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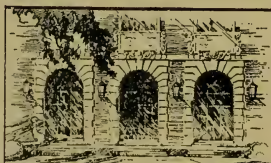
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THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

LONDON :
ROBSON AND SON, GREAT NORTHERN PRINTING WORKS,
PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

A Story.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A. F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

“BELLA DONNA,” “NEVER FORGOTTEN,” “JENNY BELL,”
ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

REPRINTED FROM “ALL THE YEAR ROUND.”

LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18 CATHERINE ST. STRAND.

1866.

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THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

Book the First.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO PASSENGERS.

THIS story, whose course shall lie along the open, every-day thoroughfares of life, with the houses of yesterday on each side, and the every-day men and women hurrying along, begins at a very every-day scene: at a railway station, with the train setting off, and cabs arriving with marvellous punctuality at precisely the last minute. In one of these cabs, the gentleman who is to be the hero, comes driving up very late—it was not his fault, but that of a hopeless “block” in the City — who, indeed, seems wholly indifferent as to whether he “*had* run it a little fine” (the encouragement of the porter who had secured him

and “brought him through”), or whether he should have to wait two hours and more for another train. It seemed all one to him, though the porter at the door of the carriage, with assumed heat and prostration, congratulated him on the success of their exertions; and saying once more that “it was putting it a little too fine,” was handsomely requited for his exertions.

This evening train left Waterloo station at “three thirty;” and it was now three thirty-one. Not being one of the “expresses” which were always breaking away up and down the line, but a sober, provincial old-fashioned train, which ambled on from station to station, it was treated by the officials with the sort of unceremonious respect they kept for old ladies with baskets, who delayed them with questions. It was not kept up to time very closely, nor very full. As it “toddled” out of the station, there was indeed seen, in one carriage or two, a row of hats and heads bent down over a row of evening papers, like a class at school; but other compartments glided by—some containing a prisoner or two, some merely empty cells, and one with a lonely gentleman all to himself, who had bought half-a-dozen papers, which lay unfolded beside him on the seat.

This gentleman had a white ticket for St. Alans

in a leather-bag beside him. He was about five-and-thirty—but looked more—was spare without being thin, pale without being colourless, thoughtful without looking a hermit or recluse, with a half-dreamy air that was agreeable and not absurd. The morocco-bag had initials on it, “J. T. ;” and inside the morocco-bag were note-books and pocket-books, a volume of Boswell’s Johnson, with a name on the title-page, which was in a bold firm hand, and read “Henry Graves Tillotson.”

Henry Graves Tillotson looked quickly from one window to the other as the “dowdy” train moved on, and jerked, and shook, over intersecting rails, and glided by the huge rambling boarding-houses where engines “bait” or board, like great circuses, and the surgeries and hospitals where they are taken in and have their wounds dressed. He looked up at the men in the round tops, half-way up great masts of trees, who, with strange instruments and levers, exercised some mysterious influence on his own motion. He turned listlessly from side to side, and saw the “backs” of factories, the storehouses and yards of timber, which were “fining” off into rows of houses, then again into rows of villas, and then later into detached houses, until the trees and green fields began to spread out and encroach altogether. By which time the old lady who was

carrying him was "getting her stride," and hurrying along at a respectable pace. Then Mr. Tillotson gave a sort of sigh, overcome perhaps by this utter solitude. Yet he had selected this lonely cell purposely. He looked over at his evening papers absently, but did not take up a single one to read. He cared very little for the meeting of the emperors at Kirchwasser—or for the actual text of the last "Note;" or even for the accident in Piccadilly "This Day;" which were the leading items of telegraphic news. And thus for some hours the stations came and went one after the other, and their names were shouted, and brought with them a dropping fire of doors.

Once, indeed, a young girl in "a hat," with her mamma, were put in at a station. The mamma had many packages and parcels—sets of novels tied up with string—and seemed, indeed, to have newly come from a fair, laden with merchandise. She hardly spoke a word, but was anxiously counting her treasures, and never getting her calculation right.

The young girl sat opposite to Mr. Tillotson, and studied him with furtive eyes for the twenty minutes between the two stations. After all, there is a little romance in this sort of travelling—when of a night in the blue chamber, under the dull lamps, two or three companions come in and sit

for half-an-hour, and we see their faces, and perhaps talk with them and feel a sort of interest in them, catching even a hint or glimpse of the far-off drawing-room or fireside, to which the carriage waiting in the dark at the foot of the steps, with lamps flashing, will carry them. Then they are gone, saying "Good night," and before morning we are a hundred miles away, and know it is all but certain we shall never see them again.

This young girl talked over their tea-table of the sad-looking gentleman who was with them in the carriage.

"Such a soft, interesting face, papa," she said; "just as if he had suffered a great deal. I am sure he had just lost his wife."

"I never noticed him at all, dear," said her mamma. No more she had.

"And sometimes I heard him sigh," the girl went on. "And his eyes were so soft. I am sure it was his wife, papa."

"Something wrong in trade," interjected papa, from his newspaper.

"No, no," said she. "I am sure not *that*. He had no bushy whiskers, or any thing of that sort. O, it was the most *curiously* interesting face."

The young girl, who never met that face again, was right. For in him there *was* this strange ex-

pression of interest which attracted every one, more or less.

Mr. Tillotson, who by some accident contrived to keep his privacy, was "visité" in due course, and required to show his papers. This process repeated itself until the darkness was well set in, and the journey nearly done, and lamps flashed into the carriage at a station about ten miles from St. Alans.

There the door was opened, and some one with a gilt-headed cane got in. This was a short narrow gentleman, in a coat that seemed well made, some thirty years ago, and a tall hat that was fixed stiffly on his head; and under the brim of the hat Mr. Tillotson saw a very pink and rugged Roman nose. Mr. Tillotson saw these features, dismissed them from his mind, and returned to Mr. Boswell, with whom he had begun to converse absently when company came in.

The new gentleman seemed a little uneasy at this behaviour, for he looked from one dark window-pane to the other, and danced his gilt-headed stick up and down between his knees. He took in Mr. Boswell resentfully, and at last spoke, leaning over on his elbow on the cushion, as if reposing on an ottoman :

"You have come down from town, I suppose? Any news up there when you left?"

Mr. Tillotson looked away absently from his book, and said, "he had not heard." He then eagerly handed over his unopened bundle of papers.

"Ah, yes," said the gentleman, feeling about his waistcoat for something. "Evening papers, I see. Did not bring my glasses. I find this sort of light, you know, ruins the eyes. I never read by it—never. When I was once quartered at Walmer, lots of years ago now, I was left for a week by myself without a soul, sir, to play piquet with; and so I was *driven in* upon reading, and that sort of thing, and read so hard, sir, that I impaired my sight, sir—*im-paired* my sight. That's always the way with young fellows. God Almighty gives us these blessings without our asking for 'em, and we go and abuse 'em. Going on to St. Alans?"

"Yes," said Mr. Tillotson. "We shall be there soon, I suppose?"

"Why, yes. Do you know, I'm going there too. I live there—have lived there for many, many years, and I suppose shall die there. Perhaps they'll carry me out to a corner of the cathedral, feet foremost. What we must all, all come to, you know! Dust upon dust. Clay, sir, that a common fellow will turn up in the fields. How fine all that is in the Service! Yes, I sup-

pose they'll give me a bed there. I know the dean very well—Lord Rooksby's brother."

"O, you know St. Alans well?" said Mr. Tillotson, anxiously closing his book.

"Yes; I may say I am a St. Alans man. I was a *boy* here," he added, with a touch of feeling, "what-d'ye-call-'em'd it on the green, saw the old cathedral every morning, and used to go reg'larly to the anthem. Ah! we were all innocent then, sir."

"And now," asked Mr. Tillotson, "is it a—a stirring place—I mean as regards business?"

The gentleman smiled. "Well, I suppose it is. Let us say it is. I always stand up for old St. Alans. It's a deadly lively place; but after the hums and storms of life, of which I have seen many, Dick Tilney, sir, loves it still. By the way, my name is Tilney, sir. If you are a stranger in old St. Alans, and coming to stay amongst us, I know the constitution of the place—have its pulse, I may say, between my fingers."

"Thank you—thank you very much. I should, indeed, like to know something about the place. I have reasons—perhaps important ones."

"Quite right—O, quite proper," said the other. "Long, long ago, when I started in life, and was fresher and perhaps more innocent than I am now—though, God Almighty be thanked, I have never

lost the early implanted sort o' thing—at my mother's knee, you know—I started as equerry to H.R.H. the Dook of Clarence. You recollect, the Sailor King and all that fine time, you know! One of the best of England's line. He always said, 'I like a man with reasons, and that can *give* his reasons.'

"I shall be here, I suppose, for a week," said Mr. Tillotson, "and then—"

"Quite right—O, quite proper," said the other, making his cane dance. "You will go to the White Hart, of course—an old gentlemanly house, and, let me tell you, that is something in these days of bagmen and snobs. As I have often told Chinnery—my second cousin, the Right Honourable Baron Chinnery of Chinnery, and all that—God help us, we don't set up to be swells; for be a man an innkeeper, or be he an ostler, or be he a counter-fellow, or be he a—a—" And hesitating here, having exhausted his illustrations, he happily added, "a any thing you like; if he behaves *like* a gentleman before his fellows, he becomes one, and the noblest work of our common Creator. That's the religion I was brought up in! I have been in St. Alans for ten years now, come weal, come woe," he went on. "I was a boy there, and came back like the hare. I suppose I shall die there. They'll stow me away in the cathedral

somewhere. They're always glad to get a gentleman. I keep my family there too, sir—wife and daughters—pleasant house, good air. No state—none in the world. You know where the White Hart is? Not very far from the bank.”

“Yes,” cried Mr. Tillotson, a little eagerly, “I have heard of that. Not doing much, I believe? They are old-fashioned and behind the time. They want working up to the new principles.”

“No doubt—no doubt,” said the other. “New or old, my dear sir, it's all one to me. I am ashamed to say I am genteel enough *never* to have had a balance *any* where. Can't do it—and can't go about it.”

Mr. Tillotson was presently asking many questions about the men of the place and local matters, and whether it was going back or “coming on,” and got curious parti-coloured answers, containing a little of the information he wanted, but all mottled over with references to old days and fine society, and to the late William the Fourth when Dook of Clarence. “Tickets here,” he said, interrupting himself. “This is St. Alans. You take a machine here, put the traps on the top, and bowl away to the town. Here, George, see to this gentleman's things.” And in a moment he was on the platform, stepping here and there

with a slight “stiffness,”—and Mr. Tillotson saw this from the narrow back and long limbs—and switching the air with his gold-headed cane. “I’ll ask you for a seat,” said he, “down to the town. These limbs of mine are a little tired, as all limbs are and should be at my stage of life. White Hart, driver!”

It was the ancient old-fashioned English country and county town, in which someway the gaudy host of grocers’ shops seem to thrive most and be most conspicuous, and books to have only a feeble, languid, unhealthy existence.

“You find us,” said Mr. Tilney, as they came down a by-street, “rather in undress. The roughs here must have their politics. The Law—the Law, sir”—and Mr. Tilney raised his hat as if he were mentioning a sacred name—“the Law has its hold upon us now. The majesty of our constitution—which, if you compare it with that of France, Italy, or any other tropical country—under the blessings of which *we* live, is about to be vindicated. Rich and poor, poor and rich, are all one there. The assizes, sir, will be on in a week or so. The grand inquest will be sworn to-morrow.”

“O, indeed!” said Mr. Tillotson, absently.

“I *know* it,” said Mr. Tilney, as if this abstraction implied doubt. “I had it from Wagstaff,

the clerk. And a heavy calendar; some heavy cases; and one of extraordinary interest, most singular, in which young Filby, quartered here, and, I am *told*, a second cousin to Lady Frogmore, is mixed up. It will be taken second or third. Then there is another—”

“And what was this affair?” asked Mr. Tillotson, bound to show some curiosity.

“O, foolish, foolish! Coming home from the races on a mail phaeton, these young fellows, who, I happen to *know*, are connected with really some of the best houses in the county, began to throw orange-peel about—some say oranges. A grocer, in a small way, and called Duckett, is at his door, and is hit or splashed. Well, now, instead of doing as you or I would, going quietly back to our shops, to our scales and beams, and tea, and that sort of line, Duckett must go and bluster, and naturally young Filby, who is a high-spirited boy (his father, between you and me, went off with a maid of honour, all the papers full of it, but with stars, you know), and the others, of course, give it to him: and the result is, he gets it.”

“And he brings an action?”

“And he brings an action. Quite right,” said Mr. Tilney. “Our wild relation, Ross, harum-scarum fellow, mixed up in it too, who,

by the way, has his hands full enough. Here we are. I'll tell you all about that further on. All about it! Remind me, though."

"You must take us as you find us," continued Mr. Tilney, apologising for the town. "We shall do better by and by. I am not ashamed to identify myself with a rising place of this sort. Ah, town is really my place! Town air suits my lungs; but I believe in poor old St. Alans; with all its faults I love it still! Here we are. White Hart. A very good house. Where's Hiscoke?"

CHAPTER II.

THE WHITE HART.

THE White Hart was a great old inn, with good connections on all sides. It had a healthy old age, and, until the fatal day when a modern Grand Railway Hotel was to burst into life, would stride on healthily; just as there are old men the admiration of their friends for their spirit, and who are always described as "hale old men." But one day the hale old man falls in suddenly, and shrinks up like a rotten apple. This inn had some architectural ambition, had great rooms, where the grandfather of the present Lord Rooksby had danced with his contemporaries, and where the same nobleman had dined riotously and held his election committees; where, too, as the Honourable Mr. Ridley, he "fought the battle of the Tories for seven days!" Now, the present Lord Rooksby always went up to London to dine, "put in" his son, the young Hon. Ridley, in a morning, without expense, had no generous feeling arising out of the past for the White Hart, and fought no battles for

Tories, or any one, indeed, but for himself only and for his family.

When Hiscoke had been found and solemnly charged to take all care of the stranger, Mr. Tillotson asked, hesitatingly, if he would stay and take share of the dinner. Mr. Tilney consented heartily, and was even good enough to order it, taking care that it should be a sort of special dinner in a special room, and with special wine, which he looked after,—with special charges, perhaps, which he did not look after. The special wine, which came up all powdered with sawdust, and was carried tenderly, like a fire-arm that might “go off” at any second, mounted softly into Mr. Tilney’s cheeks and Roman features, and coloured them finely. Under the light, now that the stiff hat was off, Mr. Tillotson saw that he was a “youngish” sexagenarian, with very thin hair, and a blue tie speckled over with “pigeon’s eggs,” and that his manner, though in company with some oddities, was that of a gentleman. He was pleasant company, and kept up an animated, if not conversation, at least commentary, on life generally—for really that only bounded the range of his subjects.

“After all, one’s own fireside,” continued Mr. Tilney, “what is there comes near that? You try the one thing and you try t’ other thing—

the courts and the camps and the what-d'ye-call-'ems—and you come back to it. I am no saint, and, thank God, have never set up to be one; but Home, and the smiling affairs, eh?—that is the true charm. You put yourself into that evening train at the call of business, and I daresay were looking back at every station—I don't wonder—a cold night in a railway carriage—after the cheerful hearth and the bright faces? Come now?"

Something like a twitch passed over Mr. Tillotson's face. "I am sorry," he said sadly, "that such a pleasant picture has no existence for me. I have left a fireside indeed behind me, but it is a solitary, *miserable* one, and to that I must return. I have never been married, and see nothing to tempt me ever to marry."

"I *beg* your pardon. O, I do, indeed, from my soul," said the other, making a glass of the brown sherry return back to the table when half way on its journey. "I did not mean to touch on any thing sore. I did not, indeed. No, no, God forbid."

"No, no; of course not," said Mr. Tillotson, sadly. "Naturally, how could you know?"

"There it is!" said Mr. Tilney. "Naturally, how should I know? But I ought to have known. Bless me, twenty years ago, when I was with

Macgregor and Foley and Billy the Middy, as we called him—that is, his late Majesty King William—they would have taught me better than that. Foley, who was major under Paget Dawson, said often and often, ‘Dammy, sir, assume that every man has done something to be ashamed of. Assume that in every boot there’s a corn, sir.’ ”

But from the date of this discovery of his companion’s celibacy Mr. Tilney began to look at his neighbour as if quite another Mr. Tillotson had come to sit down there and was entertaining him with the brown sherry. His manner became softer and more deferential, and he checked his own tendencies to soliloquy to a surprising degree.

“But if you talk of rubs and trials,” he went on, “we all catch *them*. Not a doubt of it. Man never can, but always must be, blest—fine line that! God knows I have had my share—struggle, struggle, struggle, toil and trouble, from *that* high,” and he put his hand on the seat of a chair beside him. “The very year his Majesty, formerly the Sailor Dook, died, they got me a little place about the palace, a trifling thing; and what d’ye think, before he was a year gone, they took it from me—abolished it, sir!—was *that*, I ask you, dishonouring his remains! And the dean up there will tell you in his pulpit this is all good for us!

Pool! Sir, at this moment I might have my hand on the banisters of the palace stairs—I might be sitting in my purple and linen, with the rest of them, instead of,” he added bitterly, “fighting the battle of life, sir, in a damned hole-and-corner place like this!”

Mr. Tillotson answered him gently and impassionately.

“We have all to bear these things—*all*. If it is any comfort to you, you may know that there are many whose miseries are greater, and who would—O *how joyfully!*—welcome the disappointments of money, and place, and prosperity, in the room of mere agonies of mind and conscience. Compared with such,” he went on, earnestly, “believe me, you are supremely happy. You have your family, your children. You have not your fireside crowded with black shadows—the haunting spectres of the past—that drive you to seek in business and occupation some sort of distraction, but which *will* pursue you wherever you go. Ah, think what is a little place abolished beside this!”

Mr. Tilney filled his glass again.

“You put it excellently, my dear sir, and really with great feeling. As you say, what is a place?—ah! it is the shock, the wound, the *wound*, sir. After years of devotion to be cut adrift. It was the

unkindness—sometimes of nights it comes on me—just as you describe—at the foot of the bed. Ah, had I courted my Maker, Tillotson, with one three-quarters of the devotion with which I courted my king, he—he” (he paused to recover the quotation)—“he wouldn’t have—treated me in this sort of way. No, no, not he.” After a pause, “You spoke of business, I think?” Then Mr. Tilney, well back in his chair, with his armpits over the knobs, said, frankly, “Now, what can we do for you? I should be glad to tell you any thing and every thing.”

Mr. Tillotson then disclosed the object of his coming down to that decaying country town. “I daresay you have seen in the *Times* the Foncier Capital Company. They are doing wonderfully, and spreading their business. They want to work up the country districts. I myself am a director, and very deep in it, as they call it. In short, we are going to have a branch here. There is no need to make a mystery or secret about it, and so I tell you. We are determined to make the experiment, at all events. What do you think of the prospect?”

“Well,” said Mr. Tilney, filling out some sherry, “I know nothing about rate of interest, exchange, and that class of thing—I say it above-board—and as to banks, I know the brass shovels

by sight, perhaps, and ah! ‘How will you have it?’—eh? It’s a happy moment, always, getting a spadeful of guineas. Money is one of God Almighty’s blessings, let ’em preach against it who like. I have heard Ridley, the dean, harangue against it like a fury, and it’s notorious, sir, the man’s as great a miser as there’s in the clergy-list. I don’t call *that* religion. Ask me about men and women—ask me about the mere rude details—human nature—life from the palace to the cottage—I’m at home there. And let me add, Mr. Tillotson, that a man, a *gentleman*—who says his prayers every morning, and who has walked over the kingdom with his eyes open, or without doing any—well—any confounded sneaking dirty action, *is* a scholar in his way, and as learned as any of their D.D.’s up at the Close there. Uncommon good this: Hiscoke is notorious for his brown particular.”

Mr. Tillotson felt all through that there was a sound truth in this philosophy, and picked up short sketches, points, and features about the more prominent persons of the place, which were useful for his purpose.

It was now about nine o’clock. Mr. Tilney was growing very communicative, and seemed to punctuate his sentences with sips of brown sherry. He always spoke of this drink so unctuously, and

with such flavour as combining strength and cordial and restoring power, that a rich mahogany seemed to glow before his hearers' eyes, and they moved their tongues uneasily. People were known to go and order brown sherry after an interview with him.

“I am very glad you are come,” continued he, his arm still on the round knobs — “very glad. I hope you will stay. We should all like to know you. Between ourselves, this is a stifling place for a man who has clattered through life as I have, and sat and drank with the best. It is a great change, you know, after all, and comes hard, devilish hard, upon a man, sir, who is accustomed to his bow-window and his newspaper, and his cut of club-mutton, and his two fingers from a royal dook, with a ‘How d’ye do, Tilney?’ as regular as a mutton-chop at breakfast. One of these days I’ll show you a letter from that quarter; a letter, by Jupiter, that I might have written to you, or you to me. But what was I goin’ to say? If a man has been used in a gentlemanly way through life, and has been met in a gentlemanly way by a merciful Creator, it don’t become us, sir, to cut up and grumble, and be ungrateful at the end. I tell you what,” said Mr. Tilney, prying curiously into the now empty decanter, and feeling that he must forego more of that cordial — “I tell you what :

will you come up to my shop and take your tea with my girls, up at the Close? If you will do me that honour, I shall be exceedingly happy. We are in a sort of modest happy-go-lucky way. We don't aim at style or expense, because, as I can tell you, from the ve-ry bottom of my heart, not one of us cares for that sort of thing—not one. We do our little all to fit ourselves to the lot Providence has cast us for. I have only the girls in the world, and their mother. Do come, Tillotson. Don't stand on ceremony; and I tell you, you will make them happy—*all* happy. You will indeed."

Mr. Tilney urged this point with much persistence. Indeed, Mr. Tilney had an absorbing, overpowering manner, a genteel heartiness that would take no denial, and a social paternity that he put on with men. He had even an agricultural impetuosity; but it was an agricultural affection tempered by the politer affection of drawing-rooms. After a friendship of two or three hours' duration, Mr. Tilney always found his way to a new friend's arm; and as he was elderly, and previously had mainly been talking of life and mortality, this action fell in quite easily and almost gracefully. But he could not prevail with his friend, who shrank away from company.

“ Well, then, a stroll. Come now. A little walk to show you the place ?”

What with the strong fiery wine of the White Hart, which age had not tempered, and which had maintained the old strength and stimulated the fox-hunting gentry of the real old times, and the low rooms, which were slightly “ stuffy,” and his journey, Mr. Tillotson felt a headache, and weary. When, therefore, a gentleman in velveteen, with a whip-handle in one pocket, and heavy buff club-shaped legs, dropped in, and shouted with delight at seeing Mr. Tilney, saying, “ I have heard all about the 'orse,” Mr. Tillotson got up, and said he would walk a little outside.

“ Do, do,” said the other with fervour. “ I'll not be long—not longer than this,” he said, tapping the decanter. “ The night-air is beautiful. Go on quietly towards the cathedral,—any one will tell you the way,—and I'll be after you.”

CHAPTER III.

THE BROWN ROOM.

MR. TILLOTSON went out slowly. The night-air was pleasant enough, and in the direction which he took all was very quiet. He went on slowly through some narrow streets, and he did not care to ask the way, as he had been directed; for every now and again he had a glimpse of a gigantic signal before him which solemnly showed him the road—the huge cathedral spire; and behind the base of one of the great long windows was a faint light, where workmen were busy—just as though it were a lantern held out to him from a distance. Through some narrow old streets he went slowly towards it, until he suddenly heard voices, and noise, and confusion! and round the next corner he came upon a scuffle—with hats tumbling along the road, a scramble, and scraping of shoes, and three young men struggling with another, who was in the midst of them, with his coat torn from his back.

“Give it to him!” “Serve him right!” “Low

beggar!" "Good lesson!" "Hit him hard, Filby!" "Screw his eyes out!"

One of the young gentlemen had a light cane, and was scourging the victim soundly. The others seemed to be kicking him where they could. Some women stood with their babies at the doors, and one called out for help feebly.

Mr. Tillotson paused a moment. He saw that this was more than a street scuffle; and, without pausing a moment, he walked up quietly to them, was flung aside by the momentum of the battle, but in a second had dragged away the single victim from his persecutors. There was nothing of the splendid rescuer in what he did; he had the advantage which the fresh unengaged combatant who has seen and measured the crisis from a distance always has.

According to the usual formula, they stood panting a moment, then turned on him.

Mr. Tillotson said, quietly, "Three upon one! Surely you are Englishmen, and can give Englishmen fair play?"

"He deserves it, and more!" said one of the combatants, a little excitedly. "A wretched spy of a grocer! He's not had half enough!"

"I'll have the law of you all," said the victim, a little round man, adjusting his torn coat. "I know your names: you, Filby, and you, Ross.

Mind, when I get you before the jury, see if I don't—"

Suddenly one of the most inflamed of the three burst out :

"And are you going to let this *bagman* interfere with you? Confound you, you impertinent counter-jumper, what do you mean by meddling with gentlemen? I'll give you a lesson, if they won't."

He sprang round actively to the other side of Mr. Tillotson with a light cane raised. But in an instant the light cane was twisted out of his hand, and was broken in two by a smart blow, which Mr. Tillotson meant for his shoulder, but which fell upon his cheek.

"There, there," said his friends, "that's enough. Let the grocer go, and have done with him. Come home to barracks."

The last combatant had his hand up to his cheek to hide something, and seemed quite routed. Mr. Tillotson saw something like blood through his fingers.

"You are not much hurt," he said. "I did not mean—"

"Curse you, you did though!" said the other. "You aimed at my face, like a shabby sneaking fellow—Don't hold me, I tell you! Where is he? Let me go at him!"

“Come away, do, now. That grocer has gone for a watchman. Come.” And the friends, in spite of all his struggling, took him each by an arm and hurried him off.

Mr. Tillotson looked after them a moment. “This is just life with me,” he thought bitterly—“life all over. I look for peace, and never can find it. Even in a wretched place like this, at the back of God speed, in a wretched street, I am dragged into a mean scuffle of this sort. A low street row, above all! That old vile enemy will come up—will haunt me. Though they talk of crushing out our wicked tempers—Heaven help me!—talk of subjugating the will, taming our earthly passions, and of being dead to the world! What a comic instance am I of this training for years!” And he almost laughed within himself.

He heard a cheerful step behind him, and saw Mr. Tilney coming up in the moonlight, with his stick swinging round like a catherine-wheel.

“God bless me!” he said, “what an eye for geography you have! Now that’s just like Tom Ventnor, who was always hanging about the palace wanting a ‘stole,’ or a gentleman-at-arms, or, in fact, any thing they would give him. Tom Ventnor all the world over! Put Tom down in Paris or Dresden, Stafford or Gloucester, or Berlin, or New York, or Vienna, or—or—Colney

Hatch," added Mr. Tilney, embarrassed by having got to the end of all the capitals he recollected, "and he could walk about any where, any where."

They walked on through the town. The grocers' shops were still in splendour. They passed an open market-place, where there was a statue in a frock-coat. "One of England's gentlemen," said Mr. Tilney, stopping to wave his stick at him as if he was making an incantation, "who lived as he died! That man, to my knowledge, never did a dirty action. It was one of the most pleasing ceremonies I ever saw in the whole course of my life when Lord Monboddo laid the first stone. Ridley, the dean, behaved like a gentleman for once in his life, and prayed over the bronze in good style. Chinnery, my cousin, came down here for it—all the way from Chinnery."

Then they got under a gateway, and entered on a soft quiet common, fringed about on one side with ancient detached houses of brick and stone, and of different heights; while on the other rose the cathedral, tall, firm, solid, like a rock out of the sea. The grass was between.

