said he, after witnessing the brilliant recitation of his young friend's prize poem. "But do not let such triumphs mislead you. Do not limit your ambition to the barren honours of a man of letters. It is a calling that will perhaps give you bread — perhaps immortality;—but never suffice to place your name in the list of benefactors to the human race. There is little consolation at the close of life in the consciousness of having created an ode or an epic. I had rather have invented a turn-screw, or improved the ventilation of a prison."

Such were the arguments which controverted the favourite axioms of Peter Par-

menter, and confirmed the previous bent of Cleve's inclinations. Auspicious as was the career that lay open before him of university preferment, his vagrant desires were not to be controlled; and, after taking high honours, he waited patiently for the falling in of a travelling professorship, which, after the most serious remonstrances on the part of his superiors, was accorded him by acclamation.

His preparations for leaving England were eagerly hurried over. He felt that it was his duty to visit Bilston; and bitterly did poor Cleve reproach himself that it was a duty rather than a pleasure. Already a small sum, realized as a contributor to various scientific journals, had enabled him to settle his father in comparative comfort. But the old man clung to his native village. He preferred being tenant of an old grange named Glebestone, belonging to Madame Hecksworth, to better accommodations elsewhere:

and though a stirring servant lass prevented all necessity for household labours on the part of aunt Morris or her pretty niece, both were too much habituated to work to be happy in idleness.

Jervis soon recognized the impossibility of making his father understand the bent of his plans. Born in an inland county, Richard Cleve could not so much as figure to himself the nature of the great deep. He repeated with childish iteration that "poor Jervy was going to visit foreign parts." But foreign parts conveyed to the old husbandman's mind the impression of Scotland or Ireland, as much as of a continental country.

It was not at Bilston, in short, that the poor student was to find encouragement for his projects, or sympathy in his success. Neither aunt Morris nor Jenny saw cause to rejoice in a plan that was to remove from them the pride of their days. So long as he remained a dweller in the land, they

cherished hopes that he might live to achieve the curacy of the parish. But who could say what he might become, while wandering away his youth amid the abominations of Papists, and the wickedness of foreign parts?

They would almost rather have had him adhere to weeding, with the certainty of becoming head gardener at last!

CHAPTER X.

If a man makes me keep my distance, the comfort is that he keeps *his* at the same time.—SWIFT.

ON the point of quitting England for years, Jervis Cleve found to his regret that it was expected he should go through the ceremony of leave-taking at Bilston Hall. Mrs Hecksworth had not yet visited the new residence of the humble family so largely indebted to her bounty. At the old cottage she was in the habit of making frequent calls; but for the last six months the Hecksworth family had been resident in London, and it was only on the eve of Cleve's visit they had returned to the Hall.

Business of considerable family importance had detained them in town. On attempting to prove the will of the late squire, it was

discovered that the deed of entail, which, if he had left a boy would have secured the Bilston estate to his eldest son, secured it also, failing male heirs, to his eldest daughter. His laudable wish to divide his property equally among his children was thus frustrated; and, saving Mrs Hecksworth's claim of dowry, the lands and tenements of Bilston were to devolve upon Lucy.

Of these particulars, rumour had given only slight indications in the village. Jervis was not at present aware that the damsel by whose transmission of her mother's purse his feelings had been so deeply wounded, was now lady paramount at the Hall; or that the Miss Lucy whom his earliest recollections portrayed as a smiling infant in arms, at the time he was employed in sweeping up dry leaves or the grass of the new-mown lawn, was now a great lady; bearing a scutcheon of pretence, and as many thousands a year as entitled her to be called an heiress. Dame

Fortune, by whose caprices the ragged boy had been transformed into the thriving scholar, had lined with gold the pockets of the lovely girl whose form and face were now ripening into womanly beauty.

Fairer in the eyes of the spell-bound Cleve than even her mother had ever been, his heart thrilled within him as she directed a few kindly words to the gifted *parvenu*, who, for the first time, was offered a chair in presence of Mrs Hecksworth of Bilston Hall.

“You find your father comfortable, I hope, Mr Cleve?” demanded the squire’s widow, in a tone of patronage. “Your aunt, poor woman, is getting sadly infirm. But it appears there is no longer a necessity for her working so hard as formerly. You have only one sister at home, I think?”

“Only one, madam.”

“The others are in place, in London, I fancy?”

“The eldest is married to a tradesman;—the second is no more.”

“And your brothers?—There was one, I remember, who turned out unfortunately. Have you never had tidings of him?”

“None, madam.”

“The others are in service?”

“In service, madam, and doing well.”

“You were acquainted, I believe, at Cambridge with a connexion of ours?” said Lucy Hecksworth, feeling for the embarrassment of poor Cleve under the catechizing investigations of her mother. “Davenport—Mr Herbert Davenport?”

“I was very slightly acquainted with him,” replied the embarrassed young man.

“We met him the other day on our way from town, at my cousin Sir Richard’s, at the Grange,” continued Lucy; “and he gave us a highly flattering account of your college achievements, without hinting that we should see you here. Mr Davenport mentioned that

you were going on a visit to Lord Wrexhill."

"His lordship did me the honour to invite me, but I declined the invitation."

"Quite right!" observed Mrs Hecksworth, more worldly-wise in her estimate of social distinctions *now* than when a sentimental pale-ness and a crop of raven hair had sufficed to interest her in the destinies of a sickly gardener's boy. "Nothing leads to mortification and disappointment more surely, than disproportionate connexions."

"But Mr Cleve, mamma, is the intimate friend of Lord John Howard, the son of Lord Wrexhill."

"The intimate friend of his lordship's tutor, Mr Fairfax,"—amended Cleve, with haughty bitterness. "Lord John Howard honours me with his *notice*."

"I am happy to find that you discriminate so judiciously," observed Mrs Hecksworth, with some dignity.

“And *I* am surprised to find that Mr Cleve creates a distinction where it is not made by others. Herbert Davenport (the constant associate of the Duke of Attleborough, a cousin of Lord John), assured me that Lord John Howard had not a friend he regarded more dearly.”

“What do you think of our improvements?” abruptly demanded the lady-mother, eager to change the conversation, which was taking a critical turn. “Don’t you find the lawn vastly improved by the removal of that high laurel hedge which used to shut out the evening sun?”

Lucy Hecksworth looked vexed, and Cleve coloured as deeply as his sallow complexion would admit. All this sounded to both of them so like—“Admire how we have improved our family place, since you used to weed in the garden!”

After a few words in reply, he rose therefore to take a respectful leave. It was impos-

sible for him to forget that the domineering squire's widow, by whom he was despised as a *parvenu*, was the identical creature who, in her kindlier youth, had extended a hand of compassion to his miseries.

But though it was impossible to be less than grateful, it was impossible to be *more!*

On every side, indeed, his feelings were tortured at Bilston. He was as much a stranger in his father's house, as in that of the squire. The poor half-doting man stood in awe of his own child; and even his sister, as they strolled together through the old coppice, marking the same effects of the same evening sun on the hoary trunks of the same old beech trees,—or stood watching near a secluded foot-bridge over the brook, where its course was obstructed by the clustered alder bushes which formed a shelter for the kingfisher hovering over beds of blue forget-me-nots, so bright of hue that they looked like feathers shed from its breast,—even Jane,—*even Jenny*,—did

not unfold her thoughts to him as formerly. She fancied her girlish remarks too trivial to be offered to so great a scholar. Unconscious of the unwritten poetry contained in her artless mind, she knew not how eagerly Jervis was watching for her simple words, as indications of the purest spirit of womanliness,—the only angelic influence left on earth.

Of his own prospects, indeed, she said much:—of herself, nothing! It was all question,—all interrogation. She felt that nothing *she* could have to reveal had any further right to interest her refined and over-educated brother.

“I see how it is!” communed Jervis with himself, as, on the return of his sister to her household affairs, he pursued his evening saunter alone through those furzy thickets of hazel and maple in which, when roaming in his melancholy childhood, he had been accustomed to form such glorious visions,—visions how far beyond even the

brightest realization of human life!—"I am now alone.—I have lost my family.—I have lost my happy household intimacies.—I have renounced every better tie of the heart.—I am in a false position; and all that is unnatural begets misery and regret."

But to these nervous misgivings, to which genius is on some account or other peculiarly susceptible, genius brought its consolations, like balm flowing from the wounds of some Indian tree. He was forced to admit that his gains exceeded his losses; that he had not only obtained in expansion of mind more than he had forfeited by contraction of the affections, but secured the means of solacing the old age of his father. His present morbid state of feeling sometimes prompted him, indeed, to inquire whether even his father was not happier in his old cottage, surrounded by the homely objects long familiar to his eyes, than amid the unnatural comforts forced upon him. But it was impossible to pursue

these fastidious arguments. His infirm kinswoman and gentle sister were redeemed from necessity for the hard labours which formerly had worn away their lives; and he was forced to admit that his preferment was already bringing forth good fruit.

This unsettled state of mind was, in fact, natural to his years. The mere consciousness of power does not suffice to elevate. As yet, he had given only indications of genius still to be realized. Time was wanting to satisfy the world that his acquirements were to place a new planet in the sphere of immortality, rather than dazzle it with the coruscations of a useless meteor. Time was wanting to convince the great that the peasant boy was an aristocrat of nature's creation; or even to certify to those who loved him and founded strong expectations on his future excellence, that the simplicity of his character was not mere inexperience of the world; but that virtue as surely pre-existed there

as the oak in the acorn. For time is indispensable to confirm the patent of all who aspire to honours beyond their sphere.

The boyish impertinence of a Herbert Davenport, or the empty hauteur of a Mrs Hecksworth, had made it apparent to Jervis Cleve that the splendour of his launch would avail nothing to keep him buoyant on the waters ; that it was by his own exertions he must be preserved from wreck ; that the sanctuary erected by other hands must be

By its *own* weight
Made steadfast and immovable.—

But if the responsibility of his future fortunes devolved wholly on himself, it was not a responsibility greater than he could bear. Often did he repeat to himself the striking exhortation of Siegfried Mahlmann, dwelling on every line as though it conveyed a spirit-stirring lesson to his soul.—

When the gloom is deepest round thee,
When the bonds of grief have bound thee,
And in loneliness and sorrow
By the poisoned springs of life

Thou sittest, yearning for a morrow
That will free thee from the strife ;—

Look not upwards, for above thee
Neither sun, nor star is gleaming ;—
Look not round for some to love thee ;
Put not faith in mortal seeming ;
Lightly would they hold and leave thee.
Man and woman would deceive thee.

But in the depths of thine own soul
Descend, and mightier powers unroll—
Energies that long have slumbered
In its trackless depths unnumbered.
Speak the word !—the power divinest
Will awake, if thou inclinest.

Thou art lord in thine own kingdom ;
Rule thyself—thou rulest all !
Smile, when Fortune's proud dominion
Roughly touched shall rudely fall.
Be true unto thyself, and hear not
Evil thoughts, that would enslave thee.
God is in thee !—Mortal, fear not ;
Trust in Him, and he will save thee !*

One last trial, however, still awaited him in England. If gratitude had forced him into the presence of the Squires of Bilston, gratitude could not fail to conduct him across the weedy court-yard of Fairford College.

“ My dear boy, — my dear child, — my

* Translated by a young lady.

dear Cleve!" said or rather sobbed his old preceptor, when, at the close of his daily labours, he found his favourite scholar seated in his gloomy chamber of dais, awaiting his release,—“I was afraid you had forgotten me!”

“Never!” replied Cleve, clasping the old man’s withered hands, and noting with grief the change in his appearance, intimating a sudden break-up of the constitution, such as often awaits those who attain without illness a green old age. “I was here, you know, at Christmas, on my way back to Cambridge.”

“Ay, ay?—was it no longer ago than Christmas?—Only six months?—Time seems to hang heavier, my dear Jervis, as we live longer in the world. The momentum is exhausted; the machine flags in its action. I’m not so young as I was—not so able for exertion.”

“I fear you have been indisposed, sir?”—said Cleve, in a voice of affectionate interest.

“No, not ill!”—*old*—only old!—And when one grows old, one hankers after rest.

My duty is sometimes irksome to me now. I should be glad to enjoy a doze on a summer's afternoon in my easy chair, instead of the endless labour of tuition. Teaching grows tedious, my dear boy, after fifty-five years of unremitting practice. I want rest—I want rest!”