"There it is," said Mr. Tilney, flourishing with his stick. "I have forgotten all my poetry and Georgics, though I *was* brought up at Rugby, with Stamer and Hodgson, and the rest. Ah! it sticks to me yet, sir, to see that. It is a fine thing,

and a noble thing; and it speaks to me. Who is the fellow that says that a nigger—a common nigger that you see with wool like a bit of ticking stuck on his head—is th' Almighty's image cut out of a lump o' coal? Grand, that. Well, that building, sir, seems to me th' Almighty's image cut out of pure Portland or Scotch stone—I'm not sure which. I should be ashamed if my whole heart had got so seared and knocked about, if it hadn't a corner left for a grand thought like that!"

Mr. Tillotson actually heard his voice quaver and tremble a little. Could he have seen Mr. Tilney's face, he would have noticed that his eyes were really moistened. Indeed, after brown sherry, his friends always noticed this tendency to topics of sensibility.

They were now back at the hotel. "Well, here we are," said Mr. Tilney. "This is the way we come and go. Wait; I'll go in and see what they have done with you. Where have you put Mr. Tillotson, James?"

"In the Brown Room, sir. There's a fire lighting there."

"Ah, dear, dear! So it is! Old Sir John Mackintosh, *he* slept there. (She was one of the *finest* women, Tillotson, that you would pick out. You couldn't go beyond her!) I know the road, Tillotson. This way."

They went up through many passages, till they got to this large but low square room, with faded paper, and a faded red-cushioned bedstead, with limp curtains fast drawn, which nodded when any one walked across the room. It seemed as stately as the Baldequino in St. Peter's at Rome. Mr. Tilney got his legs across a chair in a riding attitude, yet without any intention of moving. Suddenly he started. "My goodness, I declare, so it is! The very room. Wonderful indeed. There's not a sparrow falls, you know. Just ring and ask the waiter if I am not right."

"How do you mean?" said Mr. Tillotson, wearily.

"My dear friend," said Mr. Tilney, getting off his horse, "how curious! This is the very chamber where Tom Major shot old General Macarthy, at one o'clock in the morning—just as I might crack this lump of coal here."

Mr. Tilney was seeking this reminiscence in the coals with such infinite relish, that he did not see that this sudden piece of news made Mr. Tillotson fall back against the curtains of the bed as if he had been stricken; neither did he hear his murmured "Great Heaven!"

"This very room," he went on, beating the coals abstractedly, "I was brought in when a mere lad, the very morning after. And they

had the poor old general on a bed. But, mind you, brought it all on himself—couldn't command himself; and Tom, who belonged to one of the best families, could not well pass it over. Tom got away to Boulogne in time. Dear me! Tillotson, my dear friend, I beg your pardon; I do indeed. I forgot. Traveller, and all that. You look pulled down someway. We must get up flesh here — and here. There is One above who gives and who takes away! Heaven, in its infinite bounty, bless you! After all, we have every reason to be thankful when we think of—”

With this he at last took his leave, and went away. As soon as he had gone, Mr. Tillotson, as it were shrinking away from the room, rang for the waiter. “Light a fire,” he said, “in another room.”

With amazement the waiter murmured, “But this is the Brown Room, sir. Lord Llanberis, sir, always—”

“I don't care,” said Mr. Tillotson impatiently. “Get me a smaller room—one lower down, and not so lonely.”

“But the fire, sir; the housemaids are gone to bed.”

“Never mind the fire.”

The waiter went to get ready another room,

murmuring to himself that this was a queer, "ill-edicated 'feller,'" and in a short time had a smaller mouldy apartment, with also a catafalque bed, quite ready; and there Mr. Tillotson slept a troubled sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

A STORMY CONSULTATION.

ON the following morning, when the sun was well up and making the little town glitter in all its points and angles, and when the boots was telling the chambermaid, with whom he was most intimate, how the "gent," who was above, "'ad been turning up his nose" at the best room in "the 'ouse," Mr. Tilney came "swinging" in, bright as the very morning itself. He found that his friend had gone out some time, but was to be back shortly.

"Never mind," said Mr. Tilney, plaintively, as if to deprecate their sending out an immediate express; "now don't. I can wait here quite as well. Here is a paper, and I shall get on very comfortably."

So he did, for he presently found that a "little soda" with a glass of sherry "through it," would be "no harm," as he put it; and thus assisted, he did not find the moments tedious.

When Mr. Tillotson came he seized on him with alacrity. He must come off at once. But

Mr. Tillotson had letters, and business. "Look here," he said gently, showing him accounts, figures, &c.; "all this to be got through. Would later suit you?"

It was agreed, then, that about four o'clock Mr. Tilney should come again, seize on his friend, and bear him off to visit the Tilney family. And at four he did come, and Mr. Tillotson wearily let himself be led away.

"This is our little nook," said Mr. Tilney, stopping to open a wooden gate. "Nothing very pretentious, you see." It was an old gray stone house of two stories high, with the centre portion projecting beyond the rest. The windows were open, and sounds of voices came from within. But Mr. Tillotson drew back. "It seems there are people here, and I really am not—" But Mr. Tilney had on his overpowering agricultural manner in a moment. He bore down every thing, and swept him in with cries as his prototype would have done sheep. The other submitted, though his heart sank at the notion of society.

There was a little glass hall in front of the hall-door, with seats and a few plants. The hall-door was always open. As they entered, Mr. Tilney himself drew back mysteriously. "I declare," he said, "I don't know that voice."

There was a faded lady and two daughters

and two gentlemen sitting there. The gentleman whose voice Mr. Tilney did not know was still speaking, nor did he stop when they entered. He was a sharp, clean-looking, tall man, with black hair, cut close, and coming down on his forehead like the skullcap of Leo the Tenth. He continued noisily :

“The whole thing is outrageous. I come down here by appointment, and Mr. Dawkins here comes down here by appointment, and—you see! His own interests are at stake, *our* interests are at stake. But he does not care. It is weak, immoral—grossly immoral—and,” he added, “clenching” the matter, “grossly unbusinesslike.”

Mr. Dawkins repeated (baling out water between his knees with his hat) that it was grossly unbusinesslike.

Mrs. Tilney now spoke, as if introducing to her husband :

“Mr. Cater, William Ross’s solicitor ; and Mr. Dawkins”—but Mr. Tillotson himself was passed over, so absorbed were they all.

“Solicitor to the plaintiff, in the ejectment, sir. Come here by appointment,” said Mr. Dawkins.

“Our time is very valuable,” said Mr. Cater. “But there are people who do not seem to think so.”

“Ah, to be sure,” said Mr. Tilney, in a loud voice. “And where *is* Ross? Has he been

found? Has he been sent for? Let him be sought for round the town."

"We have thought of that long ago," said Mrs. Tilney, languidly. "These gentlemen have been here nearly an hour, and—won't take any wine or any thing."

"I am afraid, do you know," said Mr. Tilney gravely, "he is at this moment with some of the set from the barracks. Some of them fine young fellows enough, but free, you know. I am told that young Bundoran, Lord Skibbereen's second son, who really being in decent society and having opportunities—"

"I come down here," said Mr. Cater, in a loud voice, "at great personal inconvenience; so does Mr. Dawkins. It is very strange conduct, very. I was led into the suit by misrepresentation. I pursued it with but one view—that of a fair and profitable compromise. The other side offers that now; and yet this wrongheaded, this insane young man, declines. But I shall insist on it," added Mr. Cater, with great heat.

"We shall be beaten like hacks if we go on," said his colleague.

During this discussion Mr. Tillotson, standing irresolutely at the door, turned several times to go, but was firmly restrained by the hand of Mr. Tilney being laid upon his arm in a mysterious

and meaning manner. Now he spoke, and to Mrs. Tilney.

“I am afraid,” he said, “I am listening to matters of private interest—very unwillingly, I assure you. Mr. Tilney was kind enough to ask me up, but I can come another time.”

The two young ladies, who had, indeed, been taking note of the strange gentleman, whom only the warmth of the discussion prevented their rising and welcoming, said, with expostulation, “Mamma! O!”

“Mr. Tillotson, my dear,” said Mr. Tilney, hastily introducing him. “Sit down there, next to Mrs. Tilney.”

“I shall withdraw from the thing,” went on the solicitor; “my mind is made up—unless terms are come to; such handsome terms offered, too. Why, it’s next to insanity! It *is* insanity!”

“You may say that,” said Mr. Tilney, shaking his head. “Why, I recollect when one of the Dook’s own tradesmen—a saddler fellow—sent in his bill, why, I declare”—here Mr. Tilney interrupted himself, and put the hollow of his hand to his ear with great caution, as if it were a sea-shell—“there he is. I know his step. Yes; it’s Ross.”

“Ah, well,” said the solicitor, half satisfied,

“this is something better. But if he don’t settle—”

The door was opened sharply, and a young man entered roughly; a young man with great tossed brown hair, and a nose with a very high strong ridge, and an angry, if not habitually sulky, expression. He had his hand up to the side of his cheek, and he stood with his other hand on the door, looking round on the crowd of people.

“Well,” he said, “what is all this conventicle? What’s to do? So you’ve come down, Cater?—and Dawkins too! I told you you might come if you liked, but it’s no use.”

Mr. Tillotson was looking at him earnestly; so earnestly, that the young man took notice of him, then started a little, and fixed a dogged defiant challenging look on him. Mr. Tilney strode up hastily.

“Let me introduce. Old Sam Lefevre always said, ‘In God’s name, let us know our company, and have done with it.’ Mr. Tillotson, Mr. Ross. God bless me, Ross, my boy, what’s wrong with your cheek?”

“What’s wrong!” said the other angrily, putting down his hand. “Who said there was any thing wrong? There, look, all of you! A great sight, isn’t it? I suppose a man can fall down

and cut himself, or a boy in the street throw a stone? Ah, but if I catch that boy again, won't I scourge him!"

"Good heavens!" cried the girls, "what is it? You are dreadfully hurt!" And indeed he appeared to be, for there was a great purple line running along his cheek up to his ear.

He gave them a look of anger. "Never mind me," he said; "isn't there business going on here? What are women doing here? Just leave us alone. That's all."

"I am sorry," said the solicitor, "but we must go into this at once. As I wrote to you, a compromise is offered in your case, now ripe for trial at the present assizes. Mr. Bacon was with me this morning. He offers to share the lands in dispute; that will give over a thousand a-year to each party. What on earth drives them to propose such a thing, I cannot conceive. They must be mad! Mr. Paget, our junior, thinks so too. We have not a stick or a leg to go upon."

"That was what Mr. Paget said in our office; his very words," added Mr. Dawkins.

"O! of course we'll settle?" asked Mr. Cater, a little nervously.

"O, of *course*," said Mr. Tilney. "A thousand a-year! My goodness! A thousand! It is noble. Of course he will."

“Of *course* I will!” said Mr. Ross, ironically. “O, you seem to make up the thing readily enough among you. Then of course I won’t. My mind’s made up; and whether I live or die, whether I am assaulted by ruffians in the street or no, I’ll fight the thing out to the last. You, attorneys! Why, you don’t know your own trade! Why would they be so eager to compromise? Don’t you see the confession of weakness? I *shall* go on! I’ll fight them till I drop, or go to a jail! I’ll have every shilling, or not a shilling in the world!”

“Then!” said Mr. Cater, starting up. “Then you’ll go on by yourself, sir, and you’ll settle with me, sir, at once, and get another solicitor. I’ll risk no more for such a madman. Confession of weakness! Why, Mr. Paget told us the reason. Why, you know the defendant is a young orphan girl, who wants no law. But take your own course, sir.”

At this moment, with the young man standing up, his eyes hot, his cheeks glowing, and the ugly scar looking as if it were about to burst open from the force of the angry blood within,—with the two solicitors scowling legally at him with set lips,—with Mrs. Tilney and her family rustling their dresses from “flouncing” indignantly in their chairs,—the door opened softly, and what seemed to Mr. Tillotson a vision, a divine spirit of peace

and soft tranquillity, seemed to glide in to compose these angry elements. She stood a moment with her hand on the door, brought with her silence and stillness, and a converging of all the angry faces on her.

CHAPTER V.

ADA MILLWOOD.

SHE stood there a moment. Wonderful wavy hair, nearly the shade of gold, which ran and rippled in countless tiny hills and valleys, and gave a rich look of detail and garnish; below, a soft transparent skin, with the dreamiest eyes, a small mouth, and an almost heart-shaped face. At this was Mr. Tillotson looking over from his chair with a strange attraction. There was nothing marked, but every feature was kept in privacy and retirement; and over all floated a sort of tranquil light—a golden halo, as it were, that might have come from the very reflection of that yellow hair.

The solicitors half rose in obedience to the spell. Through the dresses of the mamma and the two sisters ran a sort of rustle of impatience, which, to say the truth, was almost instinctive. She glided over to Ross, and laying her hand on his arm, said in a low whisper, which every one heard:

“Do, ah! do be advised, dear William. Listen to your friends, and to those who know

your interests best. Do ; O, do !” And she looked up into his face with a calm devotional entreaty.

He set himself free impatiently. “ So *you* must come with the rest ! One of the wise women that know law, I suppose, and know the world as well as any of these professionals. Now see here ! a word in time. Just go away. Go up to your sewing again.”

“ Before it is too late,” she went on. “ Think of it, William. Ah,” she added, in the same half whisper, “ what is this ? You are hurt.”

(The lawyers, set free now from the spell of that sudden entry, had begun to talk again. So what she said was unheard, except by Mr. Tillotson.)

“ How did you get this ?” he heard her say, a little impatiently. “ Ah ! you have been in some quarrel. I know it. This old unhappy story. Will you *never* have done with it ?”

“ Never. No questioning, please,” he answered. “ Suppose it was a razor—a blunt infernal thing ? And I tell you what ;” his eyes began to flame and shoot sparks over to Mr. Tillotson, and his breathing to grow hard ; “ I’ll have a satisfaction in finding out the fellow that did it. It’ll be the worst job for him in his trade this many a day.”

Her eyes quickly followed the savage direction of his. A sort of light seemed to fill her face as she saw Mr. Tillotson. Mr. Tilney, who had been hovering about uneasily, seized the opening eagerly, to divert his guest from their domestic concerns.

“Mr. Tillotson, my *dear*—gentleman from town, stopping at the White Hart. Most unfortunate this. Came in at a very awkward moment. The Dook used to talk about washing our fine linen in private, and upon my soul I believe it is always the best course.”

“I *am* sorry to have come in at such a moment,” said Mr. Tillotson to *her*; “and indeed, I wished to go away long since. Perhaps I had better go even now.”

She answered him with a kindly eagerness.

“No, no,” she said; “stay. You will know our little troubles soon enough. Even now;” her placid eyes looked round with a little caution, and then dropped on the ground as she spoke, but Ross was again speaking low to the lawyers; “even now, you, who have been here but one hour, have learned some of our ways—ways that no teaching, no experience will mend.”

Mr. Tillotson’s pale face began to colour. “How?” he said.

“Ah, you understand, I see! A razor, in-

deed! I can admire your restraint and calmness; but such lessons are only thrown away on some."

She said this with a melancholy that made her, to his eyes, more like a saint than any of the famous pictures and images by divine and devout men that he had seen as he travelled. In that private interview—for it was private, with the storm of voices raging about them—there seemed to have been much spoken, though not in words; the golden threads of sympathy had been joined between them.

"Do you stay here long?" she went on hastily, and turning to look out of the window. "Then they must show you the cathedral. Look at it, opposite. O, if you do, make me a promise! I am ashamed to speak so, after only a few seconds of acquaintance; but you will forgive and excuse me. I know what all this means—I can guess what has taken place between you and him. Do not mind him. He has been brought up strangely. We all give way to him. We all humour him. He is worried and harassed and troubled. Will you promise me?"

Her face fell into such a sweet, soft, imploring expression of devotion, that no one could have resisted. But Mr. Tillotson only answered:

"I quarrel! Indeed, no! Certainly, I pro-

mise. Did you know what my life has been, you would indeed say that you might trust me."

Again the solicitor came back to his point, but on a soft and persuasive "tack." "Surely, Mr. Ross, a sensible long-headed man of the world like you will listen to reason. Come now. What can you have to go upon? Surely we ought to know your interests; they are ours, are they not? We are in the same boat, are we not?"

"Same boat! Speak for yourself, attorney, and row for yourself! Same boat! *I* know what I am at," said Ross. "I can see through a stone wall where another man couldn't find room to put a stone. I've made my plans."

"He is thinking of that ridiculous wild-goose chase on which that Grainger set off," said Mrs. Tilney, flouncing and tossing. "Hunting up a witness! It is mere childish folly; a ridiculous will-o'-the-wisp."

"And *you* know much about it, ma'am!" said Ross. "Stick to your ribbons and laces. You're a fine hand at advice. As for Grainger, he has a longer head than all of them put together."

"Sir! Mr. Ross!" said the solicitor, starting.

"Yes," said Ross, "I *am* waiting for him. He'll be here; and witness or no witness, I'll stand by him, and by what he says. He's in

the town at this moment, or *should* be. My goodness, what's that? I declare, if it isn't—" and he ran out of the room.

The attorney, still fuming, got up and went to the window. There was a cab with luggage at the gate. In a moment Ross had come back, had thrown the door open, and had entered. "There, there!" he said, triumphantly. "Look at him! This is the man of his word. He was to be here to-morrow, and he is here before his time, and—successful."

"Successful!" cried the two attorneys together, and with a start.

CHAPTER VI.

AMONG THE TILNEYS.

THE gentleman who entered with him took off a sort of poncho very leisurely. Then they saw a tall but stooping man, with a long bony face, which seemed inflamed round the cheekbones, either with the sun or with drinking. He had a lanky ragged moustache hanging down over his lips, and bright though "watery" eyes. "A regular council," he said, "I see. Easier work, I can tell you, than what I have been at. I hope I am not in the way."

"Now, Grainger," said Ross, eagerly, "speak out, and don't be afraid of any one here." (The other smiled, and looked on them a little contemptuously.) "Speak out. Every one of these wise heads have been at me, including the two demure gentlemen just come down from London. They have been screaming and chattering 'Settle, settle,' until you would think you were in a cage of parrots. Now, what do you say? You have as much right to be heard as any of them."

“I think so,” answered his friend coldly. “Well, I say DON’T; not if your mother was to tell you on her dying bed. Do nothing of the kind. Don’t mind these legal friends of yours, whom I see in such force here. They have their reasons, of course. But don’t mind them.”

“Then you will take your own course, Mr. Ross—your own course,” said the professional voices. The owners of the professional voices were standing up to go.

“I certainly shall,” said Mr. Ross; “and I mean to do so. And you shall take the course I take, Messrs. Cater and Dawkins, unless I am very much mistaken. I should like to see you when I stand up in court, and tell the judge that my solicitors have thrown up my case on the eve of the assizes simply because I wouldn’t compromise it. And also when I hand up to his lordship a note showing the speculative character of your professional assistance. No, no, Messrs. Cater and Dawkins. You will think it over, and you will act as your client instructs you. And now, once for all, don’t worry me any more. And know all of you by these presents, to use your own jargon, I shall go on and on, and on again, and fight the thing to the death. So long as I have a breath in me, I will. It gives me life and enjoyment. I like playing double or quits. It’s my fancy.

I've taken this thing up and worked it myself so far, and, if you please, shall work it my own way. So now please tell Mr. Bacon that your client declines all compromise. There. I have an appointment at the barracks now."

He strode out of the room. After a moment's pause: "*That's* sensible," said Mr. Cater. "That's what we may call genteel. There's a nice specimen of the relation that should exist between solicitor and client. But let him go on. Let him take his own course. I wash my hands of the whole thing; that is, of all responsibility," he added. Thus showing that Mr. Ross had stated the indissoluble nature of this relation, and the view the judge would take of it, quite correctly. "Then there is no further reason for our staying. Good night, good night. It is very melancholy to see such an exhibition. Even the lesson he seems to have got to-night—for it is plain he has been in some street row—no matter. Good night to you, ladies. We shall just catch the train." And the two gentlemen went away.

"A thousand per annum," said Mr. Tilney, coming back; "only think of *that*. It seems like a dream a sane man refusing it. It seems quite a dream."

Thus the professional men went away; and the family, as if relieved from a burden, and now dis-

engaged from the practical, turned to Mr. Tillotson. Every face took down its shutters and put its best goods in the window, and Mrs. Tilney promptly repaired the horrible omission of social forms.

Mr. Tilney felt that a fresh introduction was necessary.

“I met this gentleman, whom I—I know, and just brought him up. Maria, my dear, Mr. Tillotson. These are my girls, Mr. Tillotson.”

On Mr. Tilney's mouth the rays of a mysterious intelligence had beamed out with unusual effulgence. The “girls” met him with joyous alacrity. For Mr. Tilney's proceedings were so perfectly understood in his own family, that it was well known that every article he introduced was guaranteed. They read in the creases of his forehead, in his large gray eyes—even the Roman nose seemed to give warning—that this was a valuable stranger.

“Sit down near me, Mr. Tillotson,” said Mrs. Tilney, “and tell me about yourself, now that we are rid of that dreadful man. So you are come to stay here.” (This she had read off, on her husband's forehead.)

Mr. Tillotson, scarcely recovered from his embarrassment, answered, “Only for a few days. I should like to stay longer. It seems such an inviting place—”

“Only a few days?” said Mrs. Tilney uneasily. “Why, I thought—” and she was almost going to add, “Mr. Tilney had conveyed to us that you were to reside for a long period;” but she checked herself, and said, “now, now, that is a very short stay.”

The girls, however, had perfect confidence in their parent’s manner. His own friends might be, for all social purposes, of a worthless sort, but he never ventured to be the “bringer” of useless recruits. One of the girls promptly “fell out,” and laid her charms at the feet of Mr. Tillotson.

“You came from town, Mr. Tillotson?” she said, almost sadly. “O, how charming! Papa and mamma used to live in town, and have promised to take me there next year, if I am good. We are here for our education. They are considered to have the best masters in St. Alans. You will wait for Sunday, I am sure. O, you must—to hear the anthem. Doctor Fugle sings the tenor divinely. You must stay, and come to our pew.”

Mr. Tillotson said it all depended: if he *could* stay, he should be glad. Miss Augusta—that was her name—was delighted.

“Mamma! mamma!”

“What is it, dear?”

“Mr. Tillotson has promised to stay for Sunday, to hear Doctor Fugle.”

“I am very glad, dear. You must know, Mr. Tillotson, we all take our stand on the cathedral. It is our little boast. They say there is no^o one at Westminster Abbey comes near to Dr. Fugle.”

It was an antique little room, with the corners cut off by cupboards. Indeed, the house was very old, and rather “remarkable,” to use Mr. Tilney’s word. The windows were of the true rustic pattern, and, only twenty years ago, had diamond panes. In one window was the third girl, now standing with her hand to her face, looking out, in an attitude of surprising and unconscious grace. As the light fell upon her, and lighted up her devotional and pensive features, it almost seemed to the visitor that she did not belong to the mundane and earthy company sitting there, but that she was someway associated with the cathedral opposite, and that from thence a soft and gorgeous saint from the florid window, or some gentle angel from a niche, had come to them, and would presently return. He almost passed into a dream as he looked, and did not hear the vapid chatter that was in his ears. Suddenly she moved, and went hurriedly out of the room, and in a moment he saw Ross pass the window. A kind of coldness

and blankness came back on him, and in a few moments he rose to go.

Mr. Tilney wrung his hand with his most affectionate brown-sherry manner, and came out with him to the garden.

“Gay girls; light-hearted things, ar’n’t they? They’ll go on there in that way, for I don’t know how much longer. I shall start off to bed, Tillotson. Time was when I would be sitting down to the green cloth, and beginning to deal. That was in the Dook’s day. I must show you his letter. One of the kindest, most delicate things, now, you could conceive, and, for a man in his station—an H.R.H., you know—wonderful! Just look at the cathedral there. No poetry in me, you know, and I don’t set up for it. But I can see. Just look at it now. Does it or does it not speak to you here?” he added, touching his waistcoat. “I always think of the fine line. ‘Lifts its tall head and’—something or other. ‘Lies!’ that’s it! Come up to-morrow, and let us see you before you go. Do now. You like the girls? Ah, yes. They are so fond of fun; that is their only fault. But how can they help it? Look here, Tillotson,” he added, stopping solemnly, “if my grave was waiting for me, ready open, over *there*, with the men and their spades, I wouldn’t say a word to check their little harmless fun. Nò,

I *couldn't* do it. I don't see now why I couldn't go part of the way with you," Mr. Tilney said, musingly, as if some one had started an objection to such a thing. "Why not? I declare I will!" and Mr. Tilney took Mr. Tillotson's arm, and walked on.

With some hesitation, Mr. Tillotson asked: "And Mr. Ross, is he any relation?"

"O, Ross—poor Ross—to be sure! A good well-meaning creature. Never do in the world. A kind of a cousin of the girls. We have tried every thing to push him on, but can't. A most self-willed foolish young man, sir. He has got into this lawsuit, which will make him, he says, or break him. Absurd, absurd, sir. Every one of the girls despise him for it."

"But is not," said Mr. Tillotson, doubtingly, "Miss Ada Millwood interested in him?"

Mr. Tilney shook his head. "A good girl. Blankets, and all that sort of thing. Playfellows from that high, you know, and pity, and that kind of thing. No, no, no. I suppose if the man has his full pay to spend, he is well off."

Mr. Tilney said this as if, under such circumstances, the idea of any relation of affection was absurd.

"Yes, he is a strange creature, a very improper kind of man. He sometimes frightens me, do you

know, Tillotson—breaks out in a manner that's quite alarming. I do believe that man—he's only seven-and-twenty his next birthday—is one *mass* of bad passions. No kindly influences—no example—will do," added Mr. Tilney, sadly. "No, no. He has nothing *here* to call on—no chimes of his youth. And once you lose *that*, it's all up! The man, Tillotson, has *no* sense of religion. Nothing that you can put your hand on to touch;" here Mr. Tilney made a motion of winding up a musical-box on his waistcoat.

"Who is he, then?" asked Mr. Tillotson, a little interested. "Where does he come from?"

"His father was an opulent" (he pronounced this word again in a rich and unctuous way), "an op-u-lent Indian merchant. He sent this lad home to one of our great public schools, where he might learn that manliness and self-confidence which I say is so specially English. We all owe that to our great public schools. Look at Byron, look at Bobby Peel, look at little Singleton, who, when I knew him first, I vow to heaven, used to go to a cheap tailor in the Minorities, and whom it was a bit of charity to give a chop and a potato to. Well, sir, that man is now governor to one of the royal princes, and *that* man was at a public school!"

"And then?—" said Mr. Tillotson.

“It was very bad, very, very ungentlemanly. He one day threw a ruler at his master, nearly killed him; an ordained clergyman. Very gross.—‘by man’s hand, you know, let it be shed,’ and so it was, sir. I mean he was expelled two hours afterwards. And his father, a kind of cousin of mine, afterwards broke hopelessly.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Mr. Tillotson.

“Broke, I say—horse, foot, and dragoons. I don’t think there was one-and-sixpence in the pound left. Died the next year. And, I must say in justice to him, Ross has made his own way ever since. Got himself a commission, God knows how, and goes on in that kind o’ way, you know. A very strange being. Quite savage at times. I sometimes think there is something wrong in his head.”

Then Mr. Tillotson bade him good-bye, and walked away slowly, really admiring the stillness of the little common, and the picturesque houses behind him, which seemed taken from an old German or French town, and the great massive cathedral which rose so yellow before him.

That idea of yellowness suggested to him another idea of yellow, and, thinking of that pensive lovely-looking girl who was in that “rackety” house, but not of it, and stood out on such a strange background, and such unsuitable figures

as companions, he walked slowly towards the White Hart, lost his way pleasantly, found it again, got into the streets where the gaudy grocers had nearly shut up their theatrical stores—found Mr. Hiscoke at his bar—and was treated as a state guest, who ordered costly brown-sherry.

One odd reflection might have occurred to him that night as he laid his head down under his baldequino, that he had been led, chafing and with reluctance, to Mr. Tilney's house, with a weary impression on his mind that "this man would fasten on him," whereas he had come away with a feeling that amounted to eager interest, when Mr. Tilney said, cheerily, "See you tomorrow, early. Call for you, eh, and take you to the cathedral, with the girls?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE CATHEDRAL.

THE next morning was a Sunday morning, a day when the flaming grocers' shops abdicated. On that day St. Alans was given over to a sort of spiritual sense as marked out by chapters, and deans, and canons, and became wholly cathedral. The shops were closed, the White Hart languished. Nature streamed by various alleys to the cathedral. Of this morning, when Mr. Tiltson turned away from his bedstead—which seemed to nod awfully as the room shook—and looked out of window, it was a bright day, and the street seemed gay enough. On a "dead" door—for there are dead doors as well as walls—he saw some posters with a bold notice about a Neglected Mariners' Aid Society, for whose exhausted funds the dean, Doctor Ridley, the brother to Lord Rooksby, was to appeal at the cathedral.

Before he had done breakfast, Mr. Tilney had

walked in, gay and shining, with his stick. "Looked in early," said he. "Knew you were an early riser, by instinct. Have always been one myself, and so, suppose, shall be, sir, until they carry old Dick Tilney over yonder, and put him to bed." He made a flourish with his stick towards the quarter of the compass where the cathedral lay. "We are not lively to-day, though. Little to be done. No business, of course. And yet, what *can* you say? After all one day in the week only, to the Creator. When you come to think of it," said Mr. Tilney, apologising for the Sunday, "it's not so much. I don't grudge it. By the way, Ridley preaches to-day—Lord Rooksby's brother, you know—a poor drawler, between you and me. God bless me, when I think of the Chapel Royal, with Lord Henry Grey, who was dean, and I sitting on the bench with the Dook—as near as I am to you—ah, that was something like a service! Between you and me, this is a hole-and-corner of a place, religion and every thing."

"But I thought you spoke rather favourably of it last night," said Mr. Tillotson, hesitatingly.

"Perhaps I did," said the other—"most likely I did. It's an ill bird, you know—I was not then speaking with you in confidence, you

know. But it is a frightful place for a man that knows better. The men are dreadful 'cads,' and only for the *poor* girls, whom I am sparing no expense to polish, I'd cut and run to-morrow. It's not fit for a gentleman to live in."

"Wouldn't you take something?" said Mr. Tillotson, looking at the breakfast-things.

"No. O," said Mr. Tilney, irresolutely, "it would be far too early. No, no—better not." (There was here a sort of ellipsis, the omitted part referring to brown-sherry.) "Now let us go."

He put his arm through Mr. Tillotson's, and led him down the streets. They got to the common, and there, by daylight and by sunlight, Mr. Tillotson saw the long and uneven row of detached houses, each a bit of architecture in its way, where the finer ecclesiastical society had dwelt splendidly a hundred years ago. They did well enough now for small canons. On the other side was the great cathedral, to which lines of people were converging across the common like the lines on an English flag.

"We'll call at the house," said Mr. Tilney, knowingly, "and we can all go in together. Do you know, I like this worshipping of our Maker in common," he added, taking the horizon in with a flourish; "it makes me feel like—the Vicar of Wakefield. One day in the week

is all that is asked from us—not more—and it ain't much, Tillotson." These remarks were again all made as if Mr. Tillotson were urging the abrogation of the Sabbath. "Ah! here is the house. Here we are."

It would seem that one of "the girls'" duties was to take life generally in "parties," and to "make up parties" for such things. Nothing could be enjoyed heartily without some combination; if a military one, all the happier. Thus the cathedral service became subject to the same law, and Messrs. Still and Spring of the garrison had been pressed and enjoined, and almost compelled, to perform their Sunday worship under these conditions. These gentlemen were already in attendance. Younghusband, as his friends said, without any reserve, had "fought shy."

The "girls" were in their sacred toilette, the most effective and splendid of their whole series. For the others might be addressed to concert spectators and the persons who came to hear the band: but the cathedral gathered all ages, sexes, and conditions. It was best, therefore, and perhaps only devotional, to be as effective as possible. Their father put it better and more forcibly still, when he said: "Ah! Do we put on our fine clothes for you and me—for the lord-lieutenant of the county, or for the general of the district—and

shall we not put them on for the Maker of all?" And with his stick Mr. Tilney pointed towards the ceiling, in the direction of an upper room.

They went to the cathedral along a little cross path in a sort of procession, two and two, each lady with a gentleman. Mr. Tillotson was to have walked with Mrs. Tilney, but by some accident that lady was a little late, and he found himself beside the golden-haired girl of the house. As she walked, the sunlight that tipped the hands of the clock high up on the cathedral, revelled in the golden foliage of her hair. This was pale and yet rich gold. It was a feast for the eye.

The shrill speeches of the other girls, whom the continual humour of Mr. Spring and Mr. Still were causing to "die" every moment, were borne back to them.

"They seem to enjoy life so much," said Mr. Tillotson; "they are always laughing."

The girl answered him very softly. "They like life," she said, "and they like laughing."

"*You* do not laugh *quite* so much. Forgive my saying so."

"And yet I don't see why I should not. They all tell me I should be very grateful and happy."

"It is easy to tell our friends that," said he,

reflectively. "I have plenty of kind well-meaning people who keep reminding *me* that I ought to be happy."

"But *ought* you not? Mr. Tilney says that you are rich!"

"Rich, of course!" he said, a little bitterly; "that is the elixir that is to cure us of every thing. I think I should better bear what I have to bear, if I were poor."

She was growing curious—perhaps even interested.

"You speak," she said, "as if some great trial had visited you. Forgive me for saying so, but even last night I thought I saw—"

"Why not?" said he. "Though I know you but for a short time, I can see that you ask from no idle curiosity."

"No, indeed!"

Mr. Tilney walked all this time on the grass, attached to no one specially, but as the general parent and guardian of all—under the favour of a beneficent Creator. He passed Mr. Tillotson. "Ah, Tillotson! Look, cathedral—you see!"

It was scarcely possible to avoid seeing this great monument, as it stood right in front. To him Mr. Tillotson smiled an answer; to Miss Millwood he said:

"My mother and my father were alive about

eight or ten years ago. They were the ‘best of parents;’ not according to the hackneyed form by which every parent is the best of his kind, but they would have died for me, as I believe I would have died for them. But I was young and foolish—*wicked*, rather; and one day I found they had left me—for ever.” He stopped and put his hand to his eyes. “Now you may see,” he said, in a moment, “in what way I must look on life.”

In a gentler voice, trembling with sympathy: “O, I am so sorry—I did not mean, indeed—I feel for you—I,” she said, sadly, “have had my miseries, if that be any comfort to you. The only thing left to me is, to look back to a childhood that seems like a dream. One morning I too awoke, and it was all over. Ever since, it seems like a succession of dark winter days also! But I have no right to repine.”

Full of sympathy, which was growing in him every moment, Mr. Tillotson listened eagerly for more. He did not listen eagerly to much during his life. “Go on,” he said. “Miss Millwood. Tell me more, and if—”

Mr. Tilney was beside them. “That Ross, of course, not here. I suppose hard at work with a short pipe in his mouth at this very moment. Ah! very bad, very bad, Tillotson; I respect a

man that keeps up all the established decencies of life. I do indeed. No matter : here we are."

• He removed his hat and strode on in front of the rest, what with his height and stick, looking like a social drum-major. As they came under the porch, the organ, touched by Edward Bliss, Mus. Doc. Oxon., was rolling and eddying in great billows up and down the huge hall ; the air was trembling and quivering ; the great pedals were booming and buzzing up in the clouds. The ladies stole away towards what seemed the back huge wardrobes and cupboards where giants kept their linen, but which was the unavoidable effect of that enclosure which gives the true effect to a cathedral by reducing it to a convenient size. While the ladies took their gentlemen to the choir, Mr. Tilney whispered his friend softly to "come round. They had five minutes yet."

Mr. Tilney stopped a moment and drew back his friend. "Look up," he said, "and take it all in ; thrones, dominations, and the rest of them, what are they to this ? This endures ; *they* pass away, and—where are you ! By the way," said Mr. Tilney, suddenly changing the subject, "there are the Tophams. Look, Tillotson ; that London-built carriage. Most remarkable people. His brother is the Right Honourable Henry Topham — one of the secretaries. And there, you see,

they come here to service, like any of us. And I declare to Heaven, Tillotson, I have seen *him*, that overworked man, kneeling in one of the stalls with a Prayer-book in his hand, and listening to one of the *common canons* here, preaching in his regular turn. There they come. *If you like, I'll introduce you?"*

The Tophams had alighted from their carriage, and were crossing the little enclosure to the porch. Doctor Topham strode at the head of his family. He was one of the terrible powers of the place; wore a white tie, like the clergymen of the place, though he was only a layman, an ecclesiastical lawyer, vicar-general to the bishop—surrogate, and what not—in short, a pompous sour-looking pluralist of immense influence in the place, from his relation to the secretary.

He was very tall and pompous, and carried his umbrella on his shoulder, as a dragoon would his sabre. He walked in advance of his family, and seemed to approach the door of the cathedral as if it were the door of his own house. Mr. Tilney waited for him a little nervously. “How d’ye do, Tilney?” said the great man, without stopping. “They’ve not begun inside, I suppose?”

Mr. Tilney was greatly gratified by this cordial notice, and assured him that no such liberty

had been taken. "A very proud man," said he, looking after him; "can do what he likes with the government. He is coming to dine with us."

Mr. Tillotson went round the cold black area, looking up when he was bidden in the direction of the stick, and to the right, and to the right and the left, when he was invited to do that. But he had seen many foreign cathedrals of reputation and of equal size; seen them glowing with colour, and decoration, and warmth, and crowded from the grand door at the bottom of the nave up to the darker far end, where there was the white cloud and indistinct white figures. But he now saw, instead, the neat marble tablets let into the wall to the memory of the treasurer of the county, with the stone sideboard erected by the sorrowing militia officers to their captain, and various marble ottomans strewn about; among which the old knight, shining like black bronze from the polish of time, lying on his back, with his hands joined in the old way, looked sadly out of place. And presently he heard Dr. Bliss roaring and rumb-ling; but a faint smothered and suppressed Dr. Bliss, enclosed fast, and playing into an enclosure of wardrobes.

Now was Mr. Tillotson led devoutly and softly into the pew where the family knelt, and placed kneeling upon a hassock, and had a heavy book

thrust into his hand, without having even the place found for him. Heads turned round, also bonnets on the heads, to see "who the Tilneys had got with them," besides the officers regularly secured, and who were more or less a drug. The ladies and gentlemen of the town sat in tiers in the oak-stalls, and many a gay bonnet lay humorously beside a "begging griffin."

Now came in the procession, with the angelic boys, the choristers, florid, ascetic, and seraphic; all which shapes of expression were discovered in bass, tenor, and counter-tenor faces. They all scattered to their places with a resigned look, as if they were professionally holy men. Then the service set in, and then the sermon.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER THE DEAN'S SERMON.

As Lord Rooksby's brother came in to his third quarter of an hour, the sun poured down with unusual splendour, and swept across the stalls where the Tilney family sat. Mr. Tillotson saw that Mr. Tilney was asleep, with a fallen jaw and long gaunt nose; and this moment of fatal unconsciousness betrayed to him Mr. Tilney's real age. The "girls" were wakeful; perhaps studying a row of bonnet-backs on the tier below them. But at the very end the sunlight fell upon a patch of gold almost as gorgeous as the old transparent yellows in the panes high up in the windows; that yellow hair which rested on the pale white forehead and soft composed devotional face, which, with eyes cast down, was accepting the dry ramblings of the confessor who was brother to Lord Rooksby, as if he were St. Augustine or Fénelon.

Mr. Tillotson's devotion was not warm; and often and often his eyes travelled profanely to that "Madonna" face, and his thoughts travelled fast and speculated on it with a strange and a fond in-

terest. Looking back through the cold November days of our life, we stop at some such Sunday mornings as these, when the sun is suffusing every thing outside, and our thoughts are as festive as the day—a Christmas or an Easter—and travelling from mere buoyancy far away outside the walls of church or cathedral.

But now Miss Augusta, stooping across her neighbour, was whispering to Mr. Tillotson that Dr. Fugle, the tenor, was going to begin the "Anthem;" and Dr. Bliss, having securely got in his mainsail from the storm, was piping most softly and ravishingly. And Mr. Tillotson saw just opposite to him, at the other side, a round pink face with enormous whiskers, which was now singing out of a little hole at the corner of its mouth; but the face was kept up towards the groining of the roof, and the eyes had a soft and languishing air, as if they were cherubim's eyes. So that Doctor Fugle, as he chanted that his "soul panteth," seemed to be rapt, and to have soared away ecstatically. The sisters looked over at Mr. Tillotson in delight, for this was one of Fugle's best efforts; though, in truth, the seraphim was a rather old seraphim, and he supplied the absence of the higher notes by skilful declamation. Then Doctor Bliss "let go" the ropes and blocks, and the winds rose again, and all the canons, save the

bass canons, who ground their organs in an earthly way, were seen celestially rapt, chanting with resignation, with all their eyes upturned to heaven. And then came Bliss again, and the seraphic canons went out languidly in procession, quite indifferent to life after this taste of heavenly communing, and the congregation broke up with alacrity, and poured out of the cathedral.

The family procession, too, came out, with the gentlemen. The ladies were very voluble. "Did you ever hear any thing like Doctor Fugle? Such an *exquisite* voice! At that part where he said 'pan—teth—panteth,' I could have cried."

"It was fine," said their father, using his stick with feeling. "I like this sort of thing, I do, now. I feel better for it afterwards. During all the week we may have done this, that, and t'other. God Almighty knows I don't set up for a saint—never did, and never shall. I hate your canting fellows. But when I am sitting there, in that old place, of a Sunday morning, with all of us round, worshipping our common Maker, I feel the better for it—all the better for it."

He certainly did feel better, or ought to feel so, considering what Mr. Tillotson had seen of him during the sermon.

"Why couldn't he cut it shorter?" said Mr. Spring irreverently; "the man that preached."

“Lord Rooksby’s brother,” interposed Mr. Tilney softly, as a sort of caution, and looking round.

Miss Augusta, laughing and blushing, and saying “O” very often, said Mr. Spring was “dreadful,” and “shocking,” and, she feared, “wicked.”

Looking back, Mr. Tillotson saw the third girl following by herself. She seemed to him to be the gentle Cinderella of the family. In a moment he had dropped behind to join her; a step that did not attract much notice then, as Major Canby, whose arrival had been reported yesterday, was just met with and stopped on the highway. During the voluble and almost vociferous greetings that welcomed this officer’s return, Mr. Tillotson was speaking to Miss Millwood.

“I watched you during that very long sermon,” he said. “You were rapt by the dean’s eloquence.”

“I don’t know,” she answered. “I am afraid not. I was thinking of many other things.”

Her face had lighted up as he approached her. Perhaps she felt that here was a friend who inclined kindly towards her, in this family where she had relations but no friends.

“But you cannot have much to think of,” he said, “at your age, in this retired and picturesque

place, which is one of the quiet streets of the world—”

“Ah, *you* cannot tell,” she said, sadly and significantly.

Up came Mr. Tilney. “Tillotson,” he said, “mind you dine with us! Doctor Topham, Canby, and one or two more have promised to come, in the kindest way. Only a joint, I give you warning; but done well, my friend. I’ll guarantee you that. And prime meat, too. Choose my own, and market for myself. No, no, no. No excuse, my friend.”

They were close to the house now, and saw Mr. Ross leaning against the gate, smoking his short pipe. He watched them narrowly as they came up.

“Here are the holy ones come home to the heathen,” he said. “The Pharisees and publicans all in one lot! What a time you have been! Do you know I have been waiting here ever so long?” This he seemed to speak to Ada.

“Ah! it had been really better, Ross, if you had been with us at the cathedral,” said Mr. Tilney; “far better. Really, on Sunday, one day in the week only—where we had an excellent *practical* sermon from Doctor Ridley—”

“Let him prose away till he is sick,” said Mr. Ross, “for those who choose to go and hear

him. I want to speak to you, Ada." And with an imperious nod he summoned her over to one side. After the nod came a kind of insolent glance at Mr. Tillotson.

They were still at the gate; Mr. Tilney explaining, as it were, mysteriously to Mr. Tillotson: "Rather ill-conditioned, you see; but we bear with him. He is greatly to be pitied. He is always in and out of the house like a dog—a tame dog, sir. Brought up with the girls, you know."

"I think," Mr. Tillotson said, looking over a little anxiously to where Mr. Ross was showing Ada a letter, "he likes Miss Millwood, does he not?"

"Perhaps so. Cousins, you know. I daresay he has thought of them all round. Augusta for a month, then her sister, then that—er—girl Ada. Bless you, not one of them would look at him, not even that Ada there. The man's next door to a pauper."

"But if he should win his lawsuit?"

"Ah," said the other, grimly, "then I daresay Augusta—there's no knowing."

"Why not Miss Millwood?"

"O, out of the question. As for poor Ada, she has other things to think of. I don't know what we shall do with her; what to put her to."

“Put her to?” said Mr. Tillotson, in astonishment.

“She must do—er—something, you see. Augusta and her sister have portions left them by their good aunt; but she—I don’t know *what* we can *do* with her, really.”

Then Mr. Tilney dwelt (with his stick) on the praises and charms of his own daughters, who had portions. Their great charm was the love of home and taste for domestic pursuits; never caring, he said, to go outside the door.

Mr. Tillotson got away from him, back to the White Hart, under solemn pledges to return at seven o’clock and “cut his mutton.” From its windows he ruminated gloomily on the dull streets, which, though clean, looked forlorn and wretched. “Why did I promise to go to this man?” he thought. “I have no business with him, or with such company. I am wholly out of place there.” So he was, indeed. “This poor place, too, is not the place for business, I can see that with a glance. They are the dead alive here; much as I am myself. I think I will write to Mr. Tilney, and excuse myself by a headache, and go up to-morrow night.”

But he did not write, and he postponed the second resolution altogether. He would see about it, he thought. He then went out into the Sunday

town and wandered here and there listlessly, but kept carefully away from the cathedral, where, if found, he knew he would be led away to hear Doctor Fugle once more. The whole place seemed a hundred years behind. The provincial look was on it like a blight.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE DINING-ROOM.

By seven he was at Mr. Tilney's again. That gentleman was in what he pleasantly called his "marriage garment." Messrs. Canby and Still were there, with Ensign Ross, who, Mr. Tilney almost insinuated, had asked himself, adding something about "the table being full." He was looking absently and impatiently out of window. Mr. Tillotson, perhaps, understood his position perfectly, as that of a sensitive, impetuous, proud young man, without the means to purchase tolerance for his pride, impetuosity, and sensitiveness. These are luxuries as expensive to keep as dogs and racers, four-in-hands, opera-boxes, and the like.

A tall heavy man was on the rug with his back to the fire, in a very smooth white tie without a crease, which seemed to be made of cream-laid note-paper. Mr. Tillotson recognised him as Doctor Topham, the great ecclesiastical lawyer, and cousin of the Secretary to the Treasury. He some-

times recognised Mr. Tilney in this private, unofficial way; and knowing that he had good wines and choice fare, came to him without his state-coach, as it were, without his robes, and without Mrs. Topham (faintly connected with a nobleman's family).

Mr. Tilney presented his new guest a little nervously.

“How-de-do?” said Doctor Topham; then turned away. “Well, what d’ye suppose they did? Of course the bishop sent the papers to me—advice and opinion, and all that. Had he the power, or had he not? There was the point. Of course he had, as I showed with a stroke of the pen.”

“Of course,” said Mr. Tilney, with his eye on the door. “Doctor Topham, we know, has the canon law at his fingers’ ends. Ah! do tell Tillotson about the Privy-Council case.”

“I tell you what,” said Doctor Topham in a loud voice, “some stringent steps must be taken with these men—these low radical fellows and agitators in the Chapter here. What do they talk of their rights for? What rights have they? If I were the bishop, I’d deal with the whole pack of ’em at once; and that fellow Norbury I’d pick out and make an example of.”

Here was also the Mr. Grainger whom he had

seen with Ross on the first morning. This gentleman attracted his notice very disagreeably, from his soft voice and quiet manner, which fell in so harmoniously with the long, rude, and almost battered face, the rather wild eyes, and the "ragged" moustache which hung down over the corners of his mouth like that of a Chinese. Mr. Tilney had expressed a very low moral opinion of this gentleman to his new friend. "Consul, my dear sir, at Fernando Po; carries on the wild-animal and travelling business. It's very common nowadays—between ourselves, a man of desperate habits. Some relation, I think, of Lord Monboddos. I know *he* got him a consulship somewhere. After all, we must not trust *every* story," he said, as if he was actually combating Mr. Tillotson's harsh view. "Charity is a great deal. A *little* charity. And you know, Tillotson, 'judge not, in that ye may not cast your foot against a stone;'" with which extraordinary quotation from no known version of the sacred text, he went with alacrity to meet his guests.

This Mr. Grainger seemed to have the strongest influence over Ross, founded, it would seem, on a sort of reverence. The young man's eyes followed the elder's with a strange persistence. Mr. Grainger, who seemed to love to talk in a low monotone to some lady, as it were in a private corner,

with his head bent down, looked very narrowly at Mr. Tillotson as he entered, and then asked the lady all about him. "Some one papa has got hold of. Papa is always picking up people in the train, and every where."

They went down to dinner, but there was rather a "fastueux" humility in Mr. Tilney's description of the meal as "a plain joint," for the entertainment was choice and small, compact and refined. There was "nice" glass, flowers, and pretty china, The whole had a cool shady look on that sunny day. The military gentlemen got into alacrity and spirits as they saw this feast, which was laid, as it were, in an arbour.

"You must take us as you find us," said Mr. Tilney, "quite in the rough—all in the rough. You must recollect that we are far down in Wiltshire. How many hundred miles is that from Francatelli, or Soyer, or Gunter? But still, one thing, Canby, no gory joints here—no, no, no!"

For a place "all in the rough," so many hundred miles from Francatelli and the other artists, it was indeed surprising. Wine good and cool, fish, fruit, every thing. The hearts of the warriors could not but be softened and subdued to that good-humour which is almost akin to love. With his lively talk and bonhomie, Mr. Tilney illustrated

the whole as with a garnish. For this (comparatively speaking) child of nature, every dish was a surprise. "Now what have we here? What *shall* we call this? God bless me, so it is! Doctor Topham, this turns out to be something *à la Tartare*. Oysters, I believe. I don't warrant it; but it is likely to be good. Mrs. T. knows something about it, so you must be down on her. Plate, Jenny." (In a whisper to Mr. Tillotson) "For ten years we have always had a parlour-maid. Infinitely preferable to a heavy drunken creature, that deafens you with his boots. Look at Jenny there; she does uncommon well."

Jenny indeed glided round like velvet, was neat-handed, made no clatter, and, with her ribbons and chintz dress, looked almost like a theatre peasant.

The young ladies were absorbed in the recent adventures of Major Canby; Augusta, to whom the family had, after deliberation, allotted Mr. Tillotson—an arrangement always honourably adhered to by the sisters—combining her attention to her civil and military connections with a skill that was surprising, and the result of long training. The best of Mr. Canby's adventures was an incident connected with the railway, which at least made him laugh heartily.

"I knew I should be late, so I sent my fellow

at once for a cab—got down the traps uncommonly quick, I can tell you—but all along, you see, the feller was taking his time. Well, I got in, and what do you think the feller did? Got behind a wretched beer-cart, and kept behind it all the way. I was in a fever. I don't know if the beer-cart was running for the train, but it looked uncommon like it."

In uncontrollable laughter the two girls had to lay down their knives and forks. Major Canby laughed himself good-humouredly. The narrative was suspended for a few moments.

"I assure you it's a fact," he said. "I thought we should never have done with that beer-cart. I called to the feller—I shouted to him; but I saw it was all up."

"O, how dreadful!" said the second Miss Tilney in a tone of sympathy, "to miss a train, and have to wait—"

"O, it wasn't that, you know. O, I caught it—five minutes to spare. But wasn't it good—the beer-cart, you know?"

"Eh! what's that?" said Mr. Tilney, coming into the conversation, and quite delighted at the general hilarity. "I did not catch it. Something good, *I* know."

"O, you *must* tell papa," she said; "he won't let you off."

“O, it was only a curious thing about a beer-cart, as I was running for the train,” said Mr. Canby modestly; and good-naturedly began the story over again.

Mr. Tillotson was speaking, too, to another person — speaking thoughtfully and amusingly; but his narration was scarcely received with the enthusiasm that welcomed the beer-cart. He told of some of the more sensible phases of town life; and especially a strange story of a luckless banker-friend who had failed, and then was supposed to have taken poison. He told these things without vanity, or without thinking of himself, and with some dramatic effect; and then he found thoughtful eyes, looking out from under yellow hair, fixed on him. That face certainly, of all faces in the room, best understood him. Then she asked questions—short, eager, and enthusiastic questions—which betrayed her temperament to Mr. Tillotson, and showed how interested she was.

This attracted a wary sister. “A poor banker, dear!” she said scornfully. “It was very dreadful, of course. What private romance have *you* in the matter?”

Doctor Topham looked up from his plate—he always ate stooping over, and in a greedy way, like the great Dr. Samuel Johnson—“Romance!” he said; “fiddlestick! I’d like to see one of my

daughters setting up for romance. I wouldn't let a grain of it into my house, nor my brother Frederick, who is at the Treasury, into his. Who do you say is romantic?"

Augusta tittered. "O, Doctor Topham, how hard you are on poor Ada!—Why *will* you say those things, Ada?"

All the table looked at the golden-haired girl, who coloured. Mr. Tillotson spoke in a low, calm, clear voice. "Miss Millwood was not saying a word about romance. It was any thing but romantic what I was speaking of—a poor banker who destroyed himself."

Doctor Topham did not like being contradicted, and still less *being set right on any matter*. "I did not hear your banker's story, sir," he said; "and was speaking of the way I would bring up my family."

"Two different trains of ideas," said Mr. Tilney nervously. "Very good indeed."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Tillotson indifferently.

"At any rate, *we* have romance in the house," said Ross with a sneer, "in great force, and no mistake. Quite a professor, it seems."

"I have not brought it in," said Mr. Tillotson good-humouredly. "If you only knew me, you would find it fitted me less than any one in the world."

“No,” said Ross; “I believe that is not much in your line. The pound of flesh—nearest the heart—eh? Not a second’s delay—eh?”

A tinge of colour came in the other’s pale cheek. It was all “Greek” to the military gentlemen, now left miles behind.

Ada had a glow in her cheek, and her eyes were flashing reproach at Ross. He saw her, and looked back at her defiantly. “No, no,” she said, “you don’t mean all that.”

“Don’t I!” said he. “But I tell you I do. Pish for your romance and your romance-mongers. You, Ada Millwood, are a great authority on such matters. You, of course, have met lots of charming bankers, who force their money on you, and take no interest, and fill up cheques all day long—ha, ha! Poetical fellows—ha, ha! with poetical brass shovels—ha, ha!” Suddenly his voice changed. “I have met one or two of that sort, haven’t I? Fellows that will give you a coward’s blow in the dark, and pretend to get off on that; sweet fellows to look at, but with whom I shall be even one of these days.” (The military, a whole county behind, could not understand a word. They afterwards said to each other, “How jolly screwed that Ross had got, and so early in the night, too.”)