“And why not retire then, sir, and enjoy your remaining days in quiet?” inquired his former pupil.

“Ah! Jervis!—if you would but have made up your mind to take orders and succeed me in my post! For now-a-days, these master-ships are only given to divines, and I fear if you were to become a candidate——”

“I am not so ambitious!” replied Cleve, with a smile. “I have not your worth and temper to render me fit for such a post, or such a post for me.—Fifty-five years of tuition!”

“It is not, however, solicitude touching my successor that keeps me here,” replied the old man,—having summoned the still older woman who officiated as his handmaiden to

bring the trivet and tea-kettle for the only meal his experience enabled him to regard as sociable.—“ But I want means to retire with decency. Frugally as I have lived, I thank God that my heart has not been hard enough to lay by aught worth speaking of, out of my small stipend. Somehow or other, I never looked forward to this time. I knew that while zealous in the discharge of my duties, the Board would not remove me; I forgot that I was under the control of a master mightier than the Board. I forgot that I might grow old, infirm, and weary. I thought peace was for another world.—I did not anticipate that I should ever yearn after it *here!*”—

The tenderest compassion arose in the mind of the pupil as he listened to these words. But his next impulse was a feeling of self-gratulation that by his means the old man, his father, had been secured from such a crisis, and might go down in quietness to the grave.

“ Still, I think I might make shift to get

on for my few remaining years (at three-score and twelve, my dear Jervis, no need to lay in any wondrous provision for the future!) if the governors could be induced to grant me a small retiring pension."

"Induced?—they could not refuse so well-merited a concession!" cried Cleve.

"I don't know. The mayor of Fairford is the only one of them who troubles himself with the administration of the affairs of the college. The treasurer, you know, is appointed by the corporation, and both mayor and treasurer have shown themselves inimical to my interests. I have not chosen to connive at much that I considered objectionable in their arrangements."

"Still, so just a claim!"—

"It is not always by their justice claims are recognized in this world. But I have hopes, Jervis, my son,—hopes through you."

"Through *me*?—Do you suppose that the mayor of Fairford would be influenced by one

so obscure as myself, when merit and reverend age say nothing in your behalf?"

"I allude not to the mayor, but to his enemy and antagonist, Sir Richard Davenport (the son of your old patron, who succeeded last year to his property). Sir Richard, an hereditary governor of the college, has interested himself of late in its administration;—some say out of animosity to Mr Goswell, —some say out of pure and conscientious zeal. He attends every monthly meeting; and a proposition from *him* to the Board would do my business."

"But how can I serve you, my dear Mr Parmenter?" cried Jervis. "I am not in the slightest degree acquainted with Sir Richard Davenport."

"As his father's *protégé*, — as a *protégé* who has done so much honour to his father, —I should imagine that——"

"The only personal slight I received at the university," interrupted Jervis, "was

offered me by one of the members of the Davenport family, and expressly on the ground that I *was* the mere *protégé* of Sir William."

"If it would be any personal annoyance to you to interfere, my dear boy," observed the old man humbly, "don't speak of it again—give not a thought more to the subject!—God forbid that I should be the means of drawing mortification on your young head."

"On the contrary, if you have the slightest grounds for imagining that Sir Richard Davenport would listen more readily to *my* statement of your wishes and claims than to your own, say the word, dear sir, and I will proceed this very evening to the Grange."

"I *do* think so,—that is, I *did* think so," answered poor Peter, in a desponding voice. And there was something in his artless decrepitude so touching,—something so pitiful in the aspect of the man who had devoted his whole life long to be the companion of boys, and was returning to second childhood with-

out earning more by his self-sacrifice than scanty daily bread, that Jervis determined at all risks to make an effort which *might* benefit his benefactor, and could yield mortification only to himself.

It was not without misgivings, however, that he proceeded to the Grange, and in the cool of the evening, staff in hand, traversed the noble park. Of Davenport's nature he augured little good. He had practical experience of the coldness of Mrs Hecksworth, and the flippant personality of Herbert. The late Sir William he knew only as his benefactor; —a country baronet whose life had been devoted to making the most of his land, and the least of his tenants. With his successor, he had still to make acquaintance.

Happily, his ignorance of the ceremonies of life served to procure him the audience he sought. A stranger would not at that hour have obtained admittance. But the irregular mode of Cleve's approach across the park

happened to catch the eye of the party assembled in the drawing-room; and inquiry having determined that the handsome pedestrian was no other than the famous Fairford youth, he was instantly brought forward, with the view of making sport for the Philistines.

Had Jervis Cleve proved to be a clumsy rustic, Sir Richard Davenport might perhaps have regarded him with the good-humoured superiority testified by some high-bred hound to a cotter's cur. But his fashionable mother and sisters, and a few dandies who were visiting the Grange in their train, were evidently so much startled by the appearance and address of the *parvenu*,—nay, so many admiring glances were directed towards his fine intellectual countenance,—that Sir Richard felt it incumbent on him to resume his natural insolence. Jervis was worth disliking, — worth insulting. Jervis was possessed of personal endowments producing rivalry with his own.

Nor was the task of insult difficult, even without the forfeiture of his own dignity. Sir Richard could assume, at will, a hard, dry, stony look of superiority, animated only by a covert sneer more bitter than any uttered bitterness; and on being requested by Cleve to grant him the favour of a few minutes' private interview, his look was so repellently contemptuous, that it needed all the disinterested motives and energetic warmth of Peter Parmenter's advocate, to encourage him in his benevolent errand.

While in a few brief but striking sentences he made his appeal, Sir Richard's eyes were fixed on the carpet; nor did he vouchsafe a word in reply. To animate a cold auditor is the most dispiriting of tasks; and Cleve, fancying from this utter silence that he was not understood, proceeded to recapitulate his arguments and renew his petition.

“ I perfectly apprehended your meaning in

the first instance," said Sir Richard at length, with curling lip and measured tone. "I was only at a loss to conceive, sir, what motive could have determined you to apply to *me*, with whom you have no personal acquaintance or connexion, instead of allowing the interests of this worthy old gentleman, the Fairford schoolmaster, to be placed in the regular course, under the consideration of the Board of Governors of Fairford College?"

Cleve was chilled to the soul. But he had self-possession to reply that Mr Parmenter himself entertained a hope of finding his pretensions more favourably considered by a scholar and a gentleman, than by the corporation of a manufacturing town.

The Fairford youth perhaps intended to recal Sir Richard Davenport, by this allusion to his social position, to a sense of how ill he was fulfilling his duties in either capacity. Nor was the reproof thrown away.

A premeditated sarcasm stood suspended on the lips of his auditor.

“ This poor old man feels that the sands remaining in his glass, are numbered,” pursued Jervis.

“ I beg your pardon ?”—demanded Sir Richard, as if apologizing for not understanding the metaphor.

“ Mr Parmenter is so old a man,” resumed Cleve, disappointing his malicious antagonist by remaining unperturbed, “ that patience would be henceforth a weakness rather than a virtue. He must either receive immediate relief, or will receive it too late.”

“ I am not aware in what light the Board may be prepared to view a petition urged in so peremptory a manner,” said Sir Richard, haughtily.

“ If any fault of respect be perceptible, sir, in my mode of urging it,” said Jervis

Cleve, suppressing, for the old man's sake, his rising indignation, "be not the penalty visited upon one who is little able to bear up against severity. This man, although a scholar whose endowments might put the most eminent to shame, is poor, sick, old, and humble. Judge whether his remaining days ought to be embittered by harshness, however much I may have erred in trespassing upon the politeness of Sir Richard Davenport."

By the movement of the hat he held in his hand, the young man indicated that he was departing. For the audience had not been a sitting one; and Sir Richard had no further mode of testifying his impertinence, nor any opportunity of redeeming it. Almost before he had time to ring the bell, Cleve was out of the room,—out of the house. He was gone before the inquisitive group which had been watching his colloquy

with the baronet from the further extremity of the drawing-room, suspected that they were to see no more of him; and Davenport's reply to their inquiries concerning the object of his visit, "Oh! charity for his old schoolmaster, or some such trash!" was answered in its turn by eager offers of a subscription on the part of the pretty triflers, on whom the mournful brow and expressive voice of the young scholar had made so favourable an impression.

Such was the result of Cleve's first effort in diplomacy! And though the success of the memorial he drew up that night on quitting the Grange (which was the means of determining the Board of Governors to accord a liberal pension to the superannuated Parmenter, as well as an asylum for life in the college whose mastership he immediately abdicated) was a source of sincere happiness to him, it could not heal the wounds so

gratuitously inflicted on his pride by Sir Richard Davenport. These remained smarting!

His last impression of his native country was darkened by the hauteur of his patroness, and the insolence of her nephew.

CHAPTER XI.

More solid things do not show so well the complexion of the times, as ballads and libels.—SELDEN.

THE Clutterbucks of Portland place were average specimens of the class to which modern parlance has assigned the name of the aristocracy of wealth; a class of the community which, in the second generation, may produce phœnixes; but which, in the first, is more prolific in jays—addicted to fine feathers and prodigious chattering!—

For people must be educated before they can educate; and the upstart millionaires, still in the first gloss of their electro-typic gilding, have their lesson to learn.

Caroline and Emma Clutterbuck were showy-looking girls, reared in the enjoyment

and acquirement of everything that can be had, or known, for money.

Devoid of the natural good breeding which is the growth of good nature, and imperfectly versed in the forms of etiquette inculcated as a lesson by the governess, their beauty wanted attraction, and their manners polish. Co-heiresses to three hundred thousand pounds, they had been crammed with accomplishments in proportion to their fortunes; and on emerging from school-room seclusion into the glare of society, by a transition as instantaneous as that which ignites a gas-lamp, they were required to study as elaborately the mysteries of dress and fashion, as formerly the sonatas of Thalberg, or the German grammar. Their ambitious mother had set her heart upon their renewing the alliance of the Corbet family with the peerage.

Both sisters were now reigning beauties in the showy ballrooms of their father's scrip and omnium connexion; and attracted the

utmost admiration in the neighbourhood of the villa which he called his country seat, fifteen miles from Hyde-park corner; and while old Clutterbuck affected the bluff country gentleman, and presumed upon his hundred and fifty acres to offer hunting, shooting, and fishing, to all his friends, and parade about his farms and bailiffs to all his acquaintance, in as high a tone as any estated magnate of the three ridings of Yorkshire, his daughters were the pride of the ostentatious dinner parties of the dinner-giving county of Surrey, led off its balls, and reduced its duodecimo squirearchy to despair. They could not forget that they had lords and ladies for cousins; and evidently valued their fortune chiefly as the means of purchasing similar distinctions.

But after sitting enthroned as the divinities of Leatherhead, Dorking, Carshalton, and Epsom, it was mortifying enough to sink into mere mortals on their annual migration to

Portland place. In London, they were nothing. In London, they were only the Miss Clutterbucks, or rather "those" Miss Clutterbucks, who passed for "lions," from appearing over-dressed in a showy box at the opera, or over-dressed in a showy carriage in the park.

Unconscious that what was considered the utmost brilliancy of fashion in their own set was the cause of their exclusion from the real *beau monde*, they attributed the difficulty they experienced in getting into the circles which were the object of their ambition, to their plebeian patronymic ; and regarded it in consequence with as much abhorrence as the galley slave his ignominious mark.

Their hope of better things lay in the Joddrell connexion; and such was the motive of their idolatry of their cousin George.

Through *him* they still trusted to attain their end. At all events, it was refreshing to hear him babble the small-talk of his fash-

ionable associates; and for three weeks after each of his visits to Portland place, the Miss Clutterbucks became insupportable to their associates from their absurd airs of second-hand impertinence.

So long as Lady Hillingdon had resided at Brighton, she too had been brought into play, as the highest honour in their hand.—When they talked of “my aunt Lady Hillingdon,” or “my cousins the Joddrells,”—the Marylebonians, measuring the tenderness of the Corbet race by their own strong family affections, sympathized sincerely with the regrets professed by Mrs Clutterbuck that Lady Hillingdon was not oftener a resident in town, and doubted not that the correspondence between the sisters was warm and frequent.