Suddenly Mr. Tillotson’s face contracted, a

faint colour came, and a sort of scorn to his voice. "There are men," he said, "who can only be dealt with in one way—on whom all treatment, except a good physical appeal, is sure to be thrown away. I am never sorry for having given such a lesson—never!"

Ross's eyes flashed fury. "Why, what do you mean?" he said. "Pray explain."

The most gentle, piteous, and mournfullest appeal in the world was made to Mr. Tillotson from the softest and most appealing face. It seemed to say, "Ah, no, for *my* sake! Think of him as a poor hunted worried outcast, against whom is the whole world, and who is fretted and chafed, and not accountable for what he says."

Mr. Tillotson's face changed also. He at once dropped his arms.

"You are right, Mr. Ross," he said. "No wonder you call me romantic, if not bombastic. Perhaps I have been reading a great number of novels lately. It is a resource for people in *my* way, so you must make all allowance."

The sweetest look of grateful thanks rewarded this amende. But Ross was not appeased. No wonder those who knew him slightly said that he was as "ill-conditioned a boor as ever came into the world."

Doctor Topham was not heeding this light talk,

but was busy detailing the whole stages of the Privy-Council case. "I saw all the papers. It was I who advised every step. I had the bishop by the hand and led him through. There were fellows here who were for having in Lushington, and the rest of them. And I assure you, the miserable gang of plotters in the Chapter here, the hole-and-corner agitators, on every man of whom I could, at this moment, put my finger, tried to twist this into a grievance. But the bishop despised them, and he despises them *now*, sir; and all I tell you is, simply, wait, sir, wait; and at the first opening we shall be down on the ring-leaders."

CHAPTER X.

IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

“AND now, how did they treat you at the White Hart, Tillotson?” Mr. Tilney called out, in a loud voice. “Well, hey? Tell me.”

“O, excellently,” Mr. Tillotson answered absently. “They are very civil indeed.”

“So they ought to be,” said Mr. Tilney. “Do you know, they gave Tillotson the Brown Room. I knew it at once, a finely proportioned thing. It was really a compliment to Tillotson. He gave it to the princess, when she was on her way to the Dook’s, near here, to stay for the cattle-show. Tell us about it, Tillotson.”

A little confused, Mr. Tillotson cleared his voice, and said, “The fact is, I did not use it, after all.”

“Not use it!” said Mr. Tilney, laying down his knife and fork. “The princess’s! You don’t tell me that.” Mr. Tilney said this with such genuine wonder and sorrow mixed, that the rest of the company turned to look at Mr. Tillotson.

Confused under this observation, he said.

“The room was too large and vaulty; a cavern, in fact, and so cold—”

“My God!” said Mr. Tilney, aghast; “but, you know, Lord Monboddo always—And where did they put you?”

“In a smaller and more compact place.”

“I think I should have changed too, like Mr. Tillotson,” said Mr. Grainger, in a low voice.

“So should I,” said Ada Millwood.

“So should I,” repeated Ross scornfully, “if I were afraid of ghosts, or had any thing on my conscience.”

“Goodness! goodness!” said Mr. Tilney, getting abstracted; “it seems only yesterday when the whole hotel rushed in to see the poor old general. Some of us, not dressed exactly—ahem: as we are now. About two in the morning—I was only a lad, you know. A terrible scene, sir, for one so young. An old man that had served his country, and his gray hairs dabbled in blood.”

Miss Millwood turned to Mr. Tillotson, as she saw his hand travel to his forehead in a sort of agony, and also half draw back his chair. Mr. Grainger, from the opposite side, noticed the same thing with a little surprise.

“Very odd indeed,” said one of the officers; “was all this a duel?”

“A duel,” said Mr. Tilney plaintively. “The old general was testy latterly, had the idea that people said he was past his work. Then there was the young wife, you know. Very unpleasant.” (And Mr. Tilney’s face fell into all sorts of spasms and violent contortions, that meant to convey, that when the ladies were gone he would enter into satisfactory details.) “Must say I always heard he forced it on Tom Major, made him stand up there and then—*viséd* him, as the French say—as it might be you, and then—Most unpleasant thing for the hotel, nearly ruined the business—God bless me, Tillotson, let me ring.”

Miss Millwood and Mr. Grainger had seen the suffering on his face; the first, with alarm and deep sympathy; the other, with curiosity. Suddenly Mr. Tillotson pushed back his chair.

“I have not been well lately,” he said. “A little air will set me right.” And he abruptly quitted the room.

“Bless my soul! how very odd?” said Mr. Tilney. “A seizure, I daresay. Well, well, we never know! In the midst of life we are upset—like a tree.”

“I knew he was afraid of a ghost,” said Ross.

“He is one of Mr. Tilney’s new friends,” said Mrs. Tilney, apologising. “They are always do-

ing something of that sort. A rather eccentric person Mr. Tillotson seems. What would you think, Mr. Grainger?"

"My explanation would be," said Mr. Grainger, looking round warily at every one's face in succession, "that this gentleman has had some unpleasant passage in his life which this story indirectly revives. Something of a very painful sort, and—"

The burning indignant look Ada Millwood was darting at him interrupted him, and he cast his eyes down again.

"That seems a little gratuitous," she said with a sort of indignation; "or if it be indeed so, he is to be pitied."

"Certainly," said the other humbly; "no one more so."

"What's that about the fellow having a skull locked up in his store-room? a feller says it in one of the novels," said one of the officers wisely. "Every family has, you know."

"An excellent remark, Mr. Still," said Mr. Tilney. "(Wine with you.) Shouldn't be surprised if it was the case of our friend. There he is, you see, walking about."

The company all looked to the window.

"We are making the man into Conrad the Corsair, or Timour the Tartar," said Ross impa-

tiently. "Let him walk if he likes. I'm sick of these mysteries, and of making up mysteries. I suppose he's only a common banking-man from London, that gets up and eats his breakfast like others. Yes, yes, Ada Millwood, that frowning and scornful curling of your mouth will give you wrinkles, my dear, if you don't mind."

Here Mr. Tillotson entered again.

"Better now?" called Mr. Tilney to him. "Ah! I thought so—quite right."

"I get violent headaches," said Mr. Tillotson, apologetically, "which come on at the most out-of-the-way times, making every one about me uncomfortable."

After that, Mr. Ross became sulky, and scarcely spoke during dinner. Soon Mr. Tillotson's pale face began to warm up. There was an influence in his manner which brought him to the surface of any conversation, just as in society a man is respected. It was no wonder, then, that Still should ask Canby who that "buffer" (or "duffer") was, who kept putting in his oar where he wasn't wanted? To whom Canby, who would have been glad to tell the beer-cart story many times more, said he "was some banking-prig or other." When the ladies were gone up, his supremacy was confirmed. Mr. Tilney, a man of the world, had a deep respect for "information;" and what was

better, so had Dr. Topham. But still the host did not forego his own share.

“Town *is* the place, after all,” he said. “Help yourself, Canby; wait—finish that;” and diving down, he brought up tenderly a bottle which he uncorked on a slanting stand. “Dear me! I used to dine with a great man, and a good man, no other than H.R.H. the sailor Dook, and I have often and often seen him do the very thing that I’m doing, with his own hands. Did it uncommon well, too. I never saw so fine an eye and steady a hand for decanting. What about the match, Still?” he continued, as the claret made its last Æolian chant as it entered the decanter.

“Day after to-morrow,” said Mr. Still, helping himself. “To be on the green.”

“Are those Wiltshire fellows any good?”

“They *have* one fellow who can bowl, I believe. But Pitcher’s coming to us from the dépôt. Not one of them will stand up a minute before Pitcher.”

“I wonder you’d play with such a set,” said Ross with disgust. “They’re all cads and counter-jumpers. I suppose you know that? Their captain’s a sort of railway fellow, I believe.”

“Well,” said the major, “we must take what we get. We can’t go picking and choosing, you know.”

“O, just as you like,” said Ross, helping

himself. "That's your concern, you know. I like playing with gentlemen, just as a matter of taste."

"Tillotson! Tillotson!" called out Mr. Tilney, "just come here. Come over here! You know I said I would show it to you. Still, look at this. I suppose one of the most curious things you could see."

Still, however, did not come. Augusta had said to him, "It is only an old letter of papa's."

"Look here, Tillotson. His own writing. It was just when she was born. She was christened Augusta, after one of the princesses. (Helen is Helen Mecklenburga.) And I wrote to H.R.H. the sailor Dook, as they called him, about giving leave for that sort of thing—at least, to know would they object. I was sitting at breakfast one morning; *she*," nodding at Mrs. Tilney, "was not quite strong enough to get down as yet—Sir James said in a week she might—when *this* came in, just like any other letter in the world. Here it is." And he kept turning a rather yellow and gilt-edged letter tenderly, as if he expected it to fall to pieces. "You see," holding it up to the light, "his handwriting. Read it. You may. No secrets." And Mr. Tillotson read it. The date had been mysteriously removed, or at least some one had made it as uncertain as possible :

“DEAR TILNEY—Call your child by any name you like. Hope Mrs. T. is well over.

“Yours, WILLIAM.

“I am going to Portsmouth to-morrow.

“W.”

“There!” said Mr. Tilney, in admiration. “A prince of the blood, and just like you or I—or any body else! There was no more conceit in that man, or consciousness of the exalted position which he filled, than there was in that—that—” said Mr. Tilney, puzzled for an illustration, and seizing on the first that offered, “that paper-cutter. Perhaps not so much.”

He felt that this was scarcely a happy illustration. So he took back his letter, and folded it up. “He was always doing nice things of this sort,” he continued. “I could tell you a hundred like them. When he went, I can—tell—you—Dick Tilney lost his best friend. Augusta was considered, when a child, very like one of the princesses—odd, wasn’t it?—and having the same name. That was *very* curious! They are both remarkable girls; always in spirits. Listen now. And yet, naturally, Augusta is serious—*so* serious! Look here, Tillotson,” he added, confidentially; “puts all that on for society, you know. Much rather be melancholy; that is, when I say melan-

eholy, I mean be with her books. God Almighty in his infinite goodness bless them both!" he added, with sacerdotal fervour.

"Was Miss Ada christened after one of the princesses?" asked Mr. Tillotson.

"To be sure. I forgot. God bless her too!" said Mr. Tilney, feeling a sort of delicate reproof in this question. "They are *all* good, you know. But Augusta someway—I can't express it—but you will understand. By the way, you don't mind *him*," nodding at young Ross. "A little rough, you know. Sit down here, Tillotson. I should like to talk to you a little. We are here for a time, and then—"

Mrs. Tilney, now out of work, and with her head leaning back on the cushion, called softly, "Mr. Tillotson," as if she had some news to tell him. "Major Canby," she whispered, "has brought a new game, which he is going to teach them. 'Cobblers,' I think he calls it."

Augusta now came over with a pack of cards in her hand. "O, Mr. Tillotson, *you'll* play 'Cobblers,' won't you?"

"No, no," he said, smiling. "I never heard—"

"O, Major Canby is to teach us all. He saw it at Hadbury, Sir Thomas Groper's place."

"You know they played it there," said Major

Canby, delivering an explanatory lecture, "in a different way. They were all at sea, you know, when I told Lady Groper a few things, and she said it made it quite a new game. And so it is."

"O mamma," said Augusta, reproachfully, "we must play it the way Major Canby said to Lady Groper."

Mr. Tillotson then did not care to play. Miss Ada was not asked (except by the gentlemen, and with some anxiety), and the friend of the late duke was asleep on his sofa, with a fallen jaw, and a lank ghastly look, that once more betrayed his age. Mr. Ross had gone away in disgust to that "vile pipe," as Mrs. Tilney said. Major Canby then began his lecture, and never was lecturer so applauded. But he had one "sad" pupil, who could understand and see nothing unless by practical personal illustration, the cards requiring to be shifted and taken out of her hands by the lecturer, the laws of this game pressing so cruelly on a tender and pretty intellect.

Finally, brown-sherry came in, and Mr. Tilney, who seemed to detect its presence by instinct, as camels know when they are near water, woke up, and drew up his jaw. He then "tried" it, to see that it was of the sort he wished to put down before his guests.

“Try this,” his voice was heard ringing plaintively. “Try this, Still. Help yourself to some of the old tap. Dear, dear. I could tell you about the man from whose cellar I got this. Such a story—in fact story after story.”

Mrs. Tilney interposed. Major Canby was saying farewell.

“You’ll keep a place for us, Major Canby—a *good* place—at the cricket,” said Augusta. “I am dying to see cricket—*real* cricket, you know. And, mamma, won’t you ask Mr. Tillotson?” she added, conscience telling her that there were some arrears here to be made up.

“Nonsense,” said Mr. Tilney. “To-morrow, business—eh, Mr. Tillotson? We cannot have that. All play and no work makes Jack, you know. No, no,” he added, with solemnity, “pleasure first, *then* business, as much as you like.”

Not caring to set right this remarkable inversion, Mr. Tillotson excused himself from the cricket, and said, Good night, to all. With the departing military gentlemen, “the girls” and Mrs. Tilney were in a sort of riot of voices and laughing at the humour of the facetious Canby. The air was filled with female voices; they “died” over and over again. There was such “convulsions,” “O, mammas!” “For shames!” and a

hundred such protests—as it were, half entreaties, half commands, that Major Canby would be merciful, and not go further.

In such a tumult Mr. Tillotson's farewell was not likely to be noticed. Mr. Tilney, in a sorrowful way, was engaged with brown-sherry. The golden-haired girl, sad and pensive, was standing at the fire, her face looking down at the grate, her foot on the fender, her dress not a dress, but a robe. She looked like one of Ary Scheffer's figures.

“Good night,” said Mr. Tillotson to her.

She looked up at him with a trustful gratitude. “I heard you say that you would not go to the cricket to-morrow, and there was that dreadful word, business!”

“Business is Life, I begin to believe,” he said, smiling sadly.

Mr. Tilney came out with his friend to the gate. The stars were out, the night was tranquil, the great cathedral was sleeping in moonlight.

“After all,” Mr. Tilney said, pressing his friend's hand, “*this* is the sort of thing! *After all*, we come back to *this* at the end—like the Ark. I'll walk a bit of the way with you. Dear me, this is the way life goes on, one day after the other, one night after another, until the

hearse comes up, sir, and takes us away. It'll be the same for you, you know, Tillotson, as for me."

"Yes, indeed," said the other, absently, and not meaning to assent specially to this truth. "And the sooner, perhaps the best for us all. Does Miss Millwood," he added, a little abruptly, "does she stay with you all the year, or has she a home of her own?"

"Ada, you mean," said Mr. Tilney, stopping in the road. "No, sir. There," and he pointed back with his stick, "that little abode, always so free from grief and care—the Roost, as I may call it, is hers—always will be hers, while there is a stick of furniture together, or a crust, or a scrap of meat, or—or, the cruets on the sideboard."

"I see," said Mr. Tillotson, "as the child of a dear friend—"

"Harry Millwood was, I may say, next door but one to a relation. Sir, I knew every corner and cranny of that man as well as I do you—I mean, as I do my own grandfather—or did, I mean. Living in the palace in that way—he was equerry, you know—they never *would* do any thing for him; and yet, upon my soul, I couldn't blame 'em. He broke down, sir—he had to break down—give the thing up—with a wife and child on him. Had to—to cut. Cut, sir, under an assumed name, the which rather, you know, gave

me a little turn. Come weal, come woe, I like a fellow to stand by the name he took before God in his baptism."

"Well," said Mr. Tillotson, eagerly, "so they had to go away?"

"Well," said Mr. Tilney, "he died. Died," added he, mysteriously looking round, "abroad, in a very odd way. I am not at liberty to mention the circumstances, Tillotson; I am not, indeed. God knows I would keep nothing from you. But I cannot, indeed. But it was a sudden, and a violent, and a dreadful end."

Mr. Tillotson stopped this time. They were at the old gray gateway which is the entrance to the Close, dappled over with other grays, and casting a grotesque shadow on the ground about them. But the moonlight played about their two faces, and Mr. Tillotson's face seemed the palest of the two.

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Tilney. "It was as tragic a business—as heart-breaking a thing as you'd see—as you'd see at Drury Lane. I went over to them—I was abroad at the time, but I went over to 'em. Such a state of things! My God! That child in a fever—"

Mr. Tillotson shuddered. "Miss Ada? What a world it is!" he said, in a low voice, "and what miserable, guilty creatures we all are!"

“So we all are,” repeated Mr. Tilney, as if he was in the cathedral, and leading off the chanting. “Every one of us, Tillotson, prince and peasant. The only thing is, I believe, to hold fast by *that*.” And he pointed back over his shoulder to the cathedral, now a good way out of sight. “Ah! all I went through in those days! But the curious thing is, my dear Tillotson, the girl knows nothing of this. Not a word—not a breath, mind.”

“What?” said Mr. Tillotson, starting, “nothing about the manner of her father’s death?”

“Nothing; she thinks to this hour, at this very moment, that he was carried off by an ague of the country. She herself recovered her senses in about a week after all was happily got over—funeral and all that—and we never told her. What was the use, you know?”

“What a strange story!” said Mr. Tillotson, more to himself than to his friend. “I seemed to read something of the kind in her soft gentle face, a kind of sad, subdued melancholy.”

“’Pon my word, yes; and I recollect Tom Harrison—a man of the very best style and connections, you know—making precisely the same remark. ‘She’s a quiet, nunnish look,’ says Tom, who, between you and me, knew pretty

well about that sort of thing. Well, here we part, I suppose; you to the right hand, and I to the left. You know there must come one dread day when we must file away right and left. And what our only foundation is, you and I know. Good night, God bless you! God Almighty bless you, Tillotson! To-morrow at twelve, then—or was it nine? Yes, quite right. Good night!”

And after Mr. Tillotson was gone he remained a long time at the garden-gate, pensively looking up at what he called “the wonderful works of the Creator.” Mr. Tillotson went home as pensively, thinking, perhaps, of one other work, to him almost as wonderful.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRICKET.

WHEN Mr. Tillotson got back to his White Hart, he found by significant sounds that a party of gentlemen were enjoying themselves, and that these were the champions of the North Wiltshire club, who were about celebrating an anticipated victory. Their captain, Pitcher, of whom one of the military gentlemen had already spoken in terms of praise, was in the chair. They kept up their carousal very late, and prevented many worthy guests from sleeping. But these revels did not interfere with whatever waking dreams were floating through Mr. Tillotson's brain. He was travelling back to that small house on the common, which was so filled with its half-a-dozen tenants, and yet where there was one that lived all but solitary—more lonely even than if she were living by herself in a great dismal shut-up castle. For this miserable abandonment in a crowd, for this desolation among many faces, he had the deepest compassion and tenderness. It

came home to himself, and perhaps he was thinking of that compassion, almost as tender and pitying as his own, which he had seen in the soft Scheffer face. The anxieties of the bank were far away, or at least softened into the distance.

The next morning Mr. Tillotson went to business, and to practical business. Before noon he had found an excellent site for the future bank—before noon, too, he had discovered a quiet, sensible man of business, with good local knowledge; and though Mr. Tilney had recommended another, with infinitely higher qualifications, he did not select him. He had found out, too, the general resources of the place, weighed its chances of going back or getting forward—the last the most promising. There was a new railway promised, a new market talked of; in short, it was the soil for a great financial oak to strike root in and flourish.

The same useful authority gave him some useful hints as to the choice of local directors, who were to sit, as it were, on the branches of the great oak, and have an acorn or so for their own private use. There was young Welbeck, Lord Holyoake's son, a local hunting lord, who was agricultural, and interested in the Condition of the Poor and the Labouring Man's Dwellings,

and who moved in a sanitary cloud. The Hon. Welbeck, who had nothing to do, and coming of such a stock, would do well for a chairman. The intelligent solicitor told him a good deal about Mr. Tilney, whose name, after some consideration, he was inclined to believe, would not add strength to the direction. He was a little embarrassed at discovering this, for he had an uneasy instinct that his friend expected some such proof of confidence in him.

“A little too much sherry, you see,” said the solicitor—“perfectly upright and honourable, but, I should say, could not well depend on himself.”

And Mr. Tillotson saw, with regret, that it could not be done. For, through all that mixture of natural religion, the late “Dook,” the paternal interest, walking-stick, and brown-sherry, Mr. Tillotson saw a kind of good nature, and some feeling, though it was all “humped” and contorted by the constrained false and fashionable postures he had been sitting in for years. He *wished* he could do something for this old soldier of fine life, and wished, as he fancied, sincerely; but perhaps it was for the sake of some one else—from a spirit of pleasant self-delusion, which is common enough.

With this work he filled-in the morning. Meanwhile, on a green field, the Prado of the

town, a grand festival was being held. The sun was bright, and streamed down on a white tent, and on many bright bonnets, and parasols, and shawls. The Northern Eleven, under the captaincy of the famous Pitcher, were battling with the military eleven. The band was drawn up at one side, playing airs, and over the field were dotted a few white figures in all the dandyism of the game, "encumbered" with spikes in the heels, and mysterious gloves, and greaves like a Roman soldier's, while some stood with their hands on their knees, appearing to be "offering a back" to some one, but in reality only carrying out the true proficient's attitude of the game. According to long-established routine, the game did not appear to advance very fast, for at about intervals of two minutes the whole party seemed about to break up and disperse, the white gentlemen folding their arms and walking leisurely to different parts of the field, crossing each other as if they had had quite enough of the business, and were going home. But in this they only meant to shuffle themselves like cards, and create a sort of variety. Every now and again came a sharp crack when the white man at the wicket struck the ball, which, by an instinct, produced an electric spasm in every other white man far and near, who stooped, and gave fresh and sudden

“backs,” and swayed to the right and left, and looked along the ground, all expressing vigilance more or less. Sometimes the ball slipped past the white man who was stopping, and who had to go off in pursuit, and then the two batsmen were seen “running” furiously, and the whole company of far-off white men, in a state of agitation, gesticulating, and looking out nervously after their brother who was pursuing the ball.

The girls had not come down as yet, and, in fact, would not arrive until about three. Mr. Tillotson, having done enough work for the day, was thinking doubtfully whether he could, indeed, find in the White Hart sufficient entertainment for what remained, or whether, after all—— when he heard a cheerful voice in the passage.

“I’ve come for you,” said Mr. Tilney, cheerfully. “They’re all out on the green. But the girls are not gone as yet. I promised to step down for you. For we want to make a party, and come on the ground in grand style.”

It was a pity they were so pressed for time, otherwise a few minutes’ communion with brown-sherry would have come in suitably. As it was, Mr. Tilney was looking round restlessly for something to complete his comfort. But he felt there was really no time.

The White Hart was dismal enough, and Mr.

Tillotson, although he made some protest, felt that the change was a relief. Mr. Tilney talked to him, on the way, of his usual topics. One remark he made was, that it was odd, now, that we should find the girls at this place, for they hated showing themselves at public places.

“You know, Tillotson, and you have seen what they like; their tastes are for the little sort of thing we had last night. But their mother and I think it better, you know—”

When they were close to the house, they met a friendly local doctor, whom Mr. Tilney in a moment had by the arm, with some secret of importance.

“Go on, Tillotson,” he said. “*You* know the way. You’ll find them in the drawing-room. No ceremony.”

Mr. Tillotson walked on. The little green gate was open, and so was the hall-door. He walked up pensively, and his footsteps made no noise upon the gravel.

At that moment there was a curious discussion going on inside. The ladies had come from their chamber in bright and new gloves. They might have been going to a wedding. They had found the Cinderella of the house also dressed, not nearly so splendidly, but almost more effectively. That golden hair, which could be seen

so far off under the sun, was worth all the lace shawls and finery which decked her sisters and mamma. They were indignant.

“We may as well stay at home,” Augusta now said. “I give up. I don’t want to be going to these places in a tribe, like a school. I feel quite ashamed.”

Ada said softly: “I don’t care in the least for it, indeed; only William made such a point of it, and made me promise last night—”

The morning silks rustled and fluttered with indignation.

“What a romance!” said Helen scornfully. “What a lover to be proud of! I should be ashamed!”

Mrs. Tilney now came in, armed with a sharp parasol all covered with lace. She saw the third girl, and the smile, which she had put on with her bonnet, dropped down, as a glass drops from a gentleman’s eye.”

“This ends it,” she said. “What is the meaning of this new fit of gaiety? You must stay at home, ma’am, or go by yourself. Though, I suppose,” she added impatiently, “we *must* take you, or we shall have some scene with that rude low man before people.”

“I know what it is,” said Augusta, working her chin at her bonnet-strings as if she were

champing her bit. "I know it perfectly well, mamma. She has laid herself out for that Mr. Tillotson who was here last night. I was watching her artful tricks while we were talking to Major Canby—trying him with her melancholy airs and her dismal stories."

Three faces of scorn and indignation were bent on the timid girl, who was colouring in confusion; three parasols were grasped tightly as though they were falchions. Mrs. Tilney rustled violently past a chair and flung her dress back, as if it were in fault.

"I saw her, too, Augusta. But we won't *have* these doings, ma'am, if you please. Just keep in your room," &c. &c.

Mr. Tilney, hurrying from the friendly doctor, met Mr. Tillotson coming to him. "Why, bless me, why didn't you go in? Now this is unfair, standing on ceremony with *me!* Ah, Tillotson, Tillotson!" And with a gentle force he led him back again.

They met the ladies at the door, who were light-hearted and full of happiness and a childish gaiety and affection. They were the mere innocent butterflies of life, who lived for the hour in eternal sunshine and eternal good humour. This was the idea they presented to the eye of a mortal like Mr. Tillotson. Mrs. Tilney had

fitted on her smile again. Three new fresh pale kid gloves were put in his hand, and each glove was accompanied with a dimpling smile.

“Where’s Ada?” said Mr. Tilney. “She’s coming, I know.”

“I don’t think she’s quite able,” said Mrs. Tilney, with some hesitation.

“She’s not coming, papa,” said Miss Augusta, shortly.

“Nonsense!” said Mr. Tilney; “the air will do her good. There, I see her in the drawing-room with her bonnet on. God bless me! I knew she was coming; I told you so.”

Sometimes Mr. Tilney made stupid “bungling” mistakes of this sort, which arose out of a momentary enthusiasm and happiness in the contemplation of the works of his Maker. This feeling often carried him away. Mrs. Tilney walked on without replying, the smile having dropped again. And Augusta, who had all the versatility of a social “Stonewall” Tilney, suddenly changed her “base,” and seemed to long for the company of Ada. “I shall run and tell her, Mr. Tillotson,” she said, confidentially, “and *make* her come.” And thus the golden-haired girl had to come with them.

But there was a great change in Mr. Tillotson. He was in what, with him, approached nearest

to spirits. He talked to Miss Augusta with a "light" manner that seemed quite strange in him. His face cleared a little.

They came on the ground together in splendid procession. It was happily chosen as the gayest moment of the day. The white men were still dotted about, with their hands on their knees, and going through their other masonic movements; but no one took much interest in them now. The band was playing a selection from Faust, arranged by H. Hartzmann, the courteous and skilful conductor, who, disdaining a uniform, was wearing a broad-brimmed hat and frock, and conducting with wicked and angry glances at his men; and close to the band was the chief attraction. For here were chairs and white parasols, and fresh faces under the parasols, and gallant gentlemen leaning over and talking down to the sitting ladies, without the least sense of being under the sun that was shining, and of the smooth grass under their feet, and of the pleasant breezes, and of the pretty view that was all round. As the little procession, whom we have accompanied part of the way, debouched, gallant gentlemen, with the natural craving for novelty, abandoned the ladies in the chairs, and flocked round the newcomers. Among these deserters were Messrs. Still and Canby. This was the moment when

an artificial excitement was created by the news that Pitcher was bowling, or going to bowl, and that Daffy was just "going in."

"Wait until you see what Daffy can do," said Mr. Still confidentially to the ladies. "He has the finest hand. He'll show 'em."

Here, too, was young Ross lounging about. It was he who cried "Bravo!" with marked derision when Mr. Daffy was bowled out, and ironically congratulated him. "At any rate," he said, "we could see by the way you held your bat what you *would* have done." He had looked on very sourly as he saw the little procession draw near, and when a young lady asked him who that gentleman was with the Tilneys, he had answered brusquely, "Some fellow that's come down here out of a counting-house, I believe—and don't he look like one? No, I don't mean that. But he is a sort of banking man. You understand. Brass shovel—'How will you have it?' and all that sort of thing."

The young lady laughed. "But he seems to be handsome and gentlemanly—"

He looked at her impatiently. "That's just it. The young men up at Trimmer's shop in the town there, don't *they* seem gentlemanly enough? Every body is, or ought to look, gentlemanly now-a-days."

To Mr. Tillotson he gave his old scowl and rude rough nod, and a rougher "How d'ye do?" then walked brusquely up to Ada, who kept timidly in the background. He spoke to her in a low voice, which, by his face, seemed to be a harsh one. He had a bat in his hand, with which he beat the grass as he spoke. Major Canby and his friends were now so amusing that Mr. Tillotson found himself neglected. He was watching, and saw her shrink away, almost in alarm, from his unkind attack. Mr. Tillotson came round a little closer, drawn by some attraction, and then the girl seeing him a little suddenly, came closer to him, and it had all the look of coming to him for protection. Ensign Ross followed, still swinging his bat. "Would you like to see a heroine," he asked him, "a regular heroine, with a sad face, and suffering persecution? Look here! I hate victims! I have no patience with them. Not treated with respect enough at home—cruel sisters, eh? Life a burden? What has put you out?"

She looked sadly distressed—more vexed than distressed, perhaps—at this public attack. Mr. Tillotson felt the colour coming to his cheeks.

Mr. Ross saw this colour coming, and resented it. "Well, what do *you* say? Am I not right? Can't you speak, Mr. Tillotson?"

“Well, I merely say that if you hate, I pity victims, as you call them.”

“O, indeed!” said the other, with mock respect; “this is getting charming. Something in the champion way. I see! Well, you won’t be angry, but I dislike champions also. It’s far too melodramatic a business for *me*.”

She moved away impatiently. He followed, still with his bat, and with the same sarcastic smile, kept whispering something rapidly. She turned back as quickly and with a kind of harassed fretfulness, and in a soft imploring voice, said, and her words reached Mr. Tillotson, “Do, *do* leave me in peace!”

Mr. Tillotson was next her in a moment. “Come round here, Miss Millwood,” he said; “you will see the cricket better; round to this side.” And he had quickly led her away, leaving Mr. Ross looking after them half astonished, half disgusted.

“That rude unkind man,” said Mr. Tillotson, a little excitedly, “how can you bear with him? Forgive me, but I heard what he said, and what you said.”

“I suppose he docs not mean it; the old excuse.”

“The charitable excuse, if you will,” he answered. “But I have seen many faces, and am

obliged to see many; and from what *his* face tells me there can be no such excuse. Dear Miss Ada," he added, with a little fervour, "believe that I know, or can guess, at something of your life, and perhaps something of what you are forced to suffer here—"

She started.

"And I think it hard—cruel even—that a man should venture to behave as he does. It is unworthy—unmanly."

She only answered, without lifting her eyes from the ground, "You know what I told you yesterday."

"Ah!" he answered, warmly, "but he does *not* mean well! This delicacy and indulgence may be carried too far. These are the mere perverse and wicked humours of a tyrannical mind. I know human character pretty well. That sensitiveness is all absurd; and, dear Miss Millwood, if you will trust to me, or be advised by one who has a deep interest in you—"

"O, you are so good, so kind," she said, with that air of devotion which so often came upon her. "But there are reasons I must not tell you. I must bear and wait a little longer."

Meanwhile, Pitcher had been bowling in most splendid fashion. Soldier after soldier went out with a plunge. The normal attitude of the wicket-

sticks was that of being awry. Nor did Pitcher content himself with these prodigies. He had other feats; and once so scared a military gentleman by rushing at the ball the latter had just struck, and launching it with sudden violence at the wicket, that he slipped and fell from sheer surprise and nervousness, and was quickly "out." Victory, therefore, declared for Pitcher and the North Wiltshires.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. CECILIA AT THE ORGAN.

THE day wore on. The sun had travelled across the field, and the calm of evening began to set in quickly. The cricketers were growing fatigued; but the untiring ladies showed no sign of flagging interest. For them there was no monotony in the spectacle; at least, the succession of gentlemen who came up and amused the Miss Tilneys prevented their taking much heed of the passage of time. Of Mr. Tillotson, absent, dreamy, and silent, they had long since ceased to make any account. About four, he had wandered away unnoticed towards the old cathedral, which, with the enclosed green, and the little Close, and the old-fashioned houses, had begun to have a sort of attraction for him. There had been Service there that day as usual; but it had been a very deserted ritual. And Fugle, the seraphic tenor, had to expend notes, that properly belonged to the cherubim above, on two old ladies and a mildewed ancient, dotted among the lugubrious stalls, and on a tourist

who, book in hand, and studying the monuments, looked in curiously at some angelic cry of Fugle's, but cautiously took care not to be imprisoned within the great gates of the choir. When Mr. Tillotson walked among the grass, he heard the billows of the organ still rolling and swelling within. He went in. Bliss was practising above. There was no one else there. His footsteps echoed as through some vast stone grotto. He was quite alone, and walked softly into an oaken stall to listen to Bliss, Musical Doctor, Oxon.

It was a soft, solemn, stalking theme of Bach's, grand, old-fashioned, and piquant, like music in bag-wig and ruffles and square-cut coat—music that ambles on in a solemn canter round and round in a ring, with quaint curvets and backings for any length of time, with a very charming monotony—that finally wakes up into a *grand ronde*, and ends triumphantly, like the last burst of a procession. Mr. Tillotson in his stall, with two comic lions with twisted tails and a paw leaning on a shield on each side of his head, thought of Dr. Bliss and his powers, and was wondering whether the dull bricklayer's-work of lessons, teaching, and the like, dulled this fine sense of music, and whether this grand power fell into a fatal routine also, when he heard the rattle of closing stops and the locking of the organ-doors.

Doctor Bliss was going home. He stood out in the middle, looking up at the great gallery; and, as he did so, the organist glided across. But it was not Doctor Bliss. Heavy shadows were floating up among the groined arches; but with a quick instinct he knew the outline of that figure, and walked up to her quickly and stopped her. By the same instinct she knew him.

“I have been listening,” he said, “in that old dark stall—I thought it was Doctor Bliss—and have been delighted.”

“He lets me play in the evening sometimes. It is the greatest treat I can have. It is quite a world for me, that noble old organ, with life, fancies, intellect, every thing. In its company I forget every thing.”

“Just as I,” he said, “when listening, have forgotten every thing in the world too. I have never been what is called musical; but I can follow and understand what I have just heard.”

“But there are very few who *are* musical,” she said in her serious way, and smoothing down her yellow hair, which rivalled an illumined patch of amber glass just above. “They are taught instruments and notes; but that is scarcely music.” Then she said abruptly: “You have spoken more than once of troubles, and some secret bitterness which is to be irrecoverable. May I speak to you

freely? May an inexperienced girl give a little advice?"

"And I shall promise to try and follow it, too," he answered eagerly. "Indeed I shall! Why, near your wisdom ours is all foolishness. Do speak, Miss Millwood."

"You have been so good to me," she went on (and the two figures standing there under the great gallery looked picturesque even to the verger, who had come to lock up, but went away softly, recognising her),—even from the first night when you made me a promise which I had no right to ask of you,—that I *will* speak to you without restraint. If you had some dreadful trouble,—some terrible blight,—why should you sit down under it, or take it with you all through life? Believe me, we should all struggle; and after we have indulged ourselves in a sorrow and repentance, perhaps, for a time,—let it be a long time even,—we should then think of life and its duties. Dear Mr. Tillotson, I do not want to run into what comes from that pulpit there every Sunday; but I myself was once inclined to do as you do—to drag hopelessly through life; but—"

"It is too kind of you," he said excitedly—"too generous; and indeed, if I dare, or if I could, I would carry out what you say, though I shut my ears to the platitudes poured out by others. But

you do not know—you *can't* know all, Miss Millwood! Sorrows and troubles! Yes; I were blessed indeed, if all known misfortunes were poured out on me: ruin, poverty, sickness, any thing. You will think this extravagance. But I know how to struggle, and would welcome such trials. But there are other things that *must* walk with us through life till we reach our graves. That, nothing *here* can atone for. That gives us a dismal pleasure in gloom and misery, because we know the more we suffer the more we are atoning."

She answered him as excitedly as he had spoken; and the setting sunlight outside came now in a gorgeous slant from the amber panes right on the amber hair.

"Why," she said, "this is the hopeless doomed Calvinist's faith—despairing, wretched, hopeless! It makes me miserable to hear you talk so; it fills me with despair. I don't know your sad history. But no matter what has happened. I conjure you and implore; I would go down on my knees here, in this sacred place, to ask you, dear Mr. Tillotson, to fly from yourself and banish this fatal, miserable, destroying idea!"

"And what *am* I to do?" he said, putting his hand to his forehead. "Ah! if *you* preach, I must listen. Call it destroying, despairing, horrible—

what you like. But you do not know—you cannot guess—”

“I can look into your face,” she said confidently, “and see none of the cold hard lines of guilt. I can tell that you have been, to use the common hackneyed form, more sinned against than sinning. That, when young, you have been foolish, thoughtless, and have thus done things which others do coldly and with guilty premeditation—”

“O,” he said, “it is indeed as you say. I dare sometimes flatter myself it is so. Thank you a thousand and a thousand times over for this kind judgment. I shall think of it, and force myself to believe it. You say you look in my face; but can you *look at this hand?* Ah! is there no physiognomy in the hand!”

She shrank back a little. “It is not for me,” she said, “to pass judgment; nor do I wish to know the course of any one’s past life. That is for his conscience.”

“They have not put ‘Confessionals’ round this cathedral,” he said bitterly. “I wish to Heaven sometimes they had. I saw you turn away, Miss Millwood. You see I judged myself better, after all, than *you* could do.”

“No, indeed,” she said eagerly, and coming back close to him again; “you mistake. You spoke so mysteriously.”

“And yet you must not,” he said, “take with you a wrong impression. Whatever was done was forced upon me.”

“And tell me,” she said suddenly; “have you no relative—no sister, father, or mother?”

“Not one left,” he said in a strange steady key of despair that went to her heart; “and yet it all rested with me!”

With a start she shrank away.

“Ah! I see it,” he said bitterly. “How empty are professions! No matter; I was young, and careless, and wicked. ‘Wild’ is the gentle word of the world. I was wilder than even those complimented as wild. I was sent abroad to save them at home from disgrace, although it nearly broke *their* hearts. But it had to be done. We are not in a confessional, Miss Millwood; but I am telling you every thing. I went away recklessly, rejoicing at being free then and for ever. After a time my father, ill and broken, sent for me. I in part disbelieved the illness; in part was too proud, and said, ‘Let them come to me, since they sent me away from them;’ in part listened to some wicked friends who were real ‘men of the world.’ Yet I *did* feel—I did indeed, Miss Millwood; though I cannot expect you to believe me.”

“How you mistake!” she answered. “I believe you, and feel for you. Indeed I do.”

“But you have not heard all. There came a passionate letter from her, laying his death at *my* door; calling me her husband’s murderer; telling me to be an outcast, never to come near her, to end my wretched course as soon as I pleased, and let her end hers. That roused my wretched pride again; and O, Miss Millwood, what will you think of me? I went on from worse to what was yet worse. One vile story after another travelled home about me, some true, some false; but all reaching, until came *that most fatal* story of all, which, O, Miss Millwood, *was true, true,* and ever must be true!” He could not go on.

But, in a voice of the tenderest sweetness, she said to him, “There, you must not think or talk of these things. I can understand. I don’t wish to know more. And still I repeat what I have said before: whatever has happened, you must try and struggle. It is a duty, and the best atonement you can make to that lost parent.”

“Ah!” he said despairingly. “Dear Miss Millwood, I must go on as I have gone on. I have indeed tried travel, books, and now business, hard, constant, laborious business. I am longing to get up a *greed* of money. If that were to take possession of me body and soul, I might drive the other enemy out; but, someway, should it not be kept there? It is better to go on

to the end even as it was at the beginning. Though since I have come down here, I seem to have got upon more quiet waters. What with this cathedral and its old-world associations, this little enclosure about it, and its air of peace and happiness, I seem to be less wretched, or rather, it seems to me that there is less misery in the world. And some words of yours, dear Miss Millwood, have sunk deeper than perhaps you would fancy."

The great pillars and arches had begun to cast broader and broader shadows. The light behind the amber panes had gradually faded, and left them cold and dull. The glories of the sunset had gone down. The monument to the Yeomanry Captain looked like a spectral dining furniture set out for a ghostly banquet. Suddenly two figures came round the corner, and stopped before them.

"So we have found you! Come," said Ross, roughly, "what does all this mean? Nice work! Is this a place for you? Don't you know how long they have been looking for you?"

"I am coming," she said, softly. "I was playing—"

Ross laughed. His laugh echoed harshly through that great cave. "You hear that. How ready a woman is with her excuse! Why, we didn't hear a sound this hour back. Perhaps *you*

were playing also—an undiscovered accomplishment.”

“Let us go away now,” she said, hastily.
“Don’t let us lose time. Come, Mr. Tillotson.”

She went on in front with Mr. Tillotson. The other two followed hastily.

“We were unfortunate,” said Ross’s friend, “that we came too late for the music. I should like to have heard that old instrument trembling and roaring under your fingers, Miss Millwood.”

“And don’t forget our friend, who hates cricket, and I suppose dropped in here by the merest accident,” said Ross.

“It *was* accident,” said Mr. Tillotson, calmly; “but what of it, supposing it were not? This cathedral, a wonderful exception, is, I believe, always kept open like the foreign ones.”

“Ready always at repartee, is he not? Mr. Tillotson, the London banker, can give us lessons down here. Can’t he, Bob?”

“Why should you say that?” said his friend. “Why, you are as bitter as an almond. Confound you, why, if you spoke that way to a Mexican gent, he’d have you out on horseback in ten minutes, with a Colt’s repeating musket opposite. My dear friend, you must keep your tongue in order. You won’t meet every one with such restraint and moderation as this gentleman.”

The banker coloured. "Mr. Ross knows I have not restrained myself nearly so much as I ought to have done."

Ross stamped his foot savagely down on the pavement.

"Ah! that would be different, of course," said Grainger.

"*Will* you stop?" said Ross, his face glowing suddenly, and his eyes glaring. "What is this you mean? Come on in front—I wish to speak to you," he said, seizing her arm. "Come quickly;" and he almost dragged her on.

"Our friend," said Grainger, nodding his head, "is a little rough at times; but he is really good, and means well."

In a few minutes they were at home.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ILL-CONDITIONED MAN.

It was impossible to withstand the accolade manner of Mr. Tilney—his absorbing Friend-of-Man deportment ; and, if this could be withstood, it was equally hopeless to think of battling against the Friend of Man, sensitive, and meaning well, and wounded. But he was really good-natured.

“ It is like fresh air to me to get a gentleman now and then into the house. I have been accustomed to that sort of thing—to sit with the best, with his late Majesty, Jack Norman, and a hundred such. The best dishes, sir, the best clothes, the best men and women, sir ! And then to be cocked down in a miserable hole like this ! A low nest of psalm-singers and tailors. I tell you now, once for all, it's *not* a fit place for a gentleman.”

This tone was inconsistent with Mr. Tilney's previous praises of the tranquil pleasures of the cathedral, whose special charms, he had often insisted, lay in its retirement and simplicity, as

contrasted with the false pleasures of high society. As if too Mr. Tillotson had been urging pertinaciously that it *was* a place for a gentleman. But the day had been very warm, the sun beating down on his forehead, and Mr. Tilney was seen to go in and out very often of the cricketing tent, where he had found out and perhaps wooed, the maiden, Brown Sherry. Presently he grew ruminative. (This was at the door of his own house.) “How about your plan,” he asked—“the directors of the new scheme? You will have gentlemen, of course—fellows that won’t rob the till? But you won’t fish many gentlemen out of this place. If I can help you, my dear friend, or my name can be of use, or my cousin, Lord Chinnery, don’t be afraid to speak. In fact, I should like it. I have often wished for something to do.”

Mr. Tillotson was a little embarrassed. He would have liked to have served this old soldier of society. “Why, you see,” he answered, “Mr. Tilney, I can decide nothing as yet. I am afraid it is the class of purely business-men that we want—men that have been trained to things of this kind. But later, I daresay—” In short, a series of the good-natured commonplaces by which the fall of a refusal is broken. Mr. Tilney was not vexed.

“Well, I suppose so,” he said. “It’s generally my luck. I recollect the Dook, who cared for me about as much as he did for any man, saying to me, ‘Ask me for something, Tilney, one of these days. Don’t be afraid about it. If I can’t, I’ll refuse you.’ But, egad, whenever I asked, he always *did* refuse me.”

That night, then, when Mr. Tillotson found himself again with the family, he said to himself, almost pettishly, “It is absurd going on in this way, haunting a family.” But he wanted a little resolution in the mere trifles of life. There were no military present, so that Miss Augusta could devote herself without distraction to the entertainment of the guest. Miss Helen was tired, and went to lie down. Mr. Ross was not present. “I am glad of it, I am sure,” said Mrs. Tilney, “I am tired of waiting on his humours.” Miss Augusta exerted herself surprisingly to amuse the stranger. When there were patches of scarlet lighting up the landscape with a gorgeous military sunset, the poor girl naturally became bewildered and divided in her attention. Now that there were only the autumn grays of civil life, the task was easier, so over she went to her piano, and warbled ballads aimed at the very heart of the stranger.

For a few moments—when she had gone to

look for another ballad—Mr. Tillotson was left with Miss Millwood. He asked her where Mr. Tilney was.

“He has gone out,” she said. “He is in low spirits. He has met some cruel disappointment to-day, he told me. I cannot guess what it can be. He has many troubles.”

“I can guess,” said Mr. Tillotson. “I know, in fact. I believe I am accountable. It was about the new bank. But I fear there is a difficulty.”

“Poor papa,” she said sadly. “His life has been trouble enough. And he was once very happy. This place is a sad change for him, as you can imagine. It is hard, at his time of life, to be subject to fresh disappointments.”

“I am very sorry,” said Mr. Tillotson, looking at her; “but I hope there will be no disappointment here. In fact, I think we can smooth away the difficulty. I am sure it can be managed.”

Again the deeply gratified look came into her face—the soft charming look of devotion which he had never seen in any other face. Then Miss Augusta came back with her book, and began once more.

About ten came in Mr. Tilney, depressed and almost moody.

“Where is that Ross?” he said. “I have been looking for him. He said he would be here.”

“O, with his odious pipe, or some of his mess friends,” said Mrs. Tilney. “What a life the creature leads! I am sure a person that has staked his all on a chance in this headstrong way might at least conduct himself with humility and gentleness. I am sick of his airs. One would think he had got a fortune already.”

“That is the reason, perhaps,” said Mr. Tilney, with a philosophic air. “I suspect he feels it as much as any one, but is so proud, he puts on this ‘devil-may-care’ manner to hide it. ’Tis not our inky cloaks, you know, Tillotson. There was Bob Childers, who was Master of the Horse; why, when all his friends knew he was breaking, and scraping up a guinea here and a guinea there, God knows how, he was as proud and offensive a creature as the commonest cockney. There was—”

Mrs. Tilney had always to restrain these reminiscences.

“We know, of course,” she said. “Just you ring for the wine, will you?”

About eleven, when Mr. Tillotson was going home, young Mr. Ross entered very brusquely; his hair was tossed, his cheeks were flushed. He gave an angry look, and flung himself down on a sofa, making it creak and rattle. Mrs. Tilney moved indignantly in her chair.

“What is it now?” she said. “We expected you before. What detained you?”

“What detained me? Well! I wasn’t able to come. There!” he answered. “Suppose I was dining at the mess? Have you been jolly here? The usual entertainment, I suppose? To be continued every night until further notice.” And so he continued to sneer.

Mr. Tilney shook his head. “My good Ross,” he said, “you are getting a little rough. It will be time enough, you know, when you come in for your fortune. Put it off until then.”

The other burst into a loud harsh laugh.

“That *would* be a good one. I have got some news for you all about that.”

They all started. Augusta turned round from the piano. The hands of the yellow-haired girl were clasped fervently.

“Well?” they said, eagerly and together.

“Look at ’em! What excitement!” he said, ironically. “A nine days’ wonder. Put all the heads together to devour the great secret. Stare me out of countenance. Do—”

Mrs. Tilney, without any pretence of a smile whatever, half rose and said calmly, “I see it. He has heard some bad news about the suit. I know he has.”

“Well, suppose I have,” he answered bitterly,

“is it not my own concern? Was it not my own venture? I don't want any one's sympathy or expostulations.”

“O William,” said Ada, clasping her hands, “this is dreadful.”

“Dreadful!” said Mrs. Tilney, hardly containing herself. “It is all his own doing. He has brought it on himself. I have no pity for him; none in the world. Such sheer egregious folly is contemptible. You are a beggar now, and you have only yourself to thank for it.”

“Pray, do I want to thank any one else for it?” he answered coldly. “However, it finishes the business once for all, and I am not sorry for it.”

“But what *is* settled?” said Mr. Tilney. “God bless us! is it final?”

“Final, for ever,” he said impatiently. “What is the use of giving details? Those precious attorneys have been taking a big-wig's opinion—some Sir William Bushell's. I hope to God he has made 'em pay. It is discovered, now, that we never had a chance from the beginning. I suppose, something like myself,” he added, getting up. “*I* never had a chance from the beginning.”

“Plenty, sir,” said Mrs. Tilney, “if you had used them properly. I am disgusted.”

“Well,” he said with a dismal ruefulness, “I suppose I must weather on somehow. Begin

again, perhaps. There's nothing wonderful in it, after all. It has happened to plenty more before my time. But now leave it. I don't want to talk of it any more. What's been doing? What's been going on?"

No one answered him, and he looked from one to the other with a poor affectation of being at his ease, which Mr. Tillotson felt pity for.

"You must cheer up, Mr. Ross," he said good-naturedly, and going up to him. "It may not be so bad as reported. Things may turn out better. Don't be cast down."

Mr. Ross looked at him from his foot up to his head.

"Have you seen the letter that came to me to-night? No, I should say not," he said with a sneer. But he checked himself, and added in a softer tone, "No, the thing is about as bad and as settled as it can be."

Then Ada spoke in a low voice. "It may be as Mr. Tillotson says. We must all hope for the best. Don't be cast down—*don't*, William. It's not so great a blow, after all." And she came up to him with a soft imploring look.

"Why don't you say, While there's Life there's Hope, or some other amiable platitude? Good gracious! What are you all looking at me in this way for? Is a man that has got a letter

such a wonder? You are all delightful comforters. I'll not stay here any longer. I'll go back to the mess." And he rose up in a rage, and walked hastily out.

Mr. Tillotson looked at Ada, then followed him. "Excuse me for one moment," he said. "Look here, Mr. Ross. I fear you do not understand me, but I mean you well—I do indeed. If I can be of any service in this misfortune, I hope you will only show me the way. Recollect, you have some claim on me for an unfortunate mistake I once fell into."

For a moment there was a softened expression in Ross's face, but only for a moment. This was an unlucky allusion. There was a cold stiff iron bar of pride that ran through his frame from his very head to his heel.

"You are very good," he said coldly. "But I want no assistance. I have remarked, since you came here, you have been kind enough to be making me these sort of offers. What interest, might I ask, have you got in me? Is it for my own pure merits? I have not been in the world so short a time as to believe *that*. And as for what you allude to about—"

"Well then," said the other eagerly, "it is for the sake of another, who I can see *is* a little interested in you."

“ Ah, I thought so. Now we have it. Then let me tell you, Mr. Tillotson, great banker as you are, I have seen your game from the beginning. I know what you are staying here and coming here for, with your d—d benevolent and sympathising looks. I suppose you want to make capital, as you do out of the Funds, with this grand pity and generosity. An excellent dodge. This suit of mine has fallen in capitally, I suppose, with your plans. But look here, Mr. Tillotson the banker,” he added, raising his voice. “ I may have to go away, I suppose—somewhere—I don’t care where. But I shall be watching you wherever I am. You are counting on my being beaten in this. But I give you warning. If I am, some one shall suffer! I am not a man to stand these tricks, and I give you notice—”

There was a rustle of a dress close beside them, and there was a sweet voice too of grief. “ O, for shame! for shame!” it said. “ I could not believe this of you! I begin to think you are unworthy of all pity, kindness, generosity.—Mr. Tillotson, say no more to him. I am grieved, I am shocked, that your goodness should have exposed you to this; but I had thought that this—this *man*—had *some* feeling in him. But I begin *now* to see what he is.”

He looked from one to the other with a look of

impatient fury. "So this is what you are beginning to think?" he said. "I don't care who thinks that I have feeling or not. I want no compliments in that way as to thinking well or ill of me. You are both in a charming partnership. Not that I mind, indeed. Good-night to you *both*."

The feeling in his listeners was, that this was mere insanity—his eyes were so wild—and that common shape of insanity that comes from a furious struggle of such passions as contempt, disappointment, rage, and pride.

Ada's eyes were flashing, her cheeks glowing. "I thought," she said bitterly, "that under all that rudeness and roughness there was a kindness and natural generosity. But he has undeceived me now. I have tried," she continued, in a voice that still trembled a little, "to hope the best, and do what little I could by my poor words to save him from himself. But it is useless now. Let him go."

It was scarcely surprising that Mr. Tillotson's cold cheeks should have found colour at these words, or that he should have felt a thrill of something like pleasure. Then she seemed to recollect herself, fell into a sort of confusion, and fled away upstairs.

When he came back to the drawing-room, he found the family still excited.

“It is one satisfaction,” said Mrs. Tilney decidedly, “we can have done with him now. There is no further excuse for our putting up with his airs. I declare,” she continued, with her favourite motion of rustling her dress angrily, “all I have endured from him, his insolence, and want of respect, from the fear of hurting his sensitiveness. A person of *my* age consulting a young man’s humours is rather a new thing. He shall not come here any more. Indeed, I suppose he will have enough to do to keep himself from want. I am sure,” she continued, trying to put up the smile, only now it fitted with difficulty, and seemed made for another mouth, “Mr. Tillotson, who was considerate and kind towards him all through, must have seen what a thankless, ungracious person he was. Not one of the girls,” continued she, “liked him; and as for that child, Ada—to whom he had some dislike—I know *she* will be glad to be free from his tyranny.”

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ANGRY WALK HOME.

WITH this speech ringing in his ears like a bell, Mr. Tillotson went home that night almost elated. He seemed to hear it over and over again: he repeated it to himself—meditated on it. It seemed to resolve a secret for him—*about* to resolve it: to dispel a mystery that might have hung around him like a cloud. He was almost elated, and found himself looking on the little town with a sort of reverence and affection which he had not felt before. He wandered a long time about the old cathedral, looking up to it tranquilly, mentally resting within its shadows, scarcely able to make up his mind to go home. Suddenly he heard a step behind him, as if some one was running to overtake him, and, looking round, he saw Ensign Ross. But it was Ensign Ross with wild eyes of fury and inflamed cheeks.