The translation of the Hillingdons to town was, therefore, a loss rather than a gain. For beyond returning the visit of her sister, it was clear that her ladyship intended to have nothing to say to them; and the Clutterbucks, con-

scious of certain projects they had entertained, and apprehending the Hillingdons might be aware of the deliberate aim they had taken at George, stood reproved rather than indignant, at this want of sisterly cordiality.

It happened that, previous to the ratification of the ruinous treaty between Joddrell and his father, George, after leaving college, had found himself in London before the commencement of the gay season, without money and without friends; where the undisguised nonchalance of his fashionable associates imparted some value to the attentions with which he was loaded in Portland place.

There was a daily cover for him at the table of the Clutterbucks,—a seat in their boxes at the theatres,—nay, a horse was expressly sent for from Shrub's Hill for his use. At first, indeed, the head of the family was violently opposed to these excessive demonstrations. But old C., who seemed to keep his good sense for the City, and his good humour

for the West End, was soon laughed over by the audacious cleverness with which his nephew enlivened their humdrum family circle; more especially when it became apparent not only that his favourite Car. lent an idolizing ear to the gay intruder, but that the gay intruder devoted an admiring eye to his pretty cousin. It was difficult, indeed, to be ungracious towards one whose presence conferred so much happiness upon the family; and George was accordingly seen riding with his cousins, four days out of the seven, and dining with them those four, and the three remaining.

When questioned by a stray fine gentleman or two concerning his fair companions, it was easy to give a vague reply, implying nothing, or certainly nothing creditable to the parties. But it was less easy to evade the inquiries that soon poured in upon him from his mother.

Harriet Corbet, the sister of Lady Hillingdon and Mrs Clutterbuck, a disappointed and envious old maid, had considered it her duty

to despatch a hint to Brighton concerning what was going on; and, though nothing but a mother's partiality could for a moment have imagined the knowing George Joddrell likely to be taken in, the ladymother experienced, or affected, as much uneasiness as though her son had not been encrusted with worldliness by a public school and the university;—seats of polite learning, where everything *but* learning is to be learned.

When accused by his mother, on her arrival in town, of having been made a dupe by the family in Portland place, George would have laughed outright, but that he judged it more amusing to mystify Lady Hillingdon by an evasive answer. *He* knew that, having now established himself in a comfortable home, he should enter no more the hospitable doors of his adoring aunt. But it would have been too great a condescension to set his mother's heart at ease by the explanation.

He contented himself, therefore, with a

sardonic smile, which might be accepted as assent, dissent, or anything else she pleased.

Finding that to extract an answer from George by direct inquiry was out of the question, she had recourse to other modes of obtaining information, by bribing his valet, examining his letters, and cross-examining his tiger; and having satisfied herself that, although letters came from Portland place to Hill street, none proceeded from Hill street to Portland place,—that servants in stone blue and scarlet liveries brought missives to Mr Joddrell, but that no answer was conveyed by Mr Joddrell's modest undress of pepper and salt,—the only point still to be ascertained was whether the young gentleman's daily pilgrimages on his favourite hack, unattended by a gossiping groom or tell-tale tiger, were directed towards the fatal neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, Caroline Clutterbuck was the unpitied victim of all parties. It seemed to escape the attention of her mother that the

poor girl was endowed with the susceptibility of her age; and that the attentions of a showy, lively young man, to which she had been exposed as a matter of speculation, might make an indelible impression. Her cousin, though estimated after the Corbet fashion by Mrs Clutterbuck, simply as the only son to Lord Hillingdon, was to Caroline a hero of a romance; and great was her affection for the clever, handsome cousin, who, on *his* part, loved only himself.

Though unprepared for the total desertion of their favourite, the Clutterbucks could not blind themselves to the fact that, from the period of his mother's arrival, he visited them rarely; *never* except after repeated entreaties; and that when he came at last, his manner was cold and constrained.

But all this they attributed to the influence of his family. It was impossible that George could be in fault. He was misled by his mother's folly. He was incited by his father

to form a more aristocratic connexion. George must be altogether blameless; nay, was perhaps as much annoyed as themselves.

Every day poor Caroline, in her most showy morning costume, and with her hair arranged with scrupulous elegance, sat by the window in Portland place, fancying that every approaching horse, cabriolet, or phaeton, was to bring back the truant. At the opera, the key of the boxkeeper creaking in the lock brought a flush into her pale cheeks; and in the park, her eyes were eagerly bent upon the dandy throng, in the hopes of discovering the victim of parental tyranny on the watch to hail her approach. But all in vain!— They never met. Their orbits were far apart. Caroline's happiness was destroyed, her health breaking. Yet George Joddrell was not likely even to hear of her indisposition!

Little did she surmise that tidings of the illness of his bay mare would have excited far more poignant emotions in his bosom!—

Had the mother of the suffering girl surmised for a moment the real state of affairs, she would not have submitted without remonstrance. But Mrs Clutterbuck, accustomed to the adulation awaiting those who are rich enough to purchase flattery and not nice in the quality of their purchase, could not conceive that a child of hers, a beauty and an heiress, should be so utterly slighted; and having made up her mind that George's attachment would eventually break through the restraints imposed by his unfeeling parents, she waited patiently, and preached patience to her daughter.

Affairs in Hill street proceeded, meanwhile, as smoothly as if all had been solid beneath the ice on which the Joddrells were skating with so much dexterity. Lord Hillingdon once more gave dinners to his brethren of the turf, and Lady Hillingdon to the elderly roués, the boon companions of Lord Charles; both the lord and lady protesting to them-

selves and each other, that these entertainments were intended solely for the recreation of their offspring.

Had Mary and Agatha been aware of either the real or pretended views of their parents in thus opening their house, a painful consciousness would have hung over them, deteriorating all their efforts at hospitality. But they were neither doers nor thinkers of evil; and excited by the brilliancy of the scene around them, were all grace and good humour, as well as goodness and truth.

“How *could* you support that odious Lady Dashwood last night?” exclaimed their brother, on the morning following one of the formal dinner parties in Hill street. “The woman is tiresome enough when she talks;—but when she sings,—(poor old greyheaded nightingale!) it is impossible to keep one’s countenance.”

“Papa desires us to show every attention

to Sir Robert and Lady Dashwood," said Agatha, in an extenuating voice; "and it would be cruel to exercise much severity of criticism on one who takes such pains to amuse us.—It cannot be for her own pleasure she undertakes what is evidently a painful effort."

"So!—an epigram from the demure Miss Agatha Joddrell!—You are improving, child,—you are improving!" cried George. "Before the season is over, I dare say you will grow quite as *mordante* as your neighbours."

"Remember that we live next door to your friends the Micklethwaites," retorted Agatha, laughing; "it would surely be difficult to rival *them!*"

"Again?" cried her brother. "You must have eaten too much pine yesterday, and risen with an indigestion. But look to your complexions, young ladies! Our party of to-morrow will be very different from that of yester-

day :—Dick Davenport and his cousin Herbert, the Duke of Attleborough, John Howard, and half-a-dozen others,—the least of whom is called a great match. Your preferment, *mesdemoiselles mes sœurs*, lies before you. Why do you look at Mary, sweet Miss Agatha,—yet with a countenance showing neither wonder nor delight?”

“It means to express interrogation. I want Mary to tell me whether I dare ask you a favour?”

“I should imagine there was no great occasion for *that* inquiry,” replied George, good-humouredly; and being as fond of his sisters as his unloving nature would allow, he really meditated compliance with Agatha’s request, provided it conveyed no possible inconvenience to his personal comfort.

“It would give us so much pleasure, my dear George, if you would invite Mrs Fairfax’s son to dinner!” resumed Agatha. “We have no power or possibility of

marking our gratitude for all her care and kindness."

"And you therefore wish me to take upon myself, towards Lord and Lady Hillingdon, the odium of having introduced to their dinner table some overgrown booby of a school-boy?" cried her brother. "Thank you, thank you."

"Mr Fairfax is on such friendly terms with Lord John Howard, and so frequent a guest at Lord Wrexhill's and the Duke of Attleborough's, that I fancied the opportunity a good one."

"You don't mean that *your* Mr Fairfax is Lord John's bore of a tutor?" exclaimed George:—"a solemn prig, whom he used to introduce by way of kill-joy or *memento mori* into his Cambridge parties! If Howard had not been the best fellow in the world, he would have been sent to Coventry for the attempt."

"We know nothing of Mr Fairfax. I am

not sure that I should recognize him were we to meet," rejoined Agatha. "But we have heard the highest character of him. It is but natural poor Mrs Fairfax should be proud of her son. It was to provide for *his* education that she undertook the charge of ours."

"Yes! and according to my mother's account, a pretty *potage* she has made of it!—However, I have nothing to say against her on that account. *I* am indulgent enough to be satisfied with you. I look upon you as two of the most unaccomplished girls about town, and cherish you accordingly. Heavenly powers! to hear those Clutterbucks hammering away at their concertos!"—

"The Clutterbucks? You know them, then? You are intimate with our cousins?—Now do tell us——"

"Nonsense! I know very little of the family, and intend that little to be less. But about this Mr Fairfax of yours."

“ You mean this Mr Fairfax of Lord John Howard’s”—

“ Write a card for him, in proper form, for to-morrow’s dinner.”

“ Before you speak to papa and mamma?”

“ Lord and Lady Hillingdon request the honour, and so forth,—and one of my fellows shall *leave* it,”—added George, without honouring her interruption with the slightest notice.

“ But if my father and mother should disapprove?”—remonstrated the prudent Agatha.

“ The party on Friday is mine. I invite whom I please. I am not responsible to the governor.”

“ But mamma so particularly dislikes Mrs Fairfax!”—

“ She does not care a straw about Mrs Fairfax. She detested her daughters’ governess, as most mammas do. But Mrs Fairfax is your governess no longer, and Philip Fairfax

never was my tutor; so scribble your card and have done with it."

"This is very kind of you," said Mary, with glowing cheeks.

"You have not the slightest idea what an invaluable friend she was to us," exclaimed Agatha, pen in hand.

"I assure you, my dearest George, your acquiescence is an act of real kindness to us."

"To *you*? The devil a bit! I intend it as a civility to Lord John,"—replied their amiable brother.—"Howard, who is ridiculously infatuated with his bear-leader, will take it in wonderful good part, that I invite him to dinner."

The warm-hearted girls were disappointed. But they were too glad of any opportunity of showing kindness to Mrs Fairfax, to quarrel with the means that secured it. They really desired, too, to make acquaintance with the excellent son of whom they had heard so many honourable traits.

But in this they were not fated to be gratified. The card was written and despatched; but answered by a note expressive of the regret of Mr Philip Fairfax that a prior engagement would prevent his accepting the polite invitation of Lord and Lady Hillingdon.

“I am glad to see that the gentleman knows his place,” said George, handing over the excuse to his sisters. “Aware that the compliment must have been intended for Lord John, he is wise enough to abstain from society where he would be so completely out of his level. ‘Order is Heaven’s first law!’ and I am the last man in the world to infringe it by degenerating into bad company.”

CHAPTER XII.

From his youth upwards to the present day,
When vices more than years have marked him gray,
When riotous excess with wasteful hand
Shakes life's frail glass, and hastes each ebbing sand,
Unmindful from what stock he drew his birth,
Untainted with one deed of sterling worth,
Lothario holding honour at no price,
Folly to folly adds, and vice to vice.

CHURCHILL.

LORD HILLINGDON was a man who, after devoting his best years to the extinction of his natural good qualities, had put it out of his power to consult any other object in life than to keep his creditors quiet, and his house free from executions. By the excesses of a few pleasant days, he had embittered and discredited the remaining years of his life.

The heartless conduct of his wife had deadened all conjugal affection. But even

his children exercised little influence over his feelings. He took no thought for their interests, either moral or worldly; his chief care being to make the best of things, out of which it was difficult to make anything good.

The Sir Robert Dashwood, for instance, for whom his lordship had bespoken the courtesies of his family, was a man without further claim to their good will than being mortgagee, to the amount of two-and-twenty thousand pounds, of the Hillingdon estates;— a claim which might be at any moment enforced. For four years past, Sir Robert Dashwood had hinted such an intention; and Lord Hillingdon, instead of frankly meeting the proposition with an explanation of his position, adopted the shuffling policy of cajoling and conciliating the man of whose will and power he stood in awe. Accustomed to treat with unworthy persons, he felt convinced that by allowing Sir Robert to form a surmise of the embarrassed state of his cir-

cumstances he should convert their friendship into an affair of plaintiff and defendant.

In this, as in most arguments inferring the worthlessness of human nature, the cunning calculator calculated too cunningly. Sir Robert Dashwood was the same worthy man in deed as in word; and had he suspected that his old acquaintance and schoolfellow regarded his intentions with alarm, would have rejoiced in setting his mind at ease.

The mortgage entered upon for a limited term, for the accommodation of his friend, had been appointed by Lord Hillingdon to be redeemable on George's coming of age; in the idea that he should then command the means of clearing his property of encumbrances. But these encumbrances having been quadrupled by subsequent follies, the relief he was about to obtain from the coalescence of his son was devoted to urgent demands, leaving nothing for old Dashwood and his mortgage.

Had this been fairly stated to the worthy man, who had, in fact, no immediate views for the re-investment of the money, all had been understood and arranged. But when he saw the Hillingdons launching into extraordinary expenses, and dazzling all eyes with their splendour, it was but natural he should conclude their difficulties to be at an end, and feel privileged to assert his claims upon the property.

It was to evade these with decency, or what *he* considered decency, that Lord Hillingdon's efforts were directed.—Trusting, with the sanguine and irrational reliance of an incorrigible gambler, to the luck of the season for redemption from all his difficulties, he felt convinced that, in the course of the autumn, the result of his turf-engagements would place him in a situation to square accounts with his friend; and all he wished was to keep the baronet in good humour by good dinners, and preserve harmony with Lady Dashwood, by

listening unconvulsed with laughter to her attempts at singing.

Sir Robert was a county member, whose prose had been listened to for the last twenty years, with respect *in* the House, and patience, out;—an exceedingly narrative old gentleman, who would lend his ears to the longest story, to have the satisfaction of repeating it in his turn. Circumstantial as a legal conveyance, as an auditor he was full of questions, as, when a narrator, of expletives.

Yet to his longest stories, did Lord Hillingdon require his family to listen, with an air of lively interest; till, at the dinners in Hill street, old Dashwood's prose kept up a sort of privileged running-bass accompaniment, to the small-talk of the rest; a murmur, as of the distant ocean, filling the ear with vague but irresistible lassitude.

Of all this, Mary and Agatha Joddrell were too amiable and forbearing to take much

heed. But Lady Hillingdon complained bitterly to Lady Ursula Wainwright of the cruel necessity of being bored with such people as the Dashwoods; and when at length the old people came accompanied by a nephew, a Mr Dashwood, the heir of the good old baronet, even the girls grew out of patience.

For the heir apparent was a bore of a very different calibre from his uncle. Young Dashwood was as rash and rapid as old Dashwood was deliberate. He had been up in a balloon, down in a diving-bell, and was the original devisor of the aërial carriage. Everything he did, said, wore, ate, or drank, was done, said, worn, eaten, and drunk, on the newest and most approved principle. The most minute action of his life might have afforded matter for a patent.

A man less calm and unexcitable than Sir Robert, could not have endured such a whirligig in his house. But throughout Bob Dashwood's flights and innovations, his uncle

went prosing on ; and Bob protested that he sometimes set off to row to Putney bridge at the commencement of one of his set stories, and was back again at Richmond terrace before the baronet had pottered to an end. On the principle, perhaps, that extremes meet, they agreed perfectly ; and like the moment-hand and hour-hand, which, with so different an impetus, move in harmony upon the same dial-plate, got on extremely well together.

There was no point on which the uncle and nephew were more unanimous than in admiration of Agatha Joddrell. Her mild countenance, her gentle voice, her unpresuming deportment, pointed her out as the dispenser of future happiness at Clarendon Hill, when Sir Robert should have worn down his last story, and Lady Dashwood quavered her last canzonet ; and the worthy people who, on ordinary occasions, found their requests met with obsequious compliance on the part of the Hillingdons, fancied they had only to ask and

have,—even when the concession regarded the daughter of their acquiescent friends.

In this opinion they were so far justified, that, on a mere supposition of their views, Lord Hillingdon issued his commands that Bob Dashwood should be treated with especial distinction in Hill street; encouraged as a morning visitor, invited as a dinner guest, and courted as a partner and carriage-caller at every ball. While George insisted that Agatha should encourage Sir Richard Davenport, as a security for his autumn sport, Lord Hillingdon protected the pretensions of Mr Robert Dashwood, as a security for his summer's play.

Their lady-mother meanwhile, whose appreciation of her daughters was surprisingly raised by the discovery that, though girls of fourteen and fifteen are sad drawbacks upon a mother's pretensions to youth, girls of eighteen and nineteen afford a considerable accession to a mother's pretensions to popu-

larity, had begun to form projects in their behalf of far too splendid a character to comprehend a country baronet, either regnant or expectant.

“ You would scarcely think it,” she observed in one of her confidential conferences with Lady Ursula, soon after the dandy dinner-party given by her son, “ but George’s friend, Lord John, is decidedly smitten with Agatha. The other evening, at Lady Reigate’s, he scarcely quitted her side.”

“ I am not surprised. Mary and Agatha have always dangles about them of one kind or other. They are great talkers; and young men like to flirt away an hour with girls who give no trouble in drawing out.”

“ To do them justice, however, I must say I never saw two girls less addicted to flirting !” said Lady Hillingdon, almost indignantly. “ They are pleasant and chatty ; and therefore extremely popular.”

“Beware of letting them split on that rock!” cried Lady Ursula. “I never saw a girl form a good match, who was what is called popular. No one cares to appropriate such general property.”

“I should say the greatest danger arose from their own fastidiousness,” observed Lady Hillingdon, languidly. “They grow so accustomed to being followed, that change of society becomes natural, and variety an indispensable excitement. It is only the heroine of a single conquest who sits down contented with her good luck, and issues orders in all possible haste for her wedding-cake and clothes.”

“Well!—I only hope Agatha and Mary may make their single conquest and put their *trousseau* in hand, without delay. It would be a great relief to all of you. Look at your two younger sisters!” said Lady Ursula.

“Charlotte and Harriet would have been just as cross and discontented, had they mar-

ried at fifteen. *Our* girls have been differently brought up."

Recalling to mind the complaints against Mrs Fairfax's modes of education, which for ten years were poured into her ears, Lady Ursula replied by a silent elevation of the eyebrows and depression of the corners of her mouth.

"And as to conquests," resumed Lady Hillingdon, piqued by the implied sarcasm, "Agatha might marry Bob Dashwood to-morrow."

"Bob Dashwood will never marry, take my word for it, till wives are manufactured by some patent process exhibited at the Royal Institution."

"Well then, — Sir Richard Davenport! *He* troubles his head very little about science——"

"*Or* young ladies!—Sir Richard thinks of nothing but motions and majorities. Sir Richard is absorbed in politics."

"Not so much absorbed as to prevent his

proposing to Agatha last week, who would have refused him outright, had not George put his father up to asking time to enable them to become better acquainted. — Sir Richard, therefore, is on probation.”

“Poor Herbert Davenport!—I would not give much for his chance of the title and estate! *Château qui parle et femme qui écoute* you know, are on the point of surrender.”

“But Agatha does not listen. She knows nothing about the matter.”

“It all comes to the same thing in the end. When she *does* become enlightened, she will not long remain blind to the beauties of the Grange.”

“Nor to the capricious temper of its master. No Sir Richard Davenport for Agatha! —I cannot think why George considered it even worth while to deliberate.”

“You intend her then to become Mrs Dashwood?”

“Why limit her chance to the alternative? I tell you that Lord John is twice as much in love with her as her brother ever can have been with Caroline Clutterbuck, whom you insist upon it he will end by marrying.”

“Lord John, I imagine, is somewhat more under the control of Lord Wrexhill, than George under yours or his father’s.”

“But why should Lord Wrexhill oppose his marrying Agatha?”

“Not to speak it ungraciously, I fancy Lord Wrexhill would oppose his marrying any one. They mean Lord John Howard to distinguish himself in public life.”

“Is that an insuperable obstacle to his being happy in private?”

“And then he is to pass a year abroad, before he comes into parliament.”

“Very likely. But I do not suppose Agatha would object to travel with her husband on the continent?”—

“Her husband, *foi d’Ursule!* Lord John

Howard will never be! It is not worth while arguing the point. *You* know as well as I do the disadvantage a rising young man incurs by too early a marriage."

"Not where rank and fortune are united, as in the case of Lord John Howard. He has his mother's estates at Coleby, you know——"

"And Mary?"—interrupted Lady Ursula Wainwright, not choosing to give in. "Has *she* her suitors and tens of suitors, like her sister Agatha?"—

"Oh! with Mary I have no patience! The Duke of Attleborough only wants the slightest encouragement to become her declared lover; and Mary treats him with the most marked indifference!"

"There may be policy in *that*."

"There might be, in any case but Mary's; but hers is downright stupidity. Mary does not like him. She says he gives so vile a proof of taste by entertaining that Mr Herbert Davenport as a hanger-on."

“Herbert Davenport is much obliged to her. Not a man in town who has just now greater *succès!* I recommend Mary not to make him her enemy. He is a person whom it would be by no means safe to provoke.”

“That is exactly her opinion of him. She thinks him mischievous, and a *mauvaise langue*; and wonders the duke can choose such an associate. But hush! I hear my sister Charlotte’s voice on the stairs. Charlotte always makes her way here on Tuesdays and Saturdays, to see whether I have a cold or a fit of laziness, leaving a vacant place for her for the opera.”

“Can she not go with Mrs Clutterbuck? Mrs Clutterbuck, who has that charming double box, and could accommodate the whole Corbet family, even if each young lady had as many adorers as Agatha and Mary!”—

“As if Charlotte had not tact enough to prefer going with *us* when she is able! But

George (though he never enters our box), has made it a point that my sisters shall not be quartered on the girls."

"Considerate enough!"

"*Considerate?*—I am certain it is only to prevent tittle-tattle between Hill street and Portland place!"

"Surely he has no reason to complain of your over-civility towards poor Mrs Clutterbuck?"—

"How *am* I to show her civility?—We never meet."—

"Whose fault is that?"

"Sophia's,—for choosing to marry a man who has assigned her no place in society."

"Would she have attained a better, by remaining in single blessedness at Hindon Manor? She is much happier with her fine clothes, fine park, fine daughters, and coarse husband, than Miss Charlotte and Miss Harriet Corbet without them. Ha! Miss Corbet, how

do you do?—What a sweet *paille de riz!*—
What delicate flowers! I never *saw* so pale
a pink!”—

“It is not my fault if Dévy has chosen to
put pink flowers in my bonnet!” said the
crabbed Charlotte, always on the look out for
an affront.

“How do, Char.!” said Lady Hillingdon.
“Dévy, did you say?—Do you employ that
extravagant woman?”—

“So long as I do not run in debt, it signifies
little whom I employ,” retorted her sister.
“It is not people who are addicted to bargain-
shops, who are the most economical.”

“Is Sophia addicted to bargain-shops?”
coolly demanded Lady Hillingdon, knowing
from experience that there was no surer mode
of diverting her sister’s attention than by
attacking Mrs Clutterbuck.

“Sophia?—With fifteen thousand a year
and not an embarrassment in the world!

Inquire of Vouillon, and you will find that all the best things she gets from Paris are bespoke by the Clutterbucks."

"I never inquire anything of Vouillon," said Lady Ursula. "Dressiness is so completely gone by, in *our* world, that poor Vouillon would be a bankrupt were it not for her Marylebone customers."

"Yes!—I fancy her customers of Mayfair had been almost too much for her!"—said Charlotte Corbet, whose angry cheeks now afforded a vivid contrast to the pale pink flowers. People who pay once in five years, make it very necessary to have a few ready-money patronesses on her books."

"But how are ready-money customers to be on any one's books?"—inquired Lady Ursula, provokingly.

"She means on Vouillon's *good* books!" explained Lady Hillingdon, with a smile.

"By the way, Miss Corbet, is the report in

the papers true that your brother-in-law is to be made a baronet?" inquired Lady Ursula.

"I should have thought that a man who has made himself, would scorn to be made anything by the throne!"—interrupted Lady Hillingdon.