“Ah! I have found you alone,” he said, panting. “I was sure you had slipped away home. But you are doing the romantic there, it seems.”

“And what do you want?” said Mr. Tillotson, stopping calmly. “You can have nothing to say to me.”

“Haven’t I, Mr. Banker! Then you are wrong. There is no foolish woman here to protect you, before whom you can speak so mildly and gently. A nice protection—a fine opportunity of showing off!”

“I do not want to quarrel with you,” said Mr. Tillotson, still calmly, and moving across the grass towards the path. “We had better not talk any more to-night.”

“Don’t be alarmed,” said the other. “Don’t fear for yourself. This is not a lonely place. There is the old watchman passing by. A cry of yours would reach every one of these windows. See! there is some one actually looking out. There is no violence going to be done.”

For the first time for many months of his life Mr. Tillotson became impatient.

“What right have you to speak to me in this way, or in the way you have done since I have come here? I have borne much from you—too much. I have made what amends I could for what I did under a mistake. I have told you again and again that I am deeply sorry for it. And now that I look back, I can see no reason why I should. I must ask you to say what you

want with me at once, or I shall not stay another moment."

They were walking on together. People in their little old-fashioned windows—some of which had diamond panes, and were embroidered round and round with ivy and moss, and where lights were twinkling—thought that these were two gentlemen walking home pleasantly after dinner.

"Do I want to keep you or to talk with you? But I just want to tell you something very plainly. I have been watching you from the moment you came here. I am not a man to put up with interference of any sort from soft gentlemen or from bold insolent fellows! I can meet both in their own way. You think because you found out that I was falling in the world—that you, with your banker's money and your brass shovels and cheques—that you could step in and put that girl against me! That was fine generous conduct!" (His tone was already softened.)

"That girl?" said Mr. Tillotson. "Miss Ada Millwood?"

"Yes. O, how astonished you are! Not that I care much for her, or that I believe that she cares for me. She's a weak creature, with no mind or character. But still one of these days, perhaps, I might have changed my mind. I may have my designs about that woman. She was in

some sort *mine*, and you saw it. You *did!* You thought I was *down!* And I suppose, because the world chose to turn against me, and banking fellows and usurers to strip me of every thing, *you* thought you would come in with the rest, and that I should be too weak, too 'down,' to resist you. But I am *not*, sir; and you shall find that I am not, sir."

He planted himself suddenly in front of Mr. Tillotson. The people in the old windows, just going to bed, thought these were two jocular minor canons going home full of spirits.

Mr. Tillotson met his gaze. "I see you are one of those who mistake good-nature and indulgence for fear. I do not understand your threats; nor do I mind them. I will only tell you this. You might have made a friend of me. I was willing to help you. But I see your real character now. Even one who may have had some interest in you, you have succeeded in turning against you. *She* has seen your character too."

"How *dare* you!" said the other with a trembling voice. "Now listen to me. For all this air of triumph, you have not tricked me as yet, even with your money and banker's work. No, nor shall not. Now take this warning, I advise you!"

Mr. Tillotson tossed his head impatiently, and turned away.

“I may have to leave this place—this cursed place; and I am glad of it. They may be too much for me—for the moment only. But I shall get the better of them all in a month or two. I am not to be beaten by the world or by money, or even by *mild schemers*. Now take this warning. Go away too, or by heaven, if I hear a whisper of any tricks like what you have been at these few weeks, I’ll come back from any quarter of the world and give you a lesson. There! you’ll think this all disappointed love, and that sort of thing. But it’s *my* pride, I can tell you. *You* a rival indeed! You shake your cheque-book in a foolish country-girl’s eyes, and of course— Think of your age and looks, my friend! Look at the matter calmly in your bank-parlour.”

“This sort of speech has no effect on me,” the other replied calmly. “Only a madman would talk as you do. But I shall tell you this openly and fairly, as an answer to your ‘warnings.’ What I have seen of you to-night, and before to-night, would lay an obligation on me to try and save a sweet gentle amiable girl from what would be sheer misery and destruction. My answer to your warning therefore is another warning. And how little I fear your threats you will find out from my behaviour, or from whoever you leave behind you to watch it.”

He walked away calmly, leaving the other speechless with fury. The lady in the old moss-covered window, just putting out her light, thought that the two jocular canons had said good-night in the most friendly way, and had gone home to their canons' roosts.

Thus did the days wear on at St. Alans, until it came to the day or so before the assizes began. Mr. Tillotson found a strange calm and quietness in the place, and also a fascination, the charm of which he could not bring himself to break. He even fell into Mr. Tilney's raptures, and began to look on "the grand old cathedral" itself with a dreamy interest. The picture of that evening, when *she* was playing the solemn old organ, was in itself a sweet dream. He put off his departure from day to day, and even welcomed Mr. Tilney's eager importunities. That old man of fashion, for all his platitudes, really liked him. He told him all his heavy troubles and anxieties in the most cheerful and enjoyable way. It was only when he spoke of trifles that he grew desponding.

"How about the bank, Tillotson?" asked Mr. Tilney one morning.

"I have nearly all the business settled," said Mr. Tillotson. "In fact, I must be going in a day or two."

"Ah, of course you must," said Mr. Tilney

despondingly. "This is not the place for you—for any of us. Gentlemen don't do in country towns. The air stifles me, you understand. I declare to you I wish to goodness, Tillotson, I was out of this hole."

Mr. Tillotson did not press his companion with the inconsistency of this statement with other declarations; but said it seemed to him to be a calm retired place, where one could be very happy. "I would change with you with all my heart. One could grow fond of this quiet common and of the old cathedral opposite."

"Ah," continued Mr. Tilney moodily, "it is very fine—all very well—in its way, you know, for the men who draw the good salaries to wear lawn and keep up the thing. They're all common creatures, you see: know no more of the world than their big brass eagle in the choir. But for a man like me, who has been in the clubs, sir, and seen a better class of thing altogether, it don't come natural. The late Dook said to me once or twice, in his short way, 'Put you in the country, Tilney! Put you in strait-waistcoat!'"

As they drew near to the house, he noticed Mr. Tilney looking out nervously, and shading his eyes anxiously. "Do you see, Tillotson?" he asked. "My eyes are not so good. But is that Still or Canby near the door—eh, now?"

“No, no,” said Mr. Tillotson, looking; “seems more a sort of tradesman.”

A little twitch passed over Mr. Tilney. “Ah, very good,” he said. “A small account, you know. I declare, of all the hole-and-corner dunning places, these wretched towns are the worst! They are none of ’em gentlemen—no mutual trust—no confidence; but owe these mean, pitiful, abo—abo—what’s the word?—aborigines fourpence-halfpenny, and they send two dozen times for it. On my *immortal* soul they do, Tillotson! I’m getting sick of it.”

This was a strange burst from him, and in the mean time he had mechanically turned round, and said with a cautious air, “There is a view, Tillotson, of that old place yonder, at the back there, which you can’t find the match of from this to the Alhambra. Noble, noble, sir. Just come with me. Softly, softly, sir.” And taking his friend’s arm, he began to walk back almost on tiptoe, as if for the proper effect it was necessary—the old fane nodding, as it were, and not to be awakened.

In a moment, however, Mr. Tilney’s quick ear heard heavy steps, and he turned back sharply. “Another time, Tillotson,” he said; “far better another time. Don’t ask me now;” as if the old fane had wakened up and caught them in the act.

“Excuse me, Tillotson,” he went on; “only a moment—I quite forgot our friend.”

“Our friend” was unmistakably pursuing them, and running too. Mr. Tilney almost ran to meet him with his arm and stick up, adroitly made him turn back, and, looking round occasionally, showed a joyous and jocund face, as if he were discoursing on some amusing topic. But Mr. Tillotson knew well all that was underneath, even if he had not noticed the surly, blunt, and defiant air of “our friend,” who stopped occasionally and tossed his head, and, in spite of deprecating gesture on Mr. Tilney’s part—raised his voice, and sent back to Mr. Tillotson’s ear a loud and angry “Once for all, I tell *you*, Mr. Tilney—”

In short, he could read off at once that poor Mr. Tilney was a player in the dismal drama of DEBT, and, as a genteel Sisyphus, was daily rolling the heart-breaking stone of APPEARANCES up the steep ways of EMBARRASSMENT. In a second, and with a pang, for he thought of the golden-haired girl, he saw the whole course of their life, and what a strand of genteel misery was woven in with it.

He turned away and walked round as if to see by himself that “back view” of the old cathedral which rivalled the Alhambra. In the absence of his guide, he could not find this special vista.

But, after making a complete circuit, he came suddenly on the house. The tradesman was there still, in the porch, his voice reaching to Mr. Tillotson at the little gate. But there was another voice, soft, silvery, musical, modulated to expostulation and entreaty. A glint of the sunshine passing through the trellis-work of the porch came upon that golden hair and lit it up, and then, with another instinct, Mr. Tillotson read off another secret of the inner life of this family; how this sweet-tongued girl was put forward as the Intercessor and Mediatrix, to shield the persecuted family. He had it all before him, as if he knew them for years. Even now the pleading voice of the Mediatrix was having its effect, the indignant tradesman was grumbling, and, defending himself, had presently put on his hat, and walked away past Mr. Tillotson, sulkily.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ASSIZES.

THERE was a good deal of stir in the assize-town that evening. It surged over with the waters of ecclesiastical and legal society. A stream of both was gurgling through the place. Gowns of two sorts fluttered in the air. It was known that the judges had arrived, with the traditional pageantry—brought in, at a slow pace, as if under a strong guard, surrounded with a crowd, and looking gloomily out of the carriage-windows, like state prisoners being conveyed to the Tower. From various second floors over the festive grocers' shops, looked out healthy, large-cheeked, large-whiskered faces, the hands related to which were in pockets; barristerial faces and barristerial hands. Some were leaning against the window-frame with their barristerial feet up on the sill, others talking to short wiry monastic-looking men,—which represented an eminent counsel receiving “instructions” from a local agent.

Mr. Justice Buckstone and Mr. Baron Hodder were at their lodgings, about which a little crowd hung—and where, too, they were regarded with a reverence and a submission almost abject, as though they took their commission from a power higher than the Queen. Round through the town, dispersed in various first floors, were the numerous members of the circuit. Serjeant Ryder, Mr. Cobham, Q.C., Mr. Wrigley, Q.C., Mr. Colter, Q.C., Belmore Jones, the well-known popular counsel, who was as necessary to every breach-of-promise case as the writ itself or one of the issues, and who defended Chartists and others “fearlessly,” and with great speeches. But he had so often thrown his head back, and told judges melodramatically that he “stood there to vindicate” innumerable rights, punctilios, and etiquettes, and knew, on so many occasions, what was due “to the gown he had the honour and privilege to wear on his back,” that he had been looked coldly on as a forward and troublesome person, and had not been honoured with the mystic letters at the end of his name. Mr. Cobham, Mr. Exshaw, Mr. Serjeant Ryder (known as “the Serjeant”), Mr. Wrigley, Mr. Colter, all her Majesty’s counsel, together with Bagely, Gibbs, and the juniors in good business, were instantly, and almost before they had time to get from the railway or take

off their coats, invaded by gentlemen with papers; and "the Serjeant," in about five minutes, had his hands in his trousers-pockets, walking up and down the room (his characteristic mode of laying his mind to a case), listening to his junior's voice, which comes struggling through perfect billows of white briefs. The old cathedral town—and some of our canons make a little first-floor profit during this invasion—thus wakened up into a sort of owl-like animation; and in all its nooks, and closes, and niches, and quiet rusted corners, seemed to nod and flap, and softly hoot with a mild ecclesiastical bustle. But the grander scene was when half-past six drew on, and this legal aristocracy was seen, still with its hands in its pockets, crowding to the White Hart to dine; where they were to sit down some forty or fifty strong; where was the Bar sherry and the Bar port—much relished by the legal babes. But Colter, pale and worn, and with faint eyes, was already wandering away to Whichelo's Trusts, lying on his table at the lodgings, or to Mill's case, which was to be "on" first on Monday morning.

But as Sunday intervenes—supposed reasonably to be a day of rest for all but poor Colter and Bolt—it is worth while going up to the cathedral to see the legal service for once. Through all the monotony of Sunday after Sunday, and the cho-

risters and minor canons every day at three, without change and the most wearisome sameness, and Fugle with his "heart panting," this is a very agreeable break. Mrs. Toplady and her daughters get on their best and go. Dissenting ladies even, drawn by natural curiosity, go off also "to see the judges." Across the green lawn in the Close the lines of company seemed to trail and converge like gay ribbons. The sun was out. The choir was full. The vast clothes-presses seemed to creak under the load, for every rank and every tier were filled, and the rows of gay bonnets and dresses were parted by the long bands of dark black oak; and the light coming through the pale yellow and paler greens of the great windows, dappled over the two heads of the two judges who sat together in stalls of honour, imparting a regular saint's "nimbus" to the chalky well-worn face of Mr. Baron Hodder, and comically laying what seemed a little dab of crimson gore right on the bald crown of the rubicund and oily Mr. Justice Buckstone. They had been brought in by the dean himself, and stalled helplessly, and a great prayer-book thrust into their hands. All dotted about were praying barristers, with their large serious faces, and whiskers spread like black sails, for whom, indeed, those benches and stalls seemed but another shape of court; and if any

one had pulled the dreamy Colter from behind, whose thoughts were still at his lodgings noting Whichelo's Trusts, and whispered that it was time, he would have almost risen and "moved" their lordships on the spot.

Mr. Baron Hodder, the Criminal Judge, with his eyes on his great book, was also wandering off to a terrible shooting case which was to be on before him, which had been committed on the verge of two counties; for he knew that Jones, the "Dock" counsel, would have "a point" about the indictment and "the five hundred yards" required by the statute, and he was thinking what "he would do with it;" all which speculations were disturbed by the music—the sublime anthem, "For the Lord is a Just Judge," set specially by Bliss, Mus. Doc. Oxon,—in complaint to the Assizes,—and at which he was now straining and creaking, and snatching at pegs and handles left and right, and trampling the very souls out of pedals underneath—and by the sweet chirruping bleat of Fugle, whose eyes, like all other eyes in the place, turning to the right to make proper effect on the stall of honour, rose and fell; and he sometimes seemed to smile in his singing and droop his head sadly, as who should say, "Now all is finish—ed; let me be transfigured and

assum—ed, forthwith, into my place in the heavenly mansions !”

But the judges did not care for music, at first merely looking for a moment curiously at Doctor Fugle as they would at a new witness just entering the box ; and so Fugle bleated his bleat mournfully, and the other seraphic canons came in tumultuously, and Bliss, tumbling and surging in over all, sent down monster billows of sounds that swelled through the aisles, and went floating up the towers and groined roofs, and actually made the black-oak benches under the judges quiver and tremble with the vibration. And then, though Bliss’s music was poor, and the singers, separately, theatrical and affected, the grand old organ—in which were some of the Dutch Silbermann’s pipes, rich, ripe, mellow, and celestial, and the fresh voices of children, and the union of all, and the associations of the place—triumphed over every thing ; and, as it rolled past the stalls of honour, made the Coke upon Lyttleton which each judge had bound up in him as a heart, thrill for a moment.

It was altogether a delight to the inhabitants. Mrs. Tilney and her family went up in procession to the cathedral, and perhaps the ladies of her family took stock of the barristerial company and the flowing whiskers ; for Mr. Tilney, up at the

White Hart, only the night before had had brown-sherry with one of the Benjamins of the society, and obtained from him an exact list and description of the gentlemen of the Bar then in town. This youth, who was voluble and eager, gave him little short sketches of each, after the manner of the obituary notices; and these meagre outlines Mr. Tilney could readily fill out from his own sources of information. He came back mysteriously to his family.

“Do you know who is here, my dears? Young Tilbury, son of old Sir Thomas. Dear me! has sent him to the Bar. Second son, of course; but, if he pleases, Sir Thomas, you know, can—I like a young fellow’s carving out a way for himself. And there’s young Harris, in very fair business, too. I am sure it’s the same. Nice, isn’t it?”

Ross was there with his friend, restless, fuming, biting his nails, and with his eyes fixed, now on the judges, now on Mr. Paget, his own working counsel.

Mr. Cobham, the leader, was at his lodgings, as indeed was Serjeant Ryder, and other leading counsel, who were supposed to be too busy to afford time for these showy pious exercises—in truth, the serjeant was away on the hills taking a bracing walk and a quiet cigar.

At the door Mr. Ross commented on this.

“Such hypocrites!” he said. “Setting up to be holy fellows, and pretending piety! Such cant! What do they care for those fellows’ praying, or for that old whining dean’s long-winded talk? That’s the way they swindle us of our money, and go idling about the place instead of minding their business. It’s an infernal shame! And then they tell me the other fellows are up at their lodgings hammering away at their business.”

His friend Grainger, on whose arm he was leaning, and whose staring eyes searched every face that passed them by, struck in with his subdued growl:

“Well ‘fee’d,’ indeed, and then won’t work! A regular set of impostors! The rule should be, No cure, no pay.”

The Tilney family were standing close by the ancient porch—where, indeed, all the congregation were loitering—to see the distinguished strangers come out. Mr. Tilney was with them. As the judges passed in custody of an eager sheriff, hurrying them to the carriage, Ross, still biting his fingers, devoured Mr. Justice Buckstone with his eyes. “There he is,” he said to his companion; “and that bladder-chop creature is to deal with our case. I wish it was the other.”

“He looks a lounging fellow,” said his friend.
„ Takes his work easy, you may depend.”

Suddenly Ross saw Mr. Tillotson talking to Ada Millwood; and, dropping his friend's arm, strode up to them with a sour face. That ugly cicatrice was still there, though he had been plaistering it industriously day and night. It would not be gone for months.

“O,” she said, as he came up, “listen to this, William. Mr. Tillotson has been asking some of the lawyers at the hotel about the case—”

Ross scowled at the other's feet. “I had rather not,” he said, “have my case talked about or asked about among the barristers. I have paid counsel.”

Mr. Tillotson smiled, and unconsciously his gentle eye fell upon the cicatrice. The other felt it on him.

“Well?” he asked; “I daresay it has been injured enough by all this gossiping about the place. I wish people would leave me and my affairs alone. Of course they mean well, and all that kind of cant.”

Mr. Tillotson smiled. “I thought you would like to know the exact moment of it's coming on. This was the judges' registrar, and he says about one to-morrow, as there is only a short case before it.”

The girl's face fell. “So near at hand,” she said. “O, it is dreadful! How shall we bear

the suspense of the day? Do, ah, let me ask you once more, and Mr. Tillotson joins us all, do settle it as they want you."

"He joins you, does he?" said he. "And so I must settle, must I? It's enough to have it in one's mind, without being persecuted in this infernal way. He joins you, does he? Well?"

Mr. Cater, his solicitor, was beside him, motioning to a tired-looking, shabby, tall, and stooped gentleman who was near him. "Mr. Cobham, sir, wishes a word with you. To know you, in fact."

With suspicion in his eyes, Ross went with them, and the three walked away slowly over the graves. He came back presently in a fury, and overtook the Tilney party, now nearly at their own door.

"Every one thinks they have a right to dictate to me—to give me lessons; but I had better stop it at once, and give notice, that I will not be pestered in this way. That seedy mole of a pettifogger, who has got my guineas in his pocket, must needs come up to me with his advice about 'settling.' Settling! Such a croak! croak! Settle from an old mildewed anatomy! It's infernally impudent of him, a trading fellow like that; and indeed I told him as much."

"O William," said Ada eagerly. "Every

body says it. They must be right. Will you not listen? You are only preparing wretchedness for yourself.—Mr. Grainger, you have influence over him. Stop this insanity.”

The Indian-looking man rolled his wild eyes, and put the end of his wilder moustache into his mouth to chew. “I believe there is a great deal in that, Miss Millwood,” he said; “but when Ross takes a thing into his head, you might as well preach to that headstone there.”

“Do you believe him?” said Ross scornfully. “A fellow that has all but lost the shirt off his back at those German hells, and would pawn his soul for money; isn’t he likely to be for double or quits—eh? Don’t talk to me; and I ask it as a favour, Mr.—Mr. Tillotson, that *you* won’t be worrying the lawyers about my affairs. I want no one—*no* one—to be meddling in my concerns. I’m not in the humour for it, I give warning to all. If they will, damn it, I’ll *have* to give ’em a lesson!”

And, with fury in his eyes, he turned away. It was a very restless Sunday for him; and all the rest of the day he was prowling about nervously, haunting his solicitor, and taking wild quick walks over the hills. Over the Tilney mansion, all through that day, was cast a sense of gloom and uneasiness.

CHAPTER XVI.

ROSS *v.* DAVIS.

THE cathedral town was extraordinarily full; the country gentlemen, who came in crowds, used the well-known illustration about "swinging a cat" with surprising frequency and satisfaction. The White Hart was at its wits' end to devise room for its guests, and, with an expansion to which it was well accustomed, had converted closets, store-rooms, even cupboards, into sleeping-rooms; and with a rigid impartiality charged the same tariff for the state bedroom and for the meanest little hutch in the garret. All were labourers in the vineyard, and the last grand juror received the same wage as the first. For that body were "sitting," making presentments in its "rooms," arguing over roads and "cess," and such things, and were calling in "collectors," and were behaving with a fierce despotism, which, however, was harmless, and only confined to the manner. For they all felt that they were the "Jurors of

Our Sovereign Lady the Queen," who had awful duties cast upon them. By and by they would be dealing with the cases of malefactors; and it would be surprising with what jealous caution and importance the witnesses would be interrogated.

The judges were already "in." The galleries were filled, for it was well known that the Tilneys, "those people who were always aping at grandeur," had some case coming on. At least it had reference to that "half-savage, ill-conditioned" Mr. Ross, and it was much the same thing. In the Crown Court, the faint-eyed, well-worn judge was already at work, with the faint eyes laid close to his note-book, while a rude agricultural Sikh, in a fustian-jacket and corduroy, stood up in the centre, like a living Jack-in-the-Box. He was the prisoner in the great shooting-case, and the pen of Belmore Jones, who himself already scented the "point" from afar off, was racing over his foolscap, taking notes. In the other Court, Mr. Justice Buckstone had disposed of the "little case" in a conversational way, just as he would dispose of his chop; and leaning back with eyes half closed, and tapping on his knuckles, was asking Mr. Cobham if he was ready to go on with that ejection case. Cobham said he was perfectly ready, with a confidence as though he always had

been, would, and ever should be ready in every case, no matter when called on. But the question, my lud, was the other side. He didn't know how his learned friend, Serjeant Ryder, felt; whether he was not taken by surprise through the rapid but satisfactory way in which his lordship had disposed of the last case.

"Then we had better have him in," said his lordship. Still Mr. Cobham whispers behind the back of his hand, and over his brother's shoulder, to his solicitor. The solicitor shakes his head, but turns to his neighbour, who is Ross, feverish and impatient. In a moment the heads of the two are together.

"You should settle," said Mr. Cobham, behind his hand. "Now take my advice—we've no chance."

Ross drew back, looking blank. "No," he said bluntly; "go on with your speech. You *must*."

"Now, Brother Ryder," said his lordship, with the points of his fingers neatly put together, looking from side to side, and cracking his fingers faintly on his knuckles.

Presently there was a turning of faces, a rustling and a struggling, and the serjeant is labouring in, as it were, cutting a path through his fellow-creatures. *He* was ready, always was;

in fact, was a little surprised it had not been taken long before. Every body thus being ready, a jury is sworn—a dogged, agricultural, embarrassed-looking jury—and Mr. Paget opened the pleadings; this was an ejectment, brought to recover possession of the lands known as Mount Davis. The defendant, Oliver Davis, pleaded so and so, “and the issues that you will have now to try,” continued Mr. Paget, raising his voice, “are so and so,” according to the usual form. He then dropped into his place. Mr. Cobham, rising, put his handkerchief down on his brief before him, and placing one foot up on the seat, patting his knee now and then, a favourite attitude, proceeded to address the gentlemen of the jury.

Mr. Cobham said he would briefly show them how the case stood. It was a simple case—“one of the simplest, perhaps, that had ever come into a court of justice.” It of course lay in a nutshell, and if they would let him “lead their minds,” or “go with him for a short time,” they would have no difficulty at arriving at a true apprehension of the point in dispute. It was, as they had heard, a simple action of ejectment as between one man and another. Both parties were in the same station; both parties came asking equal justice at their hands—a justice, he was confident, they would obtain. For he (Mr. Cobham) had

had the honour of going that circuit for many years, and of addressing faces he had the privilege of seeing there often before him. His lordship, too, had come very often, and knew what the juries of that county were. Men more capable of dealing with the intricate relations that arise between man and man, there were nowhere, or men more likely to take a good common-sense view of any transaction. His lordship on the bench knew them ; his learned friend there knew them ; they all knew them. They were now to deal with this important case, the details of which he should now proceed to lay before them.

“ It would appear,” as Mr. Cobham said, putting his briefs farther away from him, and settling his bag and things as if he were laying breakfast, “ that about the ye—ar” (Mr. Cobham lengthened out this word, to give himself time, with silver glasses up, to look for the date) “ seventeen hundred and ninety-seven, that a Mr. Oliver Davis was possessed of certain estates known as the ‘ Moore Hall ’ property, valued at the time at about eighteen hundred to two thousand a year. He was an old gentleman, unmarried, and, I may say, of somewhat singular and solitary tastes. He lived by himself, and saw no company. About the year eighteen hundred and one, or so, he fell

in with an old friend, who had newly come from India, where he had been engaged fighting for his king and country ; a man of worth and courage ; a man of honour, a gentleman, a soldier, whose name was—was Gen—er—al” (added Mr. Cobham, stooping down to refresh his memory, through the silver glasses, as to the name of the man of worth and honour), “yes, General Halton Ross—General Halton Ross. Halton Ross,” said Mr. Cobham, twisting his glasses by the string, and now quite interested with the officer, whose name he could not recollect, “was the father of my client here !”

Ross, with a painfully eager face, had been bent forward, with his fierce eyes devouring the counsel. Every one now looked at him. The heavy jury stooped over, as if to peer down into a pond. Ladies in the gallery found him out at once, and looked down also. He felt all their eyes on him, and, with unconcealed mutterings, flung himself back into his seat. Mr. Cobham, with his knee up, had coughed and spat into his India handkerchief, and was abstractedly looking into its folds to pick up some more facts there.

“It would seem that the old intimacy of the two was renewed. They became firmer friends than ever ; and about the year eighteen hundred and”—(a fresh search here)—“yes, and ten, a

draught-deed was prepared, virtually conveying the whole of the Moore Hall estates to his friend—(give me the draught-deed," he called to his junior, who had it dragged out and opened in a second)—“under the following *remarkable* limitations. First to trustees, in trust for himself, for life; then—”

Serjeant Ryder was now standing up.

“What is that? What are you reading from?”

“The draught-deed of eighteen hundred and ten,” said his friend, in mild astonishment at the interruption.

“Which was never executed. I object to that paper. No one knows better than my learned friend that it is not evidence. Just put it up.”

“I was reading this,” said Mr. Cobham, mildly, “as evidence of the *disposition* of Oliver Davis. My learned friend will see I am quite regular.”

“I object,” said Serjeant Ryder, apparently angry at this trifling, “to *any* paper of this sort. Let’s do things regularly.”

“My Brother Ryder,” began the judge with enjoyment.

“We shall have to come on this later,” said Mr. Cobham.

“And we were going to enter it now, *nunc pro tunc*, as part of the case,” supplemented his junior, much injured.

“My Brother Ryder,” said the judge with humour, “it seems, objects to *take* your draught.”

Again the waves of obsequious merriment floated over the bar benches. The country gentlemen in the grand-jury boxes, indirectly affiliated to the legal profession, relished it with broader and more unrestrained mirth.