"It is true titles *have* been brought into sad disrepute of late years," retorted Charlotte, with rising wrath. "But the option has not been offered, I believe, to Mr Clutterbuck. *He* is not a trafficker with government.—Do you go to the opera to-night, Emma?"

"Why not?"—

"Oh! nothing.—Only as you are looking fatigued and ill, I thought you might be glad to be spared the trouble of chaperoning the girls."

"Thank you, I am neither fatigued nor ill. I suppose my cap is not quite so becoming as those of Dévy and Vouillon. It came straight from Herbault, who seems to care more for

making one look like a lady, than like a beauty."

"I should be sorry to think my looks depended on my cap."

"Should you? Oh! it is always a comfort to have something to fall back upon;—to know that any fine day one wishes to look less than absolutely frightful, two guineas' worth of frippery will set one up!—But tell me, Char., are such the ways of Portland place that a spinster like yourself is considered a safe chaperon?"

"I never offer myself as a chaperon in Portland place," replied Miss Corbet with spirit. "Sophia is not too languid to escort her girls, when they need her care; and with *her* I am sure of a seat, whether I can make myself useful or not. I did not offer myself to *her* as a chaperon. I was sure of a kind invitation, as her sister."

Lady Hillingdon had now received a harder rap on the knuckles than, even with the aid

of Lady Ursula's flippancy, she was able to parry. The only way to cut matters short, was by an inquiry after her father and mother.—“Had Charlotte any news from Hindon?”

“Papa and mamma are coming up to town next week.”

“To *town*?—For what, in the name of wonder, at *their* age, and both invalids!”

“It may not be quite so pleasant to Harriet to pass another spring in Cheshire; and Sophia cannot accommodate both of us.”

“For which reason, she is going to accommodate the whole family?”

“Papa and mamma are going to an hotel.”

“What an expense, and what an inconvenience to people of their settled habits!”—said Lady Ursula.

“Strange as it may appear to your ladyship,” said the snappish spinster, “they have not wholly got rid of their natural affections.

They want to see their children,—they want to see their grand-children. It is three years since they were last in Surrey; and papa is naturally anxious to have a look at Car. and Emma, of whose beauty he has of course heard so much, and of whom he was always so fond.”

“Ah! they are coming up to see Car. and Emma Clutterbuck?”—said Lady Hillingdon, with a smile such as Sir Richard Davenport might have envied. “Their trip will not cost them above a hundred pounds, and the sight will be cheap at the money!”—

“How wonderfully economical you have suddenly grown!” cried her sister. “And yet, as I looked in upon Agatha and Mary as I came up stairs, I found them writing out cards for a ball.”

“And the Portland place beauties would have scorned so menial an occupation!—The Misses Clutterbuck, no doubt, are above making themselves useful?”—

“I am not aware that the poor girls hold themselves above being anything, except envious and spiteful. But I must not keep Sophia’s horses waiting.—Good bye. If convenient and agreeable to you to see papa and mamma when they arrive, you can let them know. They will be at Coulson’s hotel.”

And with this sarcasm, she took leave. But though intended only as a taunt, there was truth in the libel. It was *not* either convenient or agreeable to Lady Hillingdon just then to meet her parents. Reckless as she was, and now for five-and-twenty years emancipated from their sway, the majesty of parental authority can never be altogether defied; and of all the world, the callous Emma stood most in awe of her father.

Mr Corbet was a man of the world on whom ill health had wrought a healing and happy change. The scales had fallen from his eyes, enabling him to see through the delusions still prevalent in his family. But

this did but fill his mind with anxiety. For it was part of the evil result of the education he had bestowed on his children, that parental influence was set at nought; and vainly did he strive to impress upon the minds of Emma and Sophia the cruelty of perpetuating all that his heartlessness had been the means of entailing on themselves.

The reply of Lady Hillingdon, that she brought up her children in a way befitting their rank in life,—and the reply of Mrs Clutterbuck, that hers were educated to do honour to the vast fortune awaiting them,—were intended to mark to their father the superiority of their own position to the obscurity and penury of Hindon Manor; and to the unfilial insults of his Regan and Goneril, Mr Corbet submitted without retort, but not without anguish.

He had attained that serious epoch of life, when the glitter of the world grows importunate,—when the grave becomes a reality

to be dreaded, not a word to be slurred over in polite conversation;—when the Sunday afternoon's sermon is not felt to be too long, nor the newspaper description of an archery-fête, too short. For many years of his life, he had been in jest;—he was now in earnest. Half of his family pronounced him to be nervous; and the other half, a bore. His spinster daughters proposed taking him to Cheltenham or Leamington, protesting that his digestion was impaired,—that his hypochondriacism would soon give way to blue pill and Jephson; while Mrs Corbet, who understood only one cause for despondency, began to apprehend that her husband's affairs were out of order. One of the objects of her present journey to town, was to obtain if possible a secret interview with his banker, and ascertain whether he might not have been dabbling in joint-stock companies or railway scrip.

Thus is it, evermore, amid the stir and

bustle of the world!—The grave man is pronounced to be dull,—the unhappy man to be sullen,—the reserved man to be a bear,—the enthusiast to be a lunatic;—and thus, the only member of the family whose good sense might have been serviceable to the Clutterbucks, or whose good feeling advantageous to the Joddrells, was thrown aside like a moth-eaten garment. Previous to the good old man's arrival in town, it was preconcerted in both establishments that his visits should be evaded as often as decency would allow, with that lie of centuries—the plausible pretext of—“not at home!”—

CHAPTER XIII.

Sir S. Legend.—To find a young fellow, who is neither a wit in his own eye nor a fool in the eye of the world, is a hard task. But faith and troth, you speak very discreetly.

CONGREVE.

WHY is it that even the brightest destinies in England are so often clouded with care?—that, however brilliant their career, or pleasant their abiding place, our countrymen evince such restless delight in the vicissitudes of foreign travel?

Is it the humid climate of the country?—is it the sulphurous atmosphere of the coal-grimed town?—or is it that the heavy carving and gilding with which we are apt to clog the chariot wheels of time, somewhat retard their

velocity? Have we not made the comfortable *too* much our study? Has not life become *too* gorgeous a ceremony? Are we not virtually the slaves of hours and conventions, instituted by vulgar prejudice? Is it not proved by fact that (like some pampered youth who, throwing aside the mantle of sables and velvet under which he is weighed down, warms his blood from stagnation by a five minutes' run upon the snow,) we enjoy ourselves twice as much when vagabondizing amid the slip-shod habits of the continent?—

In England, some people are too pious to be amused,—some, too fine. The sect of the *Nihil admirari*-ans has exercised a grievous influence in extinguishing the cheerfulness of society. Even those most covetous of diversion are seldom satisfied that they have reached the right moment for attaining it. They admit that last week was a pleasant one, and look forward to some ensuing party; but it would be *infra dig.* to acknowledge, even to

themselves, that they were actually experiencing enjoyment.

The English entertain a vague apprehension that there is something silly in being merry. They interrogate their sense of pleasure too fastidiously. In the midst of the pleasantest party on the sunniest day, they fret themselves by surmising whether they might not be more comfortable if they had an easier shoe or lighter hat; and at the very height of their jubilee, suddenly remember that they are keeping the carriage waiting. So commercial are the habits of the land, that even their bills of self-satisfaction are drawn at thirty days' sight; while foreigners pay themselves in ready money, even though they pay in sixpences!—

The Clutterbucks, who in Surrey were always pining after the return of the London season, and in London consoling the disappointment of their undue pretensions by looking forward to their aggrandization in

Surrey, would have been happy girls in France, with one rough home, brightened by occasional snatches at diversion, but still more, by cheerfulness and content.

Even the Duke of Attleborough and Lord John Howard, amid the fluttering pleasures of their London season, had found leisure to become conscious of the petty irritations of life. Among the idle and frivolous by whom they were surrounded, whisperers had been found to incite uneasy feelings between the young cousins ;—jealousies and heart-burnings, such as even the most straightforward good sense cannot always hold in check. At the end of July, they parted in town, or rather each quitted London for the Rhine, without parting or adieu, and with mutual feelings of pique.

Yet no sooner was it mentioned to the Duke of Attleborough, in the course of his conversation with the Frankfort banker to whom he was delivering his letters of credit, that his

noble countryman, "Monsieur Milor Jean Owad," had arrived there the preceding day, than the Duke flew to the Hotel de Russie, where Howard and Fairfax were installed, and the young men were friends in a minute.

Every cloud seemed removed from their frank minds and honest hearts, by a few weeks' sojourn on the continent. Each had so much to tell, Lord John of his tour in Holland, and the duke of his diversions at Spa and Wiesbaden, that Fairfax had time to pass a valuable morning in inspecting the antiquities of the Römer, before they missed him from their side.

One subject of common interest, however, seemed still interdicted. To the Hillingdon family, neither of them adverted: the Duke of Attleborough having been induced by Herbert Davenport to believe that the coldness with which Mary Joddrell repulsed his attentions arose from her preference of Lord John Howard; while Lord John had been privately

apprized by Bob Dashwood, that his noble cousin was playing a capital game with the Hillingdons,—causing the whole family to make love to him, by the pretence of making love to Mary.

By these means, each was irritated against the other. But on meeting again, with the instinctive cordiality so natural at their age, they tacitly agreed to avoid future motives of dissatisfaction by banishing from their conversation, if they could not from their thoughts, the fair causes of their disunion.

Of the two cousins, though his grace was two years the elder, Lord John was far the graver. For the duke, succeeding in infancy to his title and estates, had been suffered by a doating mother to run wild in childhood; while Lord John, destined from his cradle to a public career, had been educated from the moment he could speak.

The two Scottish uncles who officiated as guardians to his grace, directed their sole

attention to his pecuniary affairs, in the conviction that in these times of spendthrift-hood, to prevent a young duke from growing up extravagant, was all that was incumbent on them; while the Marquis of Wrexhill, who of all possible books held account books the least important, trained his favourite son to become a statesman, rather than a man of business.

With rare good luck, both of these rash systems prospered.—Attleborough was neither a miser nor a prodigal,—Lord John neither a bookworm nor a blockhead; and both were disposed to bask in the sunny summer-time of life, ere they began to reap its harvests, and lay in their winter store.

“I have been having such capital fun at Spa!”—said the duke, when at length they closed their morning with a drive along the banks of the Mein, to leave their names at the country-house of the English minister, to whom they had brought letters.

“Were there any London people?”

“Very few. Parliament detains them in town too late for the season of the German baths. But we had lots of Russians—besides Prince Albert of Reuss, and his pretty, romping bride; a few charming Belgians; several capital fellows—who may have been Prussians, Bavarians, Austrians, or Wirtembergers—but at all events (by their pipes and *sauerkraut*) Germans;—and, though last not least, a few highly-amusing Americans.”

“I never yet saw an American to my taste,” said Lord John. “If educated, they are self-sufficient,—if uneducated, coarse; but invariably disagreeable.”

“They amuse *me*. One may always laugh at or with them; and we had field for both. There was a capital family of savages, *gen-uine* as imported from the Ohio, of the name of Sogg;—a papa and mamma Sogg, with Miss Olympia, Miss Euphrasia, and a whole horde of close-shorn long-backed little monsters, Master Ephraim Sogg, Master Cle-

omenes, and Master Hugo Grotius; all as good as anything one finds in Mrs Trollope. But by way of counterbalance to their vulgarity, there was a delightful fellow,—one of the pleasantest I ever met, with a lovely Creole wife. I assure you, Colonel Cleveland might have figured at Crockford's or Almack's without having his Yankeeism detected."

"But *was* he an American?"—

"Oh! yes!" replied the duke in a sing-song tone, borrowed of Charles Mathews or Miss Olympia Sogg. "One of those wealthy Americans who, finding nothing at home to buy with their money (not even the comforts and decencies of life,) are forced to become absentees. Cleveland is the finest rider you ever saw; and why is he to deny himself the gratification of fox-hunting and the turf? Then, his conversational powers are something really amazing! I never heard such a flow of wit. He was quite the rage!

At Spa, the pretty Belgians were at his feet; and if the Emperor should happen to learn the sort of antics that his beautiful Countess Sabranitecki was playing with the handsome American, I fancy the Seven Stars would have to strike their flag on the Neva."

"And the pretty Creole?"

"An insignificant little doll. The sort of trinket that a rich parvenu hangs to his watchchain as an ornament, and allows to glitter there without taking further heed."

"Your friend then is a *roué*?—A Yankee *roué*! What an anomaly!"

"Cleveland is a monstrous fine fellow, full of cleverness and warm feeling; but I don't know that I should praise him on the score of his morality," replied the duke. "And you, Jack!—What pleasant acquaintances did you make among the Vrowes and burgomasters?"

"I found delightful society at the Hague. The Dutch court is the only really courtly

gathering-place remaining for Carlists, Tories, and Legitimists."

"Carlists and Legitimists!"

"Even a liberal like yourself must admit that they have their merits. The standstill tribe have more leisure for polishing their manners and cultivating their minds, than the push-on-keep-moving order, such as yourself and Bob Dashwood."

"And you really found the standstills agreeable?"

"Exceedingly!—people of simple, cordial, character, that put to the blush those varnished surfaces we left behind in London."

"London women are, I admit, the most worldly of human beings!"—observed the duke, with a sigh.

"Fine ladies are, probably, worldly, in every clime and country. But the worldliness of London girls is certainly the most offensive. Marrying so much later in life than the women of other lands, the *girls* of London

become guilty of arts and manœuvres which elsewhere belong by privilege to married women."

"And where do you pass the winter, Jack?" inquired the duke, feeling that they were approaching tender ground.

"At Florence, or perhaps Venice. I must do something besides amuse myself. At Rome or Naples, there would be no resisting the seductions of society.—And you?"—

"*I* mean to amuse myself.—Rome or Naples, therefore, is my mark!—But I shall loiter away a month first on the Rhine, and in Switzerland."

"In that case, let us proceed together!" said Lord John. "Fairfax and I do not want to be in Italy till September; and you may take leave of us at our winter quarters, before you proceed to the South."

The news of this arrangement was highly welcome to Philip Fairfax. The liveliness of the Duke of Attleborough was just what he

wanted in the companion of his pupil, who was of a graver turn of mind than at his years appeared desirable. Fairfax knew that it was Lord Wrexhill's desire to promote a friendship between the two young men; the wishes of the family being centred in an alliance between Lord John and his cousin, Lady Julia Howard; so that the tutor's satisfaction at being in some degree exonerated from the task of companionship, was every way justifiable.

The advantage, meanwhile, was mutual. To secure the company of Fairfax and his cousin, the duke was easily persuaded to visit monuments and examine antiquities, to which, alone, he would not have given a moment's attention; and while the two learned pundits were reading or conversing, it was his grace's amusement to prepare for them a sail upon the Rhine, a scamper through the valleys, or some mining expedition, coming within his notions of a lark.—

Between ruins, monasteries, operas at Frankfort, and carouses at Heidelberg, they passed a pleasant and varied autumn; figuring one morning among the courtierlings at Mannheim, and next day, at one of the charming fêtes of the charming *Duchesse D'Alberg*.

These diversions and the month of October had drawn to a close, when the party found themselves sole occupants of the vast hotel of the *Badische Hof* at Baden; where the swarm of gaudy summer flies had vanished, and nothing was to be seen but carts loading with the *batteries de cuisine* of customerless restaurateurs, and the fiddle-cases of departed orchestras.

The weather was cheerless. The autumn wind blew hither and thither in volleys the seared leaves of the beech woods. Stern masses of rock were beginning to be revealed on the precipitous *côtes* sheltering

the town, so that the grey ruins of the old castle were no longer distinguishable in solitary contrast with the dark green pines; and nothing less than the temptation afforded by the announcement of a grand ducal boar-hunt in the neighbourhood of Forbach, on the morrow, would have induced the party to remain four-and-twenty hours longer in the desolate spot.

It was some comfort that they were not destined to remain quite alone in the galleried barn, through whose corridors the wind was howling so dolefully. Late in the evening of the stormy day of their arrival, a considerable bustle in the house announced newer comers than themselves. The old roof rang with the swearing of couriers and shrillness of lady's maids; till the duke could not resist inquiring the name of the new comers, prepared of course to receive the answer that awaited him, of "*C'est un mîlor,—on ne sait pas encore*

son nom!”—but *not* prepared to receive contrary intelligence from his English valet, “that ’twas nothing but a set of nasty forruners.”

On the morrow, mounted on such steeds as they were able to procure, the cousins were off to the glass-houses on the Forbach road, the *rendezvous de chasse*; where the Graf von Ahlenstein’s people were in possession of the little retreat, half forest-lodge, half beer-house, whose quaint stag’s heads and wainscoting would do honour to the scene of a melodrama.

They were late. Two minutes after their arrival, a choice pack of powerful boarhounds were cheered into the thickets. It was not, however, till nearly an hour had elapsed, that the young tyros in a sport much more rugged and dangerous though so much less gallant and exciting, than the fields of Melton, had to congratulate each other on the finding of what had very much the look of a

lurcher puppy, but which was announced by the shouts of the *Jagdmeisters* to be a right noble swine.

Inexperienced in the ways of the sport and the place, and mounted on hacks very inferior to those of Count Ahlenstein's men or the foresters of the Grand Duke, the Englishmen were soon distanced—their horses knocked up, and their spirits down. They had the vexation of hearing the tumults of the *Jagd* die away in the distance; while their panting beasts, which had probably been doing duty in harness throughout the Baden season, seemed scarcely capable of conveying them to the little inn at Gernsbach, where they had determined to halt and refresh themselves, so as not to make their premature return a matter of jest for the few idlers still remaining at the baths.

“How deucedly like tailors we look!” said the duke to his cousin, as they wound their way among trunks of newly-

felled pine trees, about to be precipitated down the steep banks into the Murg, which, foaming below, was to convey them to the Rhine,—thence to float, raftwise, to Namedy and Dordrecht.

“ Or like apprentices returning from the Easter hunt!”—rejoined Lord John. “ We have only to fancy this green wilderness Epping Forest ; these lordly pine trees, silver birches;—and heaven grant we may have anything as good as an English beef-steak and homebrewed ale awaiting us yonder at Gernsbach!”

“ We are spared at least the mortification of making fun for some knowing English groom, or insolent dandy!” exclaimed the duke. “ With all your philosophy, Jack, what would you take to be discovered in this trim by a Melton man, or some park exquisite—like George Joddrell?”

“ Don’t mention it,” replied Lord John, debating whether it might not be desirable

to cut a branch of furze to quicken the pace of the scurvy animal which had been imposed upon him. "If ever again you entrap me into one of these charming expeditions, I give you leave to make a show of me!"—

"Ho,—hilli-ho!—Attle-borough," shouted a voice in the distance, which, though English, certainly was not that of Fairfax,—the only one of their countrymen with whom they were acquainted at Baden.

They stopped (though, by the way, their horses seemed to find it as disagreeable to stop, as difficult to proceed). But after looking in every direction, no one was perceptible, either on the forest road, or emerging from covert.

At length, a loud shout from the duke was returned by a second "hilli-ho!"—and not emerging from the forest, but cantering leisurely along the road from Baden, which a sudden turn of the path now brought before them, they discerned a point-device cavalier,

mounted on a steed qualified to enchant the eye of Tattersall or Crémieux.

“Cleveland, by Jove!”—was the exclamation of the young duke, pressing his jaded beast towards the stranger.

“An *American?*”—exclaimed Lord John, leisurely following, so as to give time for greeting between the friends. “The ‘milor Anglais,’ the ‘outlandish forruner,’ a Yankee after all! Had I known as much last night, by heavens I would have seen him before I slept! Amid the wonders of foreign travel, there is nothing I am more curious to stumble upon than that *lusus* of nature and art, a civilized American!”

On coming up with the distinguished looking horseman, Lord John, in spite of his discomfited feelings, exerted himself to go through with becoming courtesy his part in the introduction of — “Cleveland, my cousin Lord John Howard — Howard! my friend Colonel Cleveland.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Un de ces esprits vulgaires qui vivent comme voyagent les marchands, en prenant les grandes routes et les voitures publiques ; métaux sans valeur, mais frappés par l'éducation à l'effigie courante, et que l'on rencontre dans les premiers comme dans les derniers rangs ; comme ces menues monnaies qui se trouvent également dans la bourse du riche et du pauvre.—SOUVESTRE.

WHO that has sojourned in that chartered Eden of the fine and fanciful,—of royal ennuyés, — noble hypochondriacs, — *chevaliers d'industrie* from Paris, and dupes from all the rest of Europe, — Baden-Baden, but is acquainted with Gernsbach ; the object of so many sentimental pilgrimages and laughter-loving pic-nics ; where the foot-traveller, expecting to put up with the small Rhenish and unctuous *Kalbsbraten* of a wretched village inn, finds himself suddenly surrounded

with Chavert's *marmitons*, pressing upon him a *poulet à la financière* and bottle of Verzenay, subtracted from the banquet of some detachment of the *beau monde* of Mayfair; who are to be found dispersed among the ledgy rocks of Ebersteinburg, perpetrating sketches, collecting mosses, singing glees, talking nonsense, and waiting for their dinner.

As Cleveland and his two companions advanced among the saw-pits and flatting mills, along that noble bend of the river Murg overlooked by the heights of Eberstein, he either found so much difficulty in keeping back his spirited horse to the pace of the broken-down Rosinantes of his noble companions, or so compassionated their shame at appearing in this wretched plight, as to rescind his original proposal of pushing home at once together to their hotel; and proposed to share their *déjeuner* at the Black Horse. They were soon seated, accordingly, beside a table spread with a gallant boar's head, with sauce of Strasburg

horseradish and *moutarde de maille*, crayfish from the Rhine, Forbach trout, and *poulet à la Tartare*. Sillery and Steinberger sparkled in their glasses, and pleasantry on their lips; while they jested on the ill-fortune of their morning's sport, and the compensation of their encounter with Cleveland.

“I perceived your britszka in the yard the moment I was up this morning,” said Cleveland to the duke; “and having insisted on being shown into the apartment of the britszka's master, was conducted into a room where I found only the skeleton of a departed breakfast, and a gentleman who seemed to have been reading a funeral sermon over its remains.”

“My cousin's tutor,” said the duke.

“Too gentlemanly a man for a pedagogue; though too grave, now I think of it, for anything else. The gentleman had just arrayed himself with a tin cantine, for a botanizing

expedition; but was kind enough to withdraw his attention a moment from his scientific altitudes, and inform me that the Duke of Attleborough was off at day-break, boar-hunting in the Black Forest, and that himself remained my most obedient humble servant."

Cleveland's narrative was enlivened by such clever mimicry of the somewhat prim bow and precise phraseology of Philip Fairfax, that the two young men, with all their respect and love for him, found it impossible to restrain their laughter. Nor did the racy flint-like flavour of the sparkling wine they were quaffing, diminish the merriment provoked by their lively friend's recital of the adventures he had been pursuing at Wiesbaden since his separation from the duke.

Colonel Cleveland's graphic sketches of English tourists huddled into steamboats, or scudding along the banks of the Rhine in search of the Brunnen of Nassau (their Heads in their hands, or their Murrays in their

pockets), were full of humorous truth; nor could his companions refute the charge brought against their countrymen, whom Cleveland described as yielding their purses with a smile to such of the foreign swell mob besetting the gaming tables of Emms, as had been wise enough to write themselves down princes in the arrival book, starring it among their dupes with an inch of red ribbon at their button-hole; but disputing them, kreutzer by kreutzer, to the demands of tradesmen or hosts.

“If you could but have seen the Regent-street shopkeepers, and their *chaste moitiés*, bowing and curtsying to these high-sounding pickpockets, as if receiving an order over their counter instead of giving an order on their bankers in exchange for counterfeit counters, you would have blushed for Great Britain!” cried Cleveland, with a hearty laugh.

“Not another word against our cockney tribes, my dear Cleveland,” cried the duke;

“or I will acquaint Howard before your face with the full and true particulars of Miss Euphrasia and Miss Evadne Sogg’s crusade against my hand and coronet! Tuft-hunters are abundant enough in England,—but they spring, like other fungi, from the lowest refuse; while you Americans seldom exhibit a taste for a bit of emblazoned parchment, till you have learned at school the value of heraldic patent. Old Sogg is a prophet, not to say a judge in his own country; Miss Euphrasia ‘learnt manners’ at the best boarding school at Cincinnati; and Miss Evadne is a contributor of occasional odes and essays to your transatlantic annuals. They ought to have known better.”