When the court had recovered from the effect of this humour, his lordship said, with graduated remonstrance,

“I think, Brother Ryder, we must let in this paper. Come, I don’t see how we well can’t. It seems good evidence of intention. Eh?”

“As good as ever was given,” said Mr. Cobham. “A draught-deed.”

“Surely,” said Serjeant Ryder, stooping over earnestly, “your lordship can’t be in earnest. A draught-deed, unsigned, in God knows whose handwriting! We may as well begin again at our elementary books, if *that* be considered evidence.”

“I *think* I must let it in, Brother Ryder,” said his lordship gravely.

“Very well, my lord,” said the serjeant, looking to the right and left resignedly. “Just as

you please ; with all my heart and soul. Go on with the case.”

“ His lordship,” went on Mr. Cobham, “ having ruled this piece of documentary evidence to be admissible, I was going to say (give me the letter of the 25th June)—to say that old Oliver Davis, in a letter dated the 25th June, and which we now produce, and which my learned friend may see if he likes, alludes to this intended disposition of his property.” And Mr. Cobham read his letter triumphantly. “ But this draught-deed does not affect the matter. Not in the least. It would seem, however, that a sort of coldness sprang up between the friends, and later a cousin, a William Davis, then an elderly man, was taken into favour, and on the twenty-first—of—August,” said Mr. Cobham, with glasses on, and his face well down to his brief, “ eighteen hundred and twelve, he executed a deed of settlement, by which he conveyed all the Moore-Hall estates—to—William Davis—and his heirs, in the usual way. That deed was duly executed, and was in court. His learned friends were welcome to—”

“ We admit all the proofs,” said the serjeant contemptuously. “ Go on with the case.”

“ By that deed he made himself tenant for life, with remainder to William Davis, his first and other sons in tail male, remainder to his heirs

general—in the usual way, in fact. In default of these, the estate was settled on his old friend, General Halton Ross, and his heirs male. To compress the whole into a sentence,” said Mr. Cobham, “our title is this.”

The story, in short, told them by Mr. Cobham, and told dramatically—but not in a sentence—amounted to this: In course of time Oliver Davis died, and William Davis, the cousin, succeeded. William Davis, the cousin, had one child, called William Oliver Davis (and indeed, by and by, the jury got bewildered when the learned counsel began sonorously to ring their names like loud bells, now pulling “Will-i—am Davis,” and then, with a far fuller reverberation, “Will-i—am O-liver Davis”), then married, and his daughter, Alice Olivia Davis, was the defendant in the present suit.

“I have thus, gentlemen of the jury,” said Mr. Cobham, “taken you so far through all the steps of the title.” So indeed he had. And that title being conceded satisfactory, the laymen in court wondered how it was to be disturbed. But now began the dramatic part. “It would seem that William Oliver Davis, while a young man, and previous to his marriage, travelling in Scotland, fell in with a manufacturer’s daughter of strong will and great cleverness. This lady, whose father was on the verge of bankruptcy, had dis-

covered the prospects that were in store for young William Oliver Davis, and had determined to secure him. He was a wild youth, had fallen passionately in love with the young lady; and, according to Mr. Cobham, his client had married the manufacturer's daughter secretly, according to some Scotch form, which he—William Oliver Davis—believed would not hold good in England. "As if," said Mr. Cobham, passionately, "that tie, that holy tie, which is good before Heaven in one spot shall not be good before the same tribunal in another—as if the union that is cemented in the wildest island of the Hebrides is not to be equally enduring on the ruggedest shore of the Irish coast—at the Land's End as well as at John o' Groat's corner! Thank God," said Mr. Cobham, warming unexpectedly, "a Scotch marriage still holds good in this fair land of England, and is still a protection for helpless women against the designs of wicked men!"

Later on, the youth returned to his family, and soon heard that the Scotch lady had turned out very strangely—had run away from her parents with a captain, and was supposed to have died miserably. Three or four years later, the youth married an heiress, and died, leaving a daughter. The point of the whole thing was to be this. As William Oliver was married in Scot-

land, or was maintained to have been married, the second marriage was a nullity, and the offspring of that marriage—who was the present defendant—was illegitimate, and could not “come in” under the terms of the settlement. It therefore passed to the Ross’s, who were the other parties in remainder named in the deed.

Then he explained the way in which the present action came to be brought. The plaintiff’s father was an old and infirm man of eighty when his rights accrued, was very nervous and excitable, and declared that he would have “no law” during the short span of his life that remained. He had died a couple of years before, and Ross, the present plaintiff, then serving in India, had come home at once, and had lost no time in making his claim.

A very strange case, and stated by Mr. Cobham with all his usual clearness; but how would they make it out? This was said by the great legal unemployed among each other, when the judge retired to lunch. That was all very well; but how would they make it out? The court, as it were, stood at ease. Every one was chatting, and put on their hats; not that they cared to have them on, but for the pleasure of having them on now, at least, without check or restraint.

Ross hung about the door, every now and again putting in his wistful face with the fiery

eyes. "They call this doing justice," he said. "I begin to see how it will end! That old swine on the bench cares no more for the case than he does for an old shoe. It's disgusting. Look at the way they waste the public time—jabbering away over his sherry and chop."

A light figure tripped up, a soft fair face was close to him.

"Well," she asked timorously, "how is it going? Well?"

He burst out with a laugh. "Why, how should it go? How long have they been at it? Do you expect a thing of this sort to be settled off-hand in an hour? Why, they haven't began; and see! Don't be plaguing me with expresses and messages in this way. I have enough on my mind without *that*. Go home, do now, like a good girl."

This was gentler than his usual mode of speech; and she went away quite grateful. He turned in hastily, fearful of having lost any thing.

They were at work. A very broken-down old man, with white hair and a walnut-face, but yet with a cunning expression in his eyes, was being examined by Mr. Cobham. He was striving to hear, striving to speak; and Mr. Cobham was striving [to catch what words came from him.

The judge was conscious of a window at the far end of the court, and motioning with hand; but whenever Mr. Cobham stopped, said, "Go on, Mr. Cobham." Ross stamped savagely under the table. And there, too, was his leading counsel, looking from side to side, carelessly sucking an orange. The administration of justice was growing disgraceful in this country.

"The trouble we had to get at this old fellow," said the solicitor's clerk to two or three barristers near the door—"to dig him up, almost. Mr. Grainger, Ross's friend, was the man who did the job. He hunted him up for two months, night and day; never let him go a moment; hung on him like a bulldog. It was wonderful. Listen now. He is doing wonderfully well."

So he was. Under the skilful leading of Mr. Cobham, who had at last got the range, and could hear himself, and make the old man hear, he began to tell his story: how, about the year so-and-so, in the month—he couldn't give the month—he was in Aberdeen, sitting downstairs one evening; how he recollected Miss Macgregor sending him out *for* to bring young William Davis to her. He was not very willing, but he did come at last. After a time he heard stampings and "whirritings," and sounds of sobbing and wailing; and he owned, to the great merriment of

the court, that he had crept upstairs and listened, and that the whole dispute was about a marriage. Presently he heard the young man say, very sulkily, "Well, call up Jamie and the maid, and I'll do what you like." "And then," said the old man, amid loud laughter, "I thowt it were high time for me to be going." (His lordship was really diverted, and, to add to the hilarity, said, "You were afraid of being surprised, no doubt?") The old man and the maid were then called up into the room, and William Oliver, standing up with the young leddy's hand in his, told them that he declared that he and the young leddy were man and wife, and bid them recollect what he, Mr. Davis, had said. They then retired, wondering at this ceremony, which, as Mr. Cobham explained to the jury, was one of the formulas to constitute a Scotch marriage, and was known as a contract of *verba de presenti*. There was great sensation at this the dramatic portion of the trial, and yet greater when Serjeant Ryder stood up, and all but dressed himself, carefully arranging his wig and gown with dandyism, to cross-examine the old man.

The old man kept his wiry fingers tightly clasped as he was put to the customary question, "To whom did you tell *this* story first? When did you tell it? Why didn't you tell it before?"

with more to the same effect; the old man answering warily, with his head on one side and his wiry fingers tightly clasped together. Mr. Cobham presently "interposed," and said his learned friend would learn all that by and by from the plaintiff here and his friend, who by almost miraculous exertions had found out this important witness.

But Serjeant Ryder was not to be disposed of in that fashion. He affected to submit, and with a quiet eagerness for information began to ask particulars about the old man's life. Where was he in such a year? Ah! very good. Well, from that year to such a year what was he doing? Come now, try and recollect. O, he must. You know you must have a capital memory to recollect all this about the parlour and the calling up. Well, he was in Aberdeen. What! during all these long years never out of Aberdeen? Never—that is to say, never. Why, had he ever been out of the country? N—no—that is, yes, for a time. What, travelling? It was only for a time. What, travelling? repeated the learned gentleman in a louder voice. Well, he supposed a man could travel if he liked. Was it travelling for pleasure or profit—come now? Then came one of those secret inspirations which to a lawyer are as convincing as a revelation. "Come, sir," said the

serjeant in a solemn roar, "WERE YOU EVER SENT AWAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY?"

This was spoken of afterwards among the Bar as "a lucky shot in Ryder." Witness was in great confusion. "Come, sir," roared the serjeant as from a quarter-deck; "take your hand down and answer. Come, sir."

Cobham really must interpose here. Up to a certain point he had given his learned friend any latitude. But Ryder was now savage: he was not to be interrupted; the witness was in his hands; he must beg that Mr. Cobham would sit down, and sit down at once. After a terrific combat over the old man, who was looking vacantly from one to the other, the answer was at last wrung out of him that he had been seven years away, in Botany Bay. Then Ryder sat down, panting and fanning himself.

Other witnesses then came: among them Mr. Tilney, who took the oath with extraordinary reverence and solemnity, and added the words, "So help me God, Amen," of his own motion, and with great fervour. Relating what he felt afterwards at dinner, he said, "I was in the presence of my Maker, you know; and I was to speak the whole truth, every particle of the truth, and nothing in the wide world but the truth—words which seem to me *awfully* impressive."

But he did not think that perhaps the simple text of the original would have been more so.

What had Mr. Tilney to tell as to this trial? Simply this: With the leave of his lordship there he would relate all he knew in his own way, which might, after all, simplify the matter——

His lordship thinks bluntly, and without raising his spectacles from the paper, that he had better answer any questions put in the regular way.

“Yes,” says Mr. Paget; “if you will follow me, Mr. Tilney, we shall be shorter.” Now, had he ever heard any allusion in the family to this Scotch marriage—any discussion, you know—and when?

Mr. Tilney put a long first finger to his forehead, in the shape of a large human knocker, as who would say, “I will rap *here*, and find out for you.” And then, after thinking painfully, said that about twenty years ago he remembered distinctly being at the table of General Ogle, who was then Colonel Ogle, and equerry to His Royal Highness the Dook of York. He had served in the disastrous Walcheren——

“In short,” said Mr. Paget, “he dined with you. Any one else?”

“I could tell you,” said Mr. Tilney, “the names of every one there, just as if it were

yesterday; only give me a little time. There was—”

“Never mind *that*,” said Mr. Paget. “Was there a John Davis there, cousin of the settlor?”

“There was,” said Mr. Tilney, with the knocker up, and seeing the cousin up in the cornice. “There was; and there was also—”

“Very good. Now let me ask you, did any one say any thing about this matter of the marriage?”

“I distinctly recollect,” said Mr. Tilney solemnly;—“and I know that I am on my oath, and in presence of the Searcher of hearts—General Ogle, then Colonel Ogle—I recollect his saying distinctly—”

Again the serjeant was standing up. “I must interpose here, my lord. This can’t be evidence.”

“General Ogle said that William Oliver Davis had told him—”

“*Will* you stop, sir?” said the serjeant. “D’ye hear me, sir? Is that Ogle alive or dead?”

“I can’t take on me to say,” said Mr. Tilney wisely. “No, no; not that.”

“Exactly,” said the serjeant. “Then your lordship sees at once this can’t be evidence.”

“I don’t see that,” said his lordship with a pleasant twinkle.

Mr. Cobham started up. "Ogle," he said, "was a relation of the Davis family."

"Let them prove the death of Ogle, or call Ogle," said the serjeant excitedly; "but let us keep to the common principles of evidence."

Mr. Justice Buckstone said, however, he was inclined to admit this piece of evidence *de bene esse*, "as family repute," and that he would make a note of the objection. There was then a discussion as to what amounted to "family repute."

Again the serjeant lay back resignedly, and looking from side to side.

"Go on, sir," he said; "go on. Tell your story any way you like."

And then Mr. Tilney said how Colonel Ogle had told him how William Oliver had come to him in a maudlin state, saying that he was undone, and that there was a wretched woman in Scotland who had entangled him in some of their infernal marriage tricks, and that he was a miserable creature generally.

Mr. Cobham, during this important bit of evidence, had his eyes fixed on the jury with an expression almost amounting to—"What did I tell you, now?" and nodded very often as Mr. Tilney told his tale.

It was very hard to get that gentleman out of the box; for when dismissed with a "That will

do, Mr. Tilney," he would wave off that congé with a "Pardon me!" and begin again with fresh but unimportant details, which, as it were, lay on his conscience.

"Quite right, Mr. Tilney; now you can go."

"Pardon me," he said. "I have taken an affidavit here to tell every particle of the truth, the entire substratum of the truth, and nothing whatever *but* the truth—without fear, favour, or affection. His lordship, I know, would not wish me."

Then two highly-important letters were handed in of remote date, which alluded to conversations with William Oliver Davis in reference to his marriage. These were objected to, on the ground of *post lis mota*—that is, as having been written at a time *after* the question of the disputed marriage had arisen.

This was fiercely argued on both sides, as it was really important evidence. And the two counsel seem to be straining and toiling to throw each other like Cumberland wrestlers. But the judge again said with a smile, "He was inclined to let it in *de bene esse*." On which, Serjeant Ryder flung himself into his seat angrily, and said "he thought he had learned the rules of evidence when he was a boy; but it seemed he must begin again. God bless him! What were

they coming to?" And he bade his learned friend—and almost commanded him—"go on." Some one near Mr. Cobham heard him whisper exultingly behind the back of his hand, "We got that in cleverly—eh? Old Buckstone *is* with us breast-high."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VERDICT.

AFTER this, the case proceeded rapidly. The defendants had little evidence. But Serjeant Ryder made a "splendid" and damaging speech, showing up the deaf, infirm, incoherent old convict "whom they had got" enlarged from his sentence expressly for this case, and invariably speaking of him as "the old convict," "my learned friend's old convict," "*their* convict," "for this indeed we have the convict's testimony," with more to the like effect, which some way depreciated the character of the plaintiff's case. He denounced the whole as a "concocted case," made the roof reëcho with that word, and those at a distance only caught the middle syllable, and thought he was declaiming about poultry. Out in the great hall, down the long corridors, drifted those burning accents of "the counsellor's," denouncing the whole, with a gasp, as a "hideous tr-r-rumped-up case—concocted thing—concocted in its inception, concocted in its execution, con-

cocted at the beginning, concocted in the middle, *concocted* at the end." And he asked them confidently (and at the same time suffering painfully to the naked eye from heat) to "*scout*" this action from the court. And he dropped exhausted into his seat, leaving the heavy jury in a state of pettish doubt and uncertainty as to what they were to think or do.

Then the judge charged; and at the close of the judge's charge, Serjeant Ryder's junior, who had been writing a good deal behind, put a paper into his leader's hand, who thereupon stood up and "tendered a bill of exceptions." Mr. Justice Buckstone, who did not wish to be "annoyed with the thing afterwards," said good-naturedly, that "he had put the thing as clearly as possible to the jury," and, if any thing, rather more fairly for Serjeant Ryder's client than was consistent with strict justice. "Much better leave the thing to these gentlemen, who are quite capable of doing substantial justice between the parties. We shall only be embarrassing the case hereafter. Come, now," said the judge with an insinuating sort of invitation to his brother.

But his brother was cold, and stern, and hard, and pressed his exceptions.

"Well, read them, read them," said the judge pettishly.

They were :

1. That the learned judge should not have admitted in evidence a draught-deed, and one not in the handwriting of the settlor.

2. That Ogle's declaration as to a conversation on the alleged Scotch marriage should have been withdrawn from the jury, it not being shown that Ogle and the other parties to the conversation were alive or dead.

3. That the two letters should not have been received as evidence, as being *post lis mota*.

Mr. Cobham listened to his learned friend's points with some anxiety, and not a little disturbed, but was reassured by something in the looks of the heavy hunting jury. Perhaps the unworthy disparagement of the "convict" had not so much effect, especially as he, in his reply, had effectually rehabilitated the convict into "an aged man," who had lived through many troubles and youthful follies ("and let such of us as are without sin, gentlemen, be the first to cast a stone"), who had travelled well-nigh on "to the great gates of the valley of the shadow of death, like us all," and who in his long life had done many things which he now wished *undone*, and had left things *undone* which, &c. In this way was this important witness rehabilitated. And then the jury retired.

It was now seven o'clock. Every one was rising, gathering up papers, talking pleasantly and noisily, and dispersing. Hot, flushed, worn, and with eyes that almost seemed to flare, Ross went out of the court into the cool air. Already the lamps were lighted and the gaudy grocers' shops illuminated, and a crowd of lounging idlers in corduroy and fustian gathered in the middle of the road. Ross came out, angrily pushing his way, and muttering impatiently about "idle people with nothing to do." He caught hold of his solicitor. "Well," he asked, "how do we stand now?" The other answered excitedly, "I don't know, Mr. Ross. I hope you will be satisfied before an hour is over—*fully* satisfied. I have washed my hands of the whole business, long ago. I hope you listened to Serjeant Ryder's speech, and that that satisfied you?"

"Why didn't you retain him, then?" said Ross insolently. "That was *your* business."

"It has been a nice mess from the beginning," said Mr. Cater fiercely. "I tell you what, sir—I wouldn't give twopence-halfpenny for the chance of a verdict—there!"

He left him. Mr. Tilney came up with Mr. Tillotson, and took Ross's arm. They walked home together. "Come along!" he cried. "You take the other, Tillotson," he said, meaning his

arm. "We have all gone through a great deal to-day."

"And you have picked up some encouraging news—eh?" said Ross.

"I said to myself," said Mr. Tilney dreamily, "in that witness-box, tell the exact truth, the whole undivided truth, and nothing in the wide world but the truth—just as the words run. You have no idea what a curious feeling it is. Dear me! I could have given them a perfect photograph of the little supper. Ogle came in as drunk as an owl."

"What a pity you didn't tell them *that!*" said Ross with a sneer.

"At all events," said Mr. Tillotson kindly, "I do think there are excellent chances. I thought there was a great impression made on the jury; and some one near me said, I think, they were all radicals to a man."

"It is very good of you to take such trouble—very kind of you to say so," said Ross indifferently, and half sneering. "Let us get along quickly, for God's sake! I want some dinner, and then I must get back to that infernal court."

"There was a boy there that I ventured to engage to wait until the verdict came in, and then drive as hard as he could up to the Close with the news. I knew you would be anxious."

Ross looked at him half softened. "Very good of you," he said again. "We shall hear soon enough. Ill news will travel quicker than your boy."

It was a solemn and mournful dinner. The ladies of the family had heard the foreboding as to the result. Indeed, Mr. Cater had gone up expressly to repeat his declaration of its possible value at something under "twopence-halfpenny." Mrs. Tilney glowed and coloured now and again as she thought of the folly of the thing. There was but little spoken. Ross sat and glared on them, and at every sound outside looked with a start towards the window. As he did so, he saw Mr. Tillotson talking in a low voice to Ada Millwood; and he broke out impatiently:

"I wish you had left your boy and your cab alone. I have heard it coming twenty times now. And for God's sake, Ada, can't you leave that trial? You'll have plenty of time to talk of it, and to gloat over it, and to say what a pity about that Ross. Why wouldn't he take advice! I know the regular jeremiad. And the sensible friends will lay their heads together. Confound those mule-headed jurors!" he said, starting up; "can't they settle a simple case like that? And yet they can sell a horse, and weigh their meal, infernal dunder-headed crew! I never saw such

a collection of oafs. I knew how it would be when they came into the box. But I give you notice, it sha'n't stop here! Don't think it. I'll begin it all, all again. And I sha'n't be done. I sha'n't wait here any longer." And drinking off a tumbler of wine, he went out of the room.

He left them sitting in silence and looking at each other. Mrs. Tilney tossed her head.

"He is really getting like a man possessed," she said.

"He is excited," said Mr. Tilney. "Surprising! Yet I declare, when I went up into that box to-day, I just felt as if I were going in to dinner—twenty-two, you know, and the Chief-Justice there sitting at the head."

"We must make allowance for him," said Mr. Tillotson gently, "at this particular moment. He is naturally excited."

"But," said Mrs. Tilney, "we have always to be making allowances. He is always the same rude, unbearable creature that you see him to-night; to myself I can only say that he is unvaryingly rude—rude."

An hour went by. Ross came back, tired, jaded, with a sort of hopelessness in his face. Mrs. Tilney read it off, and started up.

"There! He has lost!" she cried. "I told you so; I always said so."

“Hush!” said Mr. Tillotson, authoritatively. “They have not ‘found’ yet, I am sure. Is it not so?”

“Your *superior* divination,” said Ross, “has hit it off. That old woman who tried it has just called them out, and they say there are some of them won’t agree, and he wants to discharge them. The infernal old ass wants to go home and drink his claret, and go to bed after his debauch; but Cobham, who is good for something, has made him send them back for an hour or two. I hope to God he’ll make him lock ’em all up for the night without fire or candles, and starve their fat carcasses into common sense! I’d like to give ’em a lesson all round that they wouldn’t forget in a hurry!”

He was almost savage with vexation and suspense. Mr. Tillotson had gone away. Another hour passed by, then half an hour. Suddenly they heard wheels. They rushed to the window. It was the dean’s carriage passing by.

“It’s only that apostle Ridley coming home gorged! ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’ You have a nice pack of drones down here, haven’t you? There’s one just gone home to the hive.”

“Where’s Mr. Tillotson, Augusta?” said Mrs Tilney. “Was he to come back?”

“He’s in his bed, of course,” said Ross;

“tucked in like a precise Puritan as he is. What’s the fancy you have all taken to that fellow? Any one that knew any thing of the world would see he was nothing but a common city prig.”

Mrs. Tilney did not answer.

(“I hold,” she had always said to her friends, “as little communication as I can with him.”)

Wheels again.

“There!” said Ross. “More drones for the hive. Why don’t you all get up and rush to the window?”

But the wheels did not pass the window. A cab had stopped at the little green gate. There was a quick patter of steps on the gravel of the little walk. There were voices—voices of the solicitor and Mr. Cobham. Mr. Tillotson, opening the door, had rushed in with a radiant face—a face of real joy and satisfaction.

“It is all safe!” he cried. “You have gained! The jury have found for you!”

The whole family fell into a sort of tumult. They forgot their conventional restraint before company, and uttered a cry of joy.

Ross stood in the middle, looking round with exulting eyes, and for a moment without speaking.

“Ah! What did I tell you?” he said. “What

did I always say? Do me justice *now* at least. Who shall say the bold game isn't the best—eh? Who has the best eyes and the best wit—eh?"

"Indeed, William, we were all wrong," said Mrs. Tilney, obsequiously.

"It is wonderful," said Mr. Tillotson, almost with enthusiasm; "and I am really so glad. I congratulate you again and again, Mr. Ross."

"Thank you," said the other with some softness; "I am obliged to you."

"And where is Miss Ada?" said Mr. Tillotson. "We must tell *her*. Ah! here she is."

She came gliding softly in, without sound almost. She read the good news in all their faces. She went up to the centre figure; the yellow hair and the calm soft face beneath it were lit up as with a saint's glory.

"Dear, dear William, I am so happy!" she said.

"My lodgings are not far from here," said Mr. Cobham, "so I thought I would look in and let you know. Very glad indeed—very."

"You did wonders, sir, professionally," said Mr. Tilney, complimentarily. "You laboured through the dust and the heats. We owe it all to you, sir, and I *think* a little to my testimony in that box."

“And to some other little help too,” said Mr. Cobham, smiling. “Mr. Ross, just one word outside here.”

They both walked out—down the path to the little gate. It was a calm night. The cathedral rose before them like a great Head on a shore, with a cold blue waste behind it.

“Fine thing that church of yours,” said Mr. Cobham. “Well, look here; we have pulled through this, with a squeak, indeed. Take my advice, don’t lose an hour in settling.”

“Settle,” said Ross, starting; “what d’ye mean?”

“Settle, settle, settle; just as Sir Robert said, ‘Register, register, register.’ It was next door to a miracle. You had a bull-headed jury, and the most ignorant judge on the bench. Why, sir, the verdict won’t stand a minute! We’ll be upset on the exceptions.”

“But surely *you* said they were—”

“In court, of course, we must do the best we can. Ryder was perfectly right; he had no business to admit those letters. Once the verdict is set aside, and we have only our convict to go upon! A nice fellow that, by the way! However, that’s my advice, you know, and you can do as you like.”

“O, of course,” said Ross coldly. “You

mean it well, and all that sort of thing. O, of course, we shall consider it."

"Just as you like," said the other; and walked away to tell the "brother" who shared his lodgings what a cold-blooded, ill-conditioned client he had pulled through as "up-hill a case" as ever he saw, and yet the savage had never asked him to dinner, or so much as thanked him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEAN'S PARTY.

WHEN the result of the trial was known, there was a marked reaction in favour of the plaintiff. The little public of the place did not care to consider Serjeant Ryder's "bill of exceptions," or the "points" he had saved, but only looked to the substantial fact of the verdict. It took every one by surprise; and every one was now lost in admiration of the spirit, energy, "pluck," and "gameness" with which young Ross had held on to his purpose, in spite of all advice and obstacles—even the great Doctor Topham, who had always shown an angry contempt for him, and had said openly, "that the fellow had neither wit, brains, nor sense!"

Later, Mr. Tilney came to his friend with somewhat more hopeful views of human nature. "Here's that dean—Ridley, you know, Lord Rooksby's brother—has sent us this for to-morrow night. You are to come. Mrs. Ridley saw you last Sunday at the sermon, and asked who you were."

“I never care,” said Mr. Tillotson—“I never go to parties. I fear I must be going away. I have been here longer than I intended.”

“Nonsense. I am very glad of this,” said Mr. Tilney; “it will amuse us. They do the thing very well at that house, I can tell you. I hear the Secretary is coming down to-night, and I suppose they want to make what they can of him. The poor Dook had a kind of seafaring chaplain for *his* secretary—Bowdler—and gave away all the good things. I could tell you something about him, uncommon good too, but the mistress is waiting. We’ll make a little party of it, and go together. Do, now. We do these sort of things, you see, better here; and,” he added confidentially, “that is why I would sooner live here in plain St. Alans than in all your racketing London rout. That did very well, Tillotson, fifty years ago; but I want a little breathing time between this and the little vault over there.” This he delivered sonorously, like the close of a chant.

The dean, who had preached for the Mariners on the Sunday, was indeed brother to Lord Rooksby; and though the mere knowledge of the relationship fetched the price it ought to do in this provincial market, still it was felt that by the occasional exhibition of the noble relative,

much greater profit might be turned out of this little capital. For a time there is an awe and reverence among the rustics, from the expectation that a noble ghost may walk at any hour. But soon a feeling of utter incredulity arrives. This was the tone of the public mind as to Dean Ridley's brother.

The deanery was an old house, with an enormous roof, like one of the steep stands the dean himself read from in the cathedral, with two tall chimneys at each side, also very like the lights at the side of the stand. It stood by itself in a garden, and had tall lanky windows, with many little panes in each; altogether, with a rustic ancient French-château air over it, and with the sort of dim reference to the cathedral an old retainer has to an old family.