“I have not a word to say in defence of the Soggs!” cried Cleveland. “But be assured they are people who hold a very inferior position in America.”

“So I am told by your countrymen of every American who makes an ass of himself in

Europe. The moment they try to be somebody here, I am assured they are nobody at home. That there does exist a society at New York equal to that of London, no one, my dear Cleveland, can doubt who has been so happy as to make your acquaintance;—and yet——”

“*I* have lived very little in America,” replied Cleveland, frankly. “It is only because indebted to the country for my birth, that I throw down the gauntlet in its defence. I have not a relation in America; and, were I to consult my inclinations, should never set foot upon its soil again.”

“Certainly not if you consult your *friends*,” said the duke, kindly. “We have not been long acquainted; but at our age, friendships are soon made.”

“I wish *I* could say at our age!”—interrupted Cleveland. “This scar on my forehead, and the gray hairs scattered among the locks above, ought to remind you that I have

seen service, and am a dozen years your senior."

"At all events, I hope you are not old enough to reject my friendship; and may it be confirmed next year upon English ground!—Depend on it, Cleveland, England is the place where the best of everything is to be had, and the best of everything is to be done."

"By the Duke of Attleborough,—but not by a colonel of South American caçadores,"—cried Cleveland, laughing. "We Yankees, who, with our half-dozen thousands a year, pass for fine things on the continent, are soon crowed down in your healthy, wealthy, and wise country,—(whether wealthy because wise, or wise because wealthy, no matter!) You look down upon us with much the same unfraternal contempt, exhibited by one of your magnificent elder sons towards his paltry younger brother."

"Come to England, my dear sir," inter-

rupted Lord John Howard, "if only that you may amend your comparisons. *My* elder brother, Lord Sylvester, who is the finest fellow breathing, treats *me* with signal respect, merely because I am self-denying enough to work instead of play, while *he* loves play better than work."

"Play in its literal or figurative sense?"
—inquired Cleveland.

"In both, I fear. But most young men of his set and stamp, (with the exception of Attleborough here,) are apt to make their days miserable by making their nights pleasant."

"Don't except *me!*" said the duke, with lively frankness. "I never played in London, for I had other things to entertain me. But three picktooth weeks at Spa could never have been got through, without a little *rouge et noir*. I was lucky enough, however, to be *unlucky*; and having paid in black and white, by a cheque on Coutts' for my black and red,

have forsworn all further encounter with the pickpocket princes so characteristically described by Cleveland."

"So much the better!" cried the gallant ex-colonel, filling his glass. "At your age, the blood circulates too freely to admit of your being trusted with such edge tools as the dice box. No Englishman is safe at the gaming table, till after thirty. *My* countrymen may venture five years earlier. Brother Jonathan, you know, is accustomed from his babyhood to 'carkilate,' and is less easily thrown off his guard. But yonder comes my carriage, for which, in charity to you and yours, I despatched a messenger to Baden on our arrival here. We may still do justice to a late dinner, in company with Virginia and my obedient humble servant, your botanizing friend. And now,—*en route!*"

Such was the casual foundation of an acquaintanceship which soon began to exercise unbounded influence over the mind of Lord

John Howard. Like most persons of studious and retiring habits, he was captivated by the frank and reckless character of the wild American. The liveliness of the Duke of Attleborough had long excited a stronger affection in his heart towards his sprightly cousin than he felt for those members of his family whose habits were more congenial with his own; and Cleveland possessed an additional charm, in the boldness of speech engendered by the fierce encounter of professional perils. He was princely, too, in his habits of life; and the avowed scorn of aristocratic distinctions, which in an Englishman might have been attributed to impatience of his own obscurity, appeared in *him* a national virtue.

By common consent, they pursued their tour together; and before they reached Italy, Cleveland had established himself in that position of authority, which, even among the

civilized, so often attends mere physical superiority.

Eminently handsome, his contempt of fatigue and danger was such as to excite the admiration even of two young Englishmen, habituated from their birth to manly exercises. Hardy as a mountaineer, his athletic frame appeared untirable; and in crossing the Tyrol at a season so unfavourable to the passage, he had more than one occasion of putting to proof those Herculean powers, which served to redeem his singularly daring and reckless tone from all suspicion of braggartry.

By Fairfax, meanwhile, the deference gradually conceded by his pupil to the showy stranger, was regarded with some degree of mistrust. He did not like to find Lord John accord such unlimited confidence to a man of whose antecedents they were wholly ignorant, and though the grave scholar was far

from inaccessible to the attraction of Cleveland's dashing and brilliant hardihood, he was incapable of conferring his personal regard in exchange for qualities which, though calculated to dazzle a barbarian, were unworthy to influence an enlightened man. Unwilling, however, to oppose his amiable young friend in the sole predilection of which he had shown himself susceptible beyond the pale of his own family, he consented to their joining company on the road, and proceeding together to Venice.

If the whole truth must be told, there was something almost as distasteful to him in the meek indolence of the beautiful Mrs Cleveland, as in the careless vivacity of her husband; and he almost regretted the communicativeness of the Frankfort banker which, by re-uniting the cousins, had introduced so unsatisfactory an addition to the calm fireside beside which he had trusted to resume his studies with his promising disciple.

CHAPTER XV.

And up and down the light canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along.

BYRON.

ARRIVED at Venice, however, the ocean-girt city,

Lone sitting by the shore of old Romance,
Fairfax became for a time too susceptible to the magical influence of the place, to take much heed of that of Colonel Cleveland.

It was not in his nature to visit the arabesque city of the Adriatic, as it is visited by those fashionable tourists who, under the guidance of a *valet de place*, stare at the Bridge of Sighs,—jostle in the Piazza di San Marco,—scamper through the Palladian Churches of San Giorgio Maggiore and the Redentore or the Saracenic splendours of

St Mark, and up or down the Scala dei Giganti;—swim in a gondola, yawn in a balcony over the Canal Grande, laugh at the quaint draperies of Paul Veronese, buy a bead necklace, complain of the monotony of Venice; and after three days of excitement and one of ennui, return grumbling to Fusina.

Fairfax busied himself in examining not alone the heterogeneous details of its varied architecture and neglected galleries, but the unexplored treasures of its convent libraries, and those inestimable collections of the Republic, contained in the Biblioteca of the Piazzetta. While Cleveland and his young friends amused themselves (their custom ever of an afternoon), with a gallop along the Lido di Palestrina, or by a swimming match at noonday from the remote island of Torcello, Fairfax pursued his historical investigations at the Arsenal, or amid the cabinets of the ancient palaces of Gradenigo, Cornaro, Pesaro, or Foscari.

One of the most interesting expeditions he had projected was to the Armenian convent on the island of San Lazzaro, endeared of late years by association with Byron to all English travellers. But to his infinite mortification, Lord John excused himself from bearing him company; and poor Fairfax felt lonely and desolate enough, winding in his lonely barque past the Isola della Zueca towards the Mechtarestical monastery. It was not till he found himself actually in presence of the librarian, Don Pasquale, that the collection he came to visit resumed due importance in his eyes.

Scarcely, however, had he entered the library, when his attention was arrested by the appearance of an English traveller, to whom one of the Armenian brotherhood was exhibiting a MS. of Castiglione.

“Have I really the happiness of greeting you on the shores of the Adriatic!”—cried Fairfax, laying his hand affectionately, after

a momentary survey, on the shoulder of the stranger; and the smile and deep suffusion of countenance which followed this first startling surprise, guaranteed that the happiness was reciprocal. For it was no other than the Fairford youth who was doing homage to the treasures of the Armenian library!—

“I had not the least idea of your being in Italy!” said Cleve, after their mutual exclamations and salutations were exhausted. “When you quitted England, I understood that Dresden or Vienna was to be your mark for the winter?”

“We propose visiting Vienna on our way home, after a tour in Greece and to Constantinople.”

“Then our plans will most likely bring us a second time together!” replied Cleve. “I purpose visiting Greece next spring, after passing the winter at Rome.”

“Are we to lose you, then, so soon? The Duke of Attleborough and some friends with

whom we have been travelling, are to set off next week for Rome, in apprehension of being stopped by the snow."

"It was my plan to remain a fortnight longer in Venice," said Cleve. "A single man, with little baggage and no equipage, gets on where greater men are obstructed. Enchanted with this captivating city, I have no desire to move."

Fairfax avowed his delight at this intelligence. "I have been sadly wanting a companion like yourself to enjoy these things with me!"—said he, glancing round the magnificent collection amid which they were standing.

"But Lord John,—where is Lord John?"—inquired Cleve, beginning to suspect that some change had taken place in the relative position of Fairfax and his pupil.

"Riding on the Lido, I fancy, with his cousin, and the friends of whom I was speaking. At present he is under the spell

of enchantment of which most people are conscious on their first visit to Venice. But when that and the fascination of Colonel Cleveland's society have lost their power, he will return to our quiet pursuits, and we shall pass a pleasant winter. Lord Wrexhill is anxious his son should devote the next six months to Italian and German literature; and here, we are sure of the best professors and quietest leisure."

"You make me envy you!" observed Cleve.—"Had I anything less than the Vatican in prospect, you would almost persuade me to resign the yellow Tiber for the purple Brenta."

Having deliberately completed their investigation of the rich treasury of learning open to their inspection, they dismissed one of the gondolas in waiting, and returned together to the city.

It was a clear, sparkling November day—(how unlike the murky season which the

name of that detested month recals to every English imagination) and a sharp ripple on the waters crested here and there with foam, imparted to the Canal Grande that sea-green tone which its waters are made to wear in the paintings of Canaletto.

“Is not this the realization of a picture?” said Fairfax, as their gondola shot past the landing stairs of many an antiquated palace, dignified with marble and degraded by decay.

“Say rather, the verification of a romance,” replied Cleve.—“What associations, too, for every English mind! As illustrators of Venice, to Shakspeare, Otway, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Monk Lewis, we have now added Byron and Bonington; and Shylock and Othello,—Pierre and the Bravo,—seem positively more present with one, than these lean and hungry *gondolieri*; who, instead of favouring us with stanzas from Tasso, as I expected, are mute as the

fishes of the deep. But is not that the Howard livery yonder on the landing-place?—How strange it looks amid the dull dinginess of the Venetian boatmen!—Here, then, I bid you adieu for the present,”—he continued, heartily shaking his friend by the hand, as they reached the marble steps of Santa Maria della Salute, and the *gondolieri* rested on their oars.

“Farewell, till to-morrow,” replied Fairfax. “I wish I had not promised Lord John to accompany him to Count Nadasdy’s to-night.”

“To the governor’s?—I am to meet you there!”—replied Cleve. “I brought letters from Cambridge to professor Stohl, who is to present me to-night to the count.”

“Can we not go together?” inquired Fairfax, eager to see the most of one so much more congenial to his tastes, than the present companions and favourites of Lord John.

“I fear not. The professor, who is a veteran of eighty, retires an hour earlier than your aristocratic friends will make their appearance. He is a privileged man, it seems, with his excellency. But, encouraged by the hope of your coming, I will remain after his departure.”

To this promise he adhered. The gray-haired professor, a *protégé* of Napoleon, upheld by his high reputation as a natural philosopher in his professorial chair, even under the leaden influence of the sceptre of Austria, made his sober appearance in the circle of white and light blue uniforms surrounding the well-padded and highly-aiguletted governor, just long enough to present the young English *savant* to the notice of the representative of his illiterate imperial master. But after his departure, Cleve lingered behind, under the patronage of a Bohemian count, an aide-de-camp, particularly anxious to exhibit to the courtly crew his proficiency

in the English language ; who, with the aid of the dozen words he was able to mispronounce, managed to present Milor Cliff to one or two of the leading beauties of Venice ; who were as agreeably surprised by the *lingua Toscana in bocca Romana* of the young Englishman, as Milor Cliff by the singular English put forth by the young Graf von Düretzstein.

It depends upon a woman to make the man with whom she is conversing feel at home, even in the strangest and most unfamiliar circle ; and stationed beside the chair of the young and lovely Countess Maria Michelozzi, (a noble lady of Udine, in the habit of passing the winter season at Venice,) Cleve soon found himself as in the company of a friend. The lady of the Adriatic had so many questions to ask of the progress of English literature, of Byron's daughter, of Shelley's widow, as well as of the state of the arts and sciences in Great Britain—(questions which an Englishwoman

seldom finds courage to address to an enlightened foreigner visiting her native country,) that her companion soon felt on the happiest terms with himself and her.

Attributing the condescension of the countess solely to the distinguished manner in which he had been announced by the venerable professor to his excellency, little did he suspect the weight which many a fair rival and jealous admirer of the fair Michelozzi was disposed to assign to the personal attractions of one of the handsomest Englishmen who had as yet pretended to the smiles of the dark-eyed dames of Venice.

The highly intellectual countenance of Jervis Cleve possessed a peculiar charm for people whose eyes are so early and admirably schooled as the Venetians to appreciate the picturesque in art or nature. The subdued tone of their dress, usually black, and never exhibiting anything approaching a gaudy colour, lends twofold

value to the expression of the human face divine. In France and England, the gay costume of a reigning beauty is her own rival; dividing with her person and countenance the notice of the spectators. But in the best circles of Venice, bright eyes and beaming smiles have nothing to fear from the contending brilliancy of rubies and diamonds. After the first year of married life, the fair patrician of the Brenta lays aside her jewels and gorgeous apparel; and either charms by her natural loveliness, or resigns all expectation of charming.

By persons thus chastened into refinement of taste, it was impossible for the striking beauty of Cleve to be overlooked; and he was pursuing his conversation with the Countess Maria, encouraged by her radiant glances, when the Duke of Attleborough and his party entered the room.

“ You are acquainted with your countrymen ? ” demanded the countess, perceiving

the eyes of Cleve directed towards the two cousins, whom he saw for the first time attired in the uniform of Lord Wrexhill's yeomanry cavalry.

"I have the honour to know them slightly," said Cleve.

"The young man who accompanies them I conclude, from the gravity of his costume, to be a *savant* like yourself?"—inquired the lady.

"Mr Fairfax is a man of great learning, with whom I cannot presume to compare myself," was the modest reply of her companion.

"You are right—there is no comparison between you!" replied the countess, with a smile so arch, that Cleve fancied it to be ironical. "I never saw him with them in their riding parties? They are generally accompanied by a nobleman who attracts great attention here by the splendour of his equipages, and whom people persist in

calling an American, though they see him so perfectly polished in his manners and fair in his complexion."

"Are Americans usually otherwise?" demanded Cleve, with great simplicity, *really* inquiring for information.

"Nay, with all your reading and information, you must know better than I do! But surely, in books of travels we find the people of America described as copper-coloured, and habited in blankets or skins?"

Though aware that he must not expect to find, in even the best continental society, the intellectual cultivation of his own, Cleve was not prepared for such a remark from the lips of one who could appreciate Shelley and Byron, and was interested in tunnels and railroads. But his amazement was soon suspended by the hearty salutations of the Duke of Attleborough; who hurried through his compliments to Count Nadasdy in order to shake hands with his college.

friend. Howard, too, was soon by their side.

“ To think that ‘ we three ’ should ‘ meet again ’ at a thousand miles distance from the old cloisters ! ” — said the duke ; “ two of us having exchanged our rusty array of scholarship for scarlet coats ; while you, my dear Cleve, are promoted from being the darling of old Tangent into the *cavaliere* of the fairest countess of Venice. Present me, pray, to your lovely friend, and I will do you as good a service in return.”

Without inquiring into the nature of the promised return, Cleve obtained the countess’s permission to comply with the request ; and Attleborough was soon so engrossed in conversation with the Dalmatian beauty, (who, though she knew not the difference between aboriginal and colonial Americans, could prattle very prettily of music, the drama, and the galleries and school of Venice,) as apparently to have forgotten his

promise. When lo! suddenly snatching the arm of a young man in a rich foreign uniform, who was passing near them, his head averted in conversation with an Austrian officer, the duke exclaimed, "Here! Cleveland, my dear fellow!—let me introduce to you an English friend of mine, Mr Jervis Cleve."

Ere, however, the duke could complete the introduction by naming Colonel Cleveland to Jervis, the latter turned abruptly round,—his fine face darkened by an expression of mingled amazement and mistrust. It was only when his eyes fell upon the mild expressive countenance of the young man presented to his notice, that he recovered his self-possession; and with a courteous bow, commenced the usual routine inquiries of—"Have you been long in Venice?—Are you much gratified by what you have at present seen of Italy?"

The previous explanations of the countess

meanwhile had satisfied the curiosity of Jervis touching his new acquaintance; or his interest could not but have been excited by his peculiarity of air and tone. There was something almost barbaresque in the abruptness and recklessness of the handsome Cleveland; explicable enough by the fact that he had held a command in the Mexican army during the war of Independence. Though English in his garb and language, he could not easily have been mistaken for the native of any European country.

They had been engaged nearly ten minutes in conversation, (the simplicity of Cleve having in that short period revealed to his transatlantic friend that he was a Cambridge scholar, travelling at the cost of the university,) when the countess having risen and removed to another part of the saloon, the Duke of Attleborough was once more at liberty to join his young friends.

“ I promised Cleve, just now, my dear

fellow," said he, addressing Cleveland, "to requite his service in presenting me to the handsomest Italian *donna* in the room, by doing as much in his favour with the loveliest American. Where is Mrs Cleveland?"

"Virginia?—On my life, I can scarcely tell you. At the Fenice, I fancy. I dined out."

"Then you know less of her than I do; for I can assure you she is either here or coming."

Cleveland looked neither surprised nor pleased. But the duke at that moment discerning the lady in question standing prominent among a group of dark Venetians, took the arm of Jervis Cleve and impelled him in that direction.

Nothing could be more graceful and gracious than the reception bestowed upon the new-comer. Unaware how little communication is kept up between the opposite

sexes at a Venetian *conversazione*, where the prudery of the surface might induce a shrewd observer to conjecture the corruption of manners concealed beneath, she entered cheerfully into conversation with Cleve and his friend, unconscious of the comments her evident desire to please was exciting among her companions.

Philip Fairfax, who was pursuing at the further extremity of the saloon, an interesting conversation with the Benzonis and a group of Venetian acquaintances, could not resist fixing, from time to time, his scrutinizing glances upon the group. Familiarized by his residence at Wrexhill Abbey with the best order of female society in England, he was not easily dazzled by mere extrinsic charms. The sterling excellence of his own mother, the gentle qualities of her two pupils, the high-breeding and varied accomplishments of Lady Julia and Lady Helena Howard, rendered him fastidious, too fasti-

dious, perhaps, in his judgments upon women. Meekness of manner did not impose upon *him* as a proof of amiability. There was a meanness, he sometimes thought, in the humility with which Mrs Cleveland submitted to the slights of her husband; and hypocrisy in the ready smile with which she welcomed the courtesies of indifferent persons, at moments when, had she been a woman of feeling, her heart must have been breaking.

Still, he was forced to admit that it was hypercritical to quarrel with excess of gentleness and wife-like devotion. He scarcely even liked to express his mistrust in presence of Howard. At Lord John's age, it was erring on the right side to become the dupe of specious appearances. The incredulity begotten by long experience of the hollowness of the world, is at least accompanied by the sagacity that discovers secret virtues beneath the roughest surface, — as precious mines are detected by the initi-

ated in the most seeming barren districts. Whereas those who *begin* life with mistrusting their fellow-creatures, usually end by deserving their mistrust.

Even in Cleve, whom he regarded with the love and pride of a brother, Fairfax was not anxious to excite too active a spirit of investigation into the motives and manners of society. He was conscious that his own scepticism was a source of misery. Thrown at an early age upon his own resources, and deprived by his mother's position in Lord Hillingdon's family of the benefit of her maternal counsels, he had been sharpened into worldly wisdom by collision with the rubs of life. But the loss of his illusions was the loss of happiness ; and in deliberating on the future prospects of his young friends,—Lord John whose fortunes were secured and Cleve whose fortunes were to be of his own fashioning,—his wishes on one point were alike for both, *i.e.* that the veil might be gently

withdrawn from their eyes,—not rent in twain so as never again to interpose its softening influence between their disappointed eyes and the harsh realities of life.

The heart leaps up when we behold
A rainbow in the sky ;

and though we regard it with deeper reverence when knowledge has unfolded to our eyes the insubstantial nature of the optical delusion, the heart rebounds no longer at the sight.

The tree of knowledge has been plucked—all's known !—

We neither hunger nor thirst after the fruit which we have tasted, and found bitterness at the core !

Fairfax was careful, therefore, over the expressions of his feelings when, the following day, Jervis burst into rhapsodies upon the beauty of the transatlantic fair.

“ Yes ! Mrs Cleveland is vastly pretty ;
—*only* pretty, however.”

“*Only* pretty!—Is not that enough for the mere spectator? I hate to hear personal loveliness underrated. We wish to look upon a beautiful picture, a fine statue——”

“As an effort of art,—as a specimen of the creative powers of a human being.”

“No—of the imitative. We admire these efforts in proportion as they are true to nature, and nature in proportion as she produces a *chef-d'œuvre*.”

“You see with the eyes and argue with the lips of one-and-twenty!”—replied Fairfax with a smile. “Ask Colonel Cleveland what influence is exercised over *his* mind by the charms of his wife.—Ask *me* what emotion I experience while I am gazing on Mrs Cleveland!”—

“I shall ask neither of you. Beauty in the eyes of a husband, and beauty in the eyes of a poet, are very different things. But I should despise myself as much for indifference to beauty in a woman, as in

a fine landscape or noble specimen of architecture.”

“ So far I applaud you ! ”—replied Fairfax, smiling at his enthusiasm. “ For the Parthenon, or Vale of Tempe, would scarcely exercise other influence over you, than as calculated to afford an agreeable reminiscence. At all events, I am not afraid you will go mad for the love of the façade of the *Procuratie nuove!* So put on your hat and come with me to visit it; and we will examine together the sculptures of the Loggetta.”

“ Go mad for love ?—Why surely ”—cried Jervis Cleve, interrupting himself, “ you do not for a moment fancy that this Mrs Cleveland—— ”

“ I fancy nothing whatever about Mrs Cleveland,—except that in my opinion she has occupied a larger share of our conversation than she deserves ! ”—replied Philip Fairfax. “ Let us leave her merits and de-

merits to her spouse, to whom they lawfully belong,—and away to our morning's peregrinations."

"Lord John, then, is engaged to-day?" inquired Cleve, following his philosophical companion down the dirty marble stairs of the palazzo.

"The day is fine. He is gone to the Lido with the duke. The Clevelands and his grace remain here only ten days longer. Till their departure, I shall not thwart Lord John by urging the prosecution of our intended pursuits."

And having summoned the boatmen, the gondola was detached from the anchorage poles fronting the palace, bearing the arms of the proprietor; and stepping at once from the marble vestibule into the barque floating little below its level, they installed themselves in the "coffin clapt in a canoe," and were soon gliding swiftly under the Rialto towards their destination.

Happy was it for Jervis Cleve that he possessed so wise a Mentor in the only human being endeared to him by the name of friend; and thrice happy that a singular concatenation of circumstances had thus brought them together, on the threshold of his entrance into society.

Isolated from all ordinary ties by his remarkable position, to *him* friendship was necessary, to supply the support usually yielded by family affection. Unable to derive counsel, like other young men, from his nearest kindred, he must create for himself those interests in life of which education had rendered him bankrupt.

He might appeal by letter, indeed, to the tenderness of Jenny; or beseech the benediction of aunt Morris and her poor old brother, as consolations for his lonely career. But it was from aliens he must receive the restraining suggestion, — the wise remonstrance, — involving those distinctions of arti-

ficial life, which only a hermit or a blockhead presumes to despise.

Nor were the restraining suggestion and wise remonstrance likely to be superfluous. The frivolous dissipations of an Attleborough or a Joddrell are in fact less vitally influential over the character, than the deep-seated passions of a soul such as that of Cleve; as the waters which sparkle in fountains and *jets d'eau*, possess less force than a pent and struggling stream.

Proof against vulgar irregularities, the young scholar felt a monitor to be unnecessary, only because at present ignorant under how specious an aspect may present themselves

“Those thousand paths that slope the way to crime!”

END OF VOL. I.



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