The Very Rev. Lord Rooksby's brother had, however, put it in thorough repair when his noble brother's interest had brought him the deanery (of course charging his predecessor's executors with dilapidation, and his own successors with restorations), and out of his own resources had fitted up the house very handsomely. Mrs. Dean and the Miss Deans having got down Lord Rooksby for a day or two, had determined to "cash," discount, mortgage, and exhibit that noble person in every possible way that profit

could be made, or a penny of social pride "turned" on him.

The dean himself was a mild and amiable man, but whose life was literally a burden to him, from the joint terrorism exercised by Mrs. Ridley and Doctor Topham. With Mrs. Ridley singly he might have dealt; against Doctor Topham and his rude tyranny, his connection with the Treasury, and his secret influence with the bishop, he might have made some stand; but the cabals of the place, and the confusion brought by Doctor Topham's dislikes and despotism, his proclaimed purpose to get this man and that man "out," harassed and worried him beyond belief.

He had been taught by Mrs. Ridley to like good society, and he would have liked it, had he been allowed; for on visits at "good houses" he found some peace and quiet, after the distractions of his own. And now, Mrs. Ridley having got down the Lord Rooksby, and learning, moreover, from her friend and accomplice, Doctor Topham, that the famous "Right Honourable Frederick Topham" could spare twenty-four hours from the Treasury, and was flying down to his brother on some family business, for that time only, thought it would be a splendid idea to exhibit these two luminaries in combination, and concerted measures for that purpose with Doctor

Topham. The Doctor also thought it would be a good idea, and entered into it, agreeing to let out his distinguished relative for that night. And very soon it became known that there was to be a great dinner-party at the deanery, with a faint rumour, to which, in some bosoms, hope was father, that the crowd might be admitted in "the evening" to a railed-off place, whence they might gaze their fill at the splendid strangers.

From afar off, across the common, the long lanky windows could be seen lighted up. The festival was known, and the selection of guests caused bitter heartburnings. Asking every stall in the cathedral, *that* was absurd; and when it was considered that every stall held a wife and large family, the thing became more absurd still. Some of the excluded came privily, and actually skulked about the common to watch the festivities they could not share in.

The dean's noble brother, Lord Rooksby, stood not in any reserved place, with a railing round him, or in an exhibitor's case — but simply as any other man in the room. He was very tall, had gray hair, and a dried yellow face, which he kept very high, and well thrown back, and was explaining quietly to the archdeacon and Doctor Topham, who had dined, "what it seemed to him should be done with the Church." As the Tilney

party entered in a long file, the whole room, with its contents, seemed in a state of rest and happiness, reposing after the state dinner, and content with the beatific vision of the nobleman who had "come among them."

There was to be music. Mrs. Ridley had ordered some of the choir serfs to attend. These gathered behind the piano, and kept together for mutual protection, waiting until they should be wanted. They were caged until their voices were set free and allowed to spring. Mr. Hart was there, the dreadful bass, the Polypheme of the choir, with a beard and whiskers like a deep black cactus, suggesting an awful idea of vocal strength. There was also Mr. Yokel, the counter tenor, and Doctor Fugle, the seraphic tenor, but now without his seraphim's robe, and looking any thing but spiritual. In his stall, with the robe on, with an indistinct hint as of wings folded up behind, he was, so to speak, carried off. But here, behind the piano, he was revealed as a rather coarse, oily-cheeked, large-whiskered, and very earthy being.

The Tilney girls sat down, a little desponding from this gloomy state of things; for the horizon being darkened with great black ecclesiastical firs and cypresses, did not promise much. They sat round and waited. Mr. Tilney, who

had an aptitude for "getting on," now recollected his old arts, got into his old social armour, and had presently secured Lord Rooksby by an allusion to a fellow-equerry whom his lordship had also known. Minor canons looked on from afar at this wonderful instance of the power of knowledge of the world.

Both the great lights were present, who divided popular admiration. The public might regard the dean's brother, of whom they had heard so much, with curiosity; but they looked with awe, and a yet greater interest, on that Doctor Topham, that very Czar of the little place, who was known to rule the men and women, the high and low, and almost dispose of their persons and chattels with a despotism that was frightful. And there beside him was the Right Honourable Frederick, a spare gentleman, with a stearine face, in a little group of his own, explaining something with extraordinary fluency and volubility. The crowd looked on with wonder at these two little groups, and saw with mysterious awe Doctor Topham pass from one to the other indifferently, and assert his rude rough-shod supremacy over the Lord Rooksby himself, by noisily, and with angry language, telling him the "wretched state" of things here, and that the whole chapter wanted a sound "purging."

Presently Dr. Fugle, and some half-dozen of the pariahs confined behind the piano, fell into line without leaving their prison, and began some "part-singing."

Under cover of this entertainment, which seemed the signal for easy and fluent conversation, Mr. Tillotson drew near to Miss Millwood, before whom a youthful and bashful vicar-choral was standing up and talking. The golden hair gleamed under the lights. There was a soft melancholy in her face. She heard the vicar-choral, but with a degree of attention that could not have been very flattering to that gentleman, who unjustly set down her distraction to quite another reason. "That old Tilney," he told a brother choralist, going home, "introduced her to the lord, and it quite upset her." But the lord, to Mr. Tilney's great pride, had asked him who was that "remarkable-looking young woman over there, who had really quite an air about her?" And he had brought the lord to her. The Miss Tilneys had seen the introduction, and moved with indignation in their chairs. It seemed like the wicked elder sisters, indignant at Cinderella being sent for to the palace.

Then the choir gentlemen began their minstrelsy. It was part-singing for which these artists were deservedly famed. "Ah! why, my love, she sighs

for me!" by Wagner, in very close harmonies, and in which Doctor Fugle's tenor, coming out of a little hole at the corner of his mouth, produced a great effect. He sang as if he were in his stall, and with his eyes fixed on the little rosette of the gaselier, just as they used to be on the groining of the cathedral. The voices were considered to come out finely, especially with the rough and powerful "street-pavement" voice of Mr. Rogers; especially, too, where they all came in together, with an up-and-down languishing, and increasing stress and vigour: "My—love is —see-eyeing—is see-eyeing —is sighing all for-r-r-r-r," in a note prolonged before the final descent, "ME!" That ME rolled away, in fluttering waves, into silence.

CHAPTER XIX.

DARKNESS AGAIN.

MR. TILLOTSON had gone over to Ada Millwood. She had beckoned to him. "I wanted to speak to you," she said. "He went away this morning. It is the best thing for him, and for us all. But forgive me if I ask you—but that night I saw him—at least I am sure it was he—go up to you on the green. How much you have suffered from him, and so kindly borne with for him, I can guess. And I do fear that—"

"No, no, I understand him perfectly. I *did* make some allowance for him hitherto, but I begin to see that he has some incurable dislike to me. I have not the art of pleasing people. But he is gone, and, I suppose, will not come back."

"I suppose will not come back!" she repeated a little absently. "He talked of changing into some other regiment. It will be all for the best."

"Ah, 'if he had even the tact to know those

who are inclined to befriend him!" said Mr. Tillotson, warmly.

"And so *you* are going away too," she said suddenly. "Going in the morning?"

"Yes, going back to the solitude—of the world. I am very glad of this opportunity, for I wished to speak to you before I went. Indeed, I should hardly have come here but for such a hope. There! They are beginning another of their glees. I have seen a great deal of your family life," he went on hastily. "I know you will forgive me what I am going to say, but *you* will give me credit for wishing to show that I would like to serve you. You have all been so kind to me, and I begin now to feel very desolate when left to myself. I could not help seeing many things in your house which I must have shut my eyes not to have seen."

Her eyes dropped upon the ground, and she did not answer.

"Again I ask you to forgive what I am going to say. The way of life in which I live quickens our observation. I have guessed a great deal more than I have seen; guessed that you—forgive me, I say again—were not so happy in that house as you deserve to be, Miss Millwood; and that though the family, I suppose, is affectionate, their hopes and wishes and aims of life are so different, that—"

“But why should you think this?” she answered gently, and as if wishing him to go on; “no one has surely told you?”

“Told me! no. But I have an instinct that we—that you and I—have suffered much the same. I fancy I have no one to understand me; that even in a crowd I am alone. That every thing in life for me is cold, cheerless. From the moment I entered your house, from the moment, too, that *you* entered the room on that first night, something seemed to tell me that your life was like mine. Forgive me this absurdity.”

“Mr. Tillotson,” she said softly, “I do, indeed, know you, and believe you. Perhaps I have had some little sorrows of my own. Not, however, to compare with yours. No! no!”

“Little sorrows,” answered he; “no, no. Then *they* are all for the world. They do not understand you. They never will, and I do not blame them. They cannot be what they have not power to be. But it is different for you. It will grow worse as time goes on. Every day it will become worse; the isolation and desolation will become unendurable. You feel it—you must feel it every day.”

“Yes,” she said quietly, without lifting her eyes.

“I know,” he went on. “I have had dismal experience myself. For years I have scarcely

known life properly. Within this week or so I have begun to feel life, the air, the warmth of the sun. O, such life, air, and warmth!" He said this with no melodramatic stress or attitude; but calmly, as he said every thing else. She could not suspect that there was any secret meaning in it.

(The labouring men were now drawing a heavy vocal roller over a rude macadamised road, and by desire of Lord Rooksby were repeating the song. They were hard at "My love is see-*eye*-ing;" then, on a story higher, "my love is see-*eye*-ing—is sighing for-r-r—ME!" Neither Mr. Tillotson nor his companion heard these vocal labouring men.)

He went on: "What would I propose, what would I advise? you will ask. Recollect, I am going away, and have the privilege of a man on the scaffold. I seem to see one chance before me. It may prove to be a delusion—a will-o'-the-wisp—like every thing else in life; but if I dared to speak plainly?—"

"She looked up hurriedly. "What *can* you advise? There is nothing that you could know, or could say, unless—"

"Ah! it may be no remedy after all," he went on quickly; "but it might. You have been kind to me, O, so kind! I have felt that you sympathised

with me. More I could not hope for. But perhaps in time—perhaps compassion for one who has been so miserable and hopeless—”

She looked at him. “O, Mr. Tillotson,” she said in alarm, “what do you wish me to say?”

“If I were any one else, or belonged more to the ways of the world, I might hide what I am going to say behind all manner of delicate hints. But it is better to speak plainly, is it not?”

“No, no, no,” she said hastily. “Dear Mr. Tillotson, I implore you—no. Don’t speak about *that*. O, why did you? This so grieves me!”

He started, almost rose, with a kind of half groan. “Have I made one more mistake?” he said sadly. “Ah, I can see I have. I was going to ask you to leave this place—to come and begin a new, and what I believe would be a happier, life. Happier for us both. I have money and influence; these, too, would help to make you happy; and, as far as the supremest devotion—” he looked in her face, and paused. “Ah, but I see—one more mistake.”

“Dear Mr. Tillotson,” she said almost passionately, “how *can* I thank you! But it is impossible. There are reasons! If you knew—O, never, never, never!”

“Ah! I might have guessed this. It is the

old fortune. "It was the only chance left to me. It may go with the rest. There is the music beginning again."

It was the grinders at work once more. Doctor Fugle and his oarsmen labouring through another glee—to oblige the company.

"What will you think of me?" she said, despairingly. "I don't know what to say. You will despise me, because you will think I led you on to this. But I did not mean it to do so. Indeed no! Tell me that you do not think so."

"My fate and my mistake! I thought," said he, hopelessly, "that from the beginning you seemed to treat me with interest and kindness, and I stupidly mistook that kindness. I have made a hundred such blunders in my life. No, it was all my fault."

"Yes, I *did* feel an interest," she said, with some hesitation, "and I admired and pitied. I saw that you were alone, and—"

"To be sure. I understand. But I thought as there was no one else you cared for—and though for a moment I thought that he who has left us had some influence, still what you had told me settled *that*—and—"

"Yes, yes," she said hastily.

Mr. Tilney here came up with an air of mystery.

“Tillotson,” he said, “a word. What fine music that is! Fugle is next door but one to divine, ain’t he? Whenever I hear that man he quite lifts me up. O, I say! A letter to-night from that scapegrace.”

“From Mr. Ross?”

“Not at all so bad a creature as you would fancy. Good at bottom. I tell Mrs. Tilney this will all wear off in time. My dear sir, Bushell, the best counsel in England, tells us that the decision is all wrong in law—must go overboard, sir—he is sure of reversing it, and, not only that, but certain of winning in the end. With all his faults, he has a pure game spirit. I like him for it—I do! Not only that, but he has wormed out an old lady who is to furnish him with the pieces to carry on the war. Wonderful his tact. I wish I had had his spirit when I was his age!”

“So, then,” said Mr. Tillotson calmly, “we may consider his prospects restored?”

“As good as restored. Even if he loses, he don’t know what the old lady may do for him. Wonderful, wonderful,” he added devoutly, “are the ways of the Providence overhead!”

“Yes,” said Mr. Tillotson absently, and looking over at the golden-haired Miss Millwood.

In another half-hour the Tilney party were walking home. As they were getting their “things,”

Mr. Tillotson heard some one whisper him, "O, once more forgive me!"

He almost smiled. "You might have told me every thing," he said; "but no matter now."

"I had nothing to tell," she said; "but I am going to ask you for something more. You will not mention to Mr. Tilney what you have said to-night. I have a reason."

"That also I can understand perfectly," he said bitterly.

"But I fear you do *not* understand me," she said passionately and loudly, so that the maid who was getting her cloak stared.

They walked home slowly. "So sorry that you are going," Mrs. Tilney said, with what any body who did not know her well would have supposed a smile of delight. "Shall quite miss you, Mr. Tillotson. Now you must promise us to come very soon again. Augusta here says she feels *improved* by knowing you. Good-bye, then. Good-bye, Mr. Tillotson."

They were at the gate of their house, among the luxuriant hedges and flowers which almost hid it. Augusta, who knew the keys of the human voice far better than she did those of regular music, threw some pathos into her voice. At this moment she felt some penitence for opportunities neglected, and wished that she had renounced the military

works and pomps for the more substantial blessings whose superior advantages she now saw.

The third girl stood behind them all, half up the walk leading to the house. Where the sisters were prominent, it was understood and expected that she should keep retired. The moon was out. As a background there was the old house overgrown with great cushions of leaves, with lights in its small windows, and looking like a scene. The moonlight, too, fell upon her pale face, and lit her up like a tinted statue.

“Your kindness I shall not forget, Mr. Tilney. I must say good-bye to them.” And he passed them and went up the walk.

“Good-bye,” he said hastily. “Depend on my secrecy, as indeed you might suppose. Men do not publish their own mortifications.”

“Forgive me!” she said again, very piteously. “O, forgive me! I have not told you every thing. I dare not.”

“Ah! *That* does not mend it much,” he said, with deep grief and suffering. “It comes to the same thing. Unless,” he added, almost imploringly, “it means that after some time—years even—”

She shook her head sadly. “No, no,” she said, “I may not even say *that*. Ah! what *can* I do?”

Mr. Tillotson looked down. “Then so be it.

Promise me this, at least, if ever you should want aid or assistance of any kind for yourself or for *them*, you will send for me. Will you promise me *that*, at least?"

The others had now reached him. "Good-bye again," they said; and passed into the house.

"I do, I do," she said eagerly.

"A solemn pledge, I mean," he said hurriedly, "not to be lightly spoken. Let me look to some little relation to you in the future. It will be a gleam of light before me. O, what infatuation! For these few weeks I actually thought the sun was coming and the sunny days, and that the clouds were all behind. Only one more delusion," he added, with a smile, "to put to the rest! Well, you promise?"

(Mrs. Tilney's voice was heard calling shrilly, "Ada!")

"I do, I do promise. Indeed I do! Don't think ill of me, but be indulgent. I cannot tell you every thing. There, dear Mr. Tillotson, good-bye, God bless you, and make you happy."

She seemed to fade out. He saw her pass into the illuminated doorway, where the light was shed on her golden hair for the last time. Even then, and at that distance, he saw a sweet, grieved, and most wistful look turned to the darkness where he had been left. Then she was gone.

Mr. Tilney's loud voice seemed to waken him up. "Going back to town, going back to town, Tillotson?" he said, as if meditating. "Very well. Going back and plunging into the vortex! What would I take and change with you? I vow and protest I like our little things here—nice people, you know, better than all your routs, and drums, and balls, and parties. 'We never can get you out, Tilney,' H.R.H. said to me over and over again. 'Why are you always holing at home in this confounded retirement?' Ah! No quiet for me, Tillotson, until we get to our old friend over there," pointing at the old cathedral, now all but steeped in moonlight. "The one thing, you know, Tillotson. The only thing, after all!"

Mr. Tillotson, who by this time knew the course that these reflections would take, did not reply to them, but told Mr. Tilney a piece of news that was very gratifying to him. "The company have agreed to make you a director. I got the answer to-night. A paid director too."

He started with delight. "A director! My dear Tillotson, this is goodness! this is friendship! to get back to the old place. I shall be able to draw breath now. I am consumed, wasting in this hole." (In a second Mr. Tilney had forgotten the one thing necessary.)

Mr. Tillotson set him right on this point.

“You shall hear more about it,” he said. “I must go now. I have to set out early. Good-bye! Thanks for all kindness!”

“God bless you! *God* bless you, Tillotson!” Then the other walked back in the moonlight to desolation and to the White Hart, listening to the clock striking twelve, and thinking that with that hour ended a short dream of happiness. He sat long in his ancient room, which seemed as blank, as desolate, and even mouldy as his own heart. Sometimes he paced to and fro, and struck his forehead with his hand. “One more miserable delusion,” he said. “Stupid, insensible, folly, folly, as well as guilt!” And so he sat on and walked until the cold morning light began to steal in through the ancient red curtain of the White Hart’s window. By the first train, which left at six, he had gone—not to London, but to another town, where he was to stay a few hours, and then go up. Now all the white walls and cold penitential passages of the world were before him.

Book the Second.

CHAPTER I.

“THE CAPTAIN’S” NIECES.

ON the platform of the Waterloo station, where the trains were screaming in and screaming out, an elderly gentleman, that leaned on a stick and limped a little as he walked, was waiting for a particular train to come in. He was thin and stooped, had a very high Roman nose and well-curved brown whiskers, which gave him an almost warlike expression; but his blue eyes, with which he looked to the right and to the left, were the softest and the gentlest in the world. They fell on the *al-fresco* bookseller, who was doing so large an open-air business in gamboge-covered books, and straps, and railway rugs, and opera-glasses, and the spare moments of whose life seemed to be employed in cutting leaves. The soft eye fell on this overworked official, and he limped up to him to ask for information.

“Just out, sir. Quite new,” the bookseller said, touching with his paper-knife an orange-coloured

book, as clean and fresh as a newly-baked loaf. It was, indeed, not an hour from its own oven.

The lame gentleman shook his head and smiled. "If you printed a little larger," he said, taking it up; "or, I suppose, if I were only twenty years younger—"

"Well, there's better paper and print now than there used to be," the other went on, cutting desperately. "We sell 'em by the bushel."

"And now let us see," said the gentleman, taking up a book, putting on a pair of glasses very low on his nose, and looking sideways at it. "What is all this about? Thaddeus of Warsaw. God bless me! I am very glad of that—very. Why, that's a really fine work."

"A classic, sir," said the bookseller, who had learned to read his customers like his books. "Considered a reg'lar classic. They don't write such things nowadays."

"O, I declare I must have Thaddeus," said the gentleman, taking out his purse. "And I hope, sir, you sell a great many copies. I read it years ago, and was delighted with it. Two shillings! God bless me, how cheaply they bring out these things! How can they do it, the creatures, and keep themselves? There. Thank you." And he moved away, looked through the double glass still on his nose down at the gorgeously chromatic por-

trait of Thaddeus which was on the back of his yellow book. The bookseller looked after him with some interest, as he saw the deep respect of the gentleman for the story, and his sincere admiration for the outside picture.

He ran after him. “Let me tie it up for you, sir, and put it in paper.”

The gentleman thanked him warmly, and then put Thaddeus safely in his pocket.

He was presently leaning on his stick, talking to a conversational porter, who was pointing here and there, and over to this building and that. He was telling about their professional life, and how their rounds of duty were managed, and how 'ard the work was, and how much “'arder paid.” That led on into the duty of working signals, which led again to their curious mechanism.

“See that now! Most interesting and curious!” said the gentleman, in pleased wonder. “And tell me, now, what sort of lighthouse is that up there? The poor people seem to me to live up there altogether.”

“If you step this way,” the man said, mysteriously, “I’ll show you the whole thing, sir. Nobody ain’t allowed to get down on the line,” he added, with a great air of suspicion; “but I’ll manage it. The superintendent’s at his dinner.” And in a very short time the gentleman was limp-

ing quietly up some steep steps, and was actually up in the glass roost where men pull at iron handles all day and night long. There a chair had been rubbed clean; and with his chin on the top of his stick he was presently in free and pleasant conversation with the chief of that little establishment and the whole staff. When he went away, it was agreed in that little community that he was "as a nice friendly sort of gentleman as you could ask to meet."

It will have been seen, from these two trifling little incidents, that this lame gentleman was one of the few who have the delightful art of attracting the common passers on the highway of life without any trouble, who get a kindly nod even if they cannot stop, and who have that surprisingly useful gift of making a friend of the man with whom they stand under an archway during a shower of rain. The name of this gentleman was Diamond—Captain Thomas Diamond, of the Royal Veteran Battalion.

"I am waiting," he said to the friendly porter, with whom he was now on the most confidential terms, "for two ladies, nieces of mine, and I have never seen them since they were that high. And really, now, I don't know how I shall make them out when they do come."

It was a puzzling thing, but it often occurred;

someway, it always came right, the porter said. “There was a look about them by which you knew. You saw two young women a-getting out of the train, and you knew at once they were *your* young women.”

The captain owned there was good sense in this observation, founded, as it was, on an extensive experience of human nature—at least, of the human nature that arrives in some fifty or sixty trains daily. “I daresay you are right,” he said. “’Pon my word, there is a great deal of sense in what you say.”

“You just take your stand, it may be there, sir,” said the porter, illustrating his remark, and encouraged by this praise, “and look out for the first two young women you see standing in the open door, or lookin’ up and down the line for some one. And they’ll be your two young women—I’ll lay you a crown.”

This allusion to the coin might have been accidental, but it gave a sort of hint to Captain Diamond, who thanked him very warmly for his kindness, and took something out of his purse, which he gave with great mystery, not wishing publicly to violate the company’s regulations.

The train was now seen far off along the platform, and in a moment there was a rush of officials from private doors, and a restlessness in drivers and

horses and cabs, a backing, and a plunging, and a gesticulating, while every one was looking out at the edge, as if a ship were coming alongside the pier. And in a moment the train came in, rumbling and rolling, and making the roof reverberate; and the engine was pulled up suddenly, shedding steam and dew, and dripping like an exhausted racer. In a second doors flew open, and the platform seemed to have generated a new race of men and women, who came into a cold world with cloaks and wrappers and caps on, and baskets in their hands.

The porter had, indeed, shown a profound instinct; for, exactly as he had foretold, the captain saw two ladies in the doorway of a carriage, looking up and down anxiously. Often afterwards he would begin praising railway porters heartily for their instinct and "willingness," saying they were the most intelligent class of men in the world.

The captain limped up to the door, and touching his hat—he was a little near-sighted, and always read with spectacles—which was a little like a bishop's, said, with great deference, "I beg your pardon, but perhaps you are looking for—"

"Ah! it is uncle," cried the elder of the ladies. "Uncle Diamond, we are your nieces."

"I thought so," he said, taking both their

hands, and helping them out, “and I am so glad, my dears.”

The younger, with a very fairy-like face, and an eager, restless manner, who was small, bright, and black-eyed, now broke in without preface: “And I am so glad! But, O, uncle Diamond, such a dreadful thing has happened to us; we don’t know what to do.”

“God bless me,” said the captain, starting back, “what is it?”

“We have lost every thing. I could sit down and cry; and after all our miseries and misfortunes to have this! And we don’t know what to do, uncle.”

“Never mind, my dear,” said he, without knowing what they meant, “we’ll get it again. It will all come right again in the morning.”

“It is a great misfortune for poor little Alice. We were getting some tea in the refreshment-room,” said the elder, quickly, “and she laid down our bag, and forgot it.”

“The train went off so suddenly,” the other said, “and they hurried us on. But what *are* we to do? for it had all our money in the world, and darling mamma’s picture and her letters, O, uncle Diamond, uncle Diamond!” And the little girl wrung her hands bitterly.

Uncle Diamond soothed her tenderly. It would all come right, he said, depend on it. What was the station—what was the place? There was really a most intelligent fellow here among the porters, and suppose they consulted him—

“There is a chance,” said the elder, “you know there is. The gentleman—”

“Yes, uncle,” said the younger, “a gentleman that was with us bravely jumped out when the train was moving, and, I fear, has hurt himself dreadfully.”

“He’ll look after it, depend on it,” said the captain, with affected cheerfulness and confidence. “To be sure he will! He’s sure not to be hurt. Here’s our sagacious friend, he’ll tell us what to do.”

The sagacious friend at first seemed to doubt the truth of the story, for he said it was “teetotally agin the laws of the company that any one should leap out when the train was in motion.” When they persisted in their statement, he seemed to think it a bad case morally, and it weakened his view as to the possibility of recovering the lost bag. P’raps he had got the bag, and more likely, p’raps he hadn’t. Whether he had or hadn’t, the authorities wouldn’t let him go—most likely. When Captain Diamond proposed telegraphing to the station, he said it was no use, as he had come

on—most likely. At last, however, he advised coming back in about an hour and a half, when the next train was due, and in all probability he would come by that—supposing “he was let.”

They determined to wait there. The elder, dismissing the bag from her thoughts, talked calmly with her uncle about their affairs, and her journey, and other things. But the younger, excited, restless, eager, kept running to the waiting-room door, and looking out wistfully until the time had passed.

Once more the cloud of officials emerged, doors were shut loudly, men and women gathered at the edge and looked out anxiously as for some one to take them off, signals began to toss their arms violently, and a distant bell to sound. There came in a St. Alans train, which, as before, opened its sides, and broke into life with all the quickness of a pantomime trick.

The two girls stood, each leaning on an arm of their uncle. Both faces were full of anxiety; but the younger leant forward, fluttering as if she were going to fly, and searching every face she met. Captain Diamond had first thought of applying the skilful advice of the porter to the present case, but broke down in a moment, bewildered by the crowd of faces. But the two

sisters were at work. Suddenly the younger broke from her uncle's arm, and called out,

"There, there he is! I see him. O, uncle, uncle, look!"

"And see," said the other, calmly, "he has got our bag all safe. I can see it in his hand."

"And O, sister," said the younger girl, "he is safe. He looks quite safe. O, it would have been dreadful had he been hurt."

"Where, where, dears," said the captain, now quite bewildered, and looking a little wildly at every body. "Egad, I can see nothing. Though, to be sure, I don't know him yet."

"O, and you will thank him," said the younger. "Won't you, uncle? Here he is."

"Why, Heaven preserve us, it's Tillotson!—or is it?" said he, as that gentleman came up. "Ay! ay! My dear friend Tillotson, is this you? Ah, yes! I know him, dears. You are not hurt, are you, my dear fellow?"

"Here is the bag," said Mr. Tillotson. "It had a very narrow escape. Some one was walking away with it just as I entered."

"How shall we ever thank you?" the young girl said, earnestly and with sparkling eyes. "And O! you were in such dreadful danger, too."

"Yes," said Mr. Tillotson, gravely. "I am afraid it was rather a mad act. Had it been

you, or your friend, or a fellow-creature, there would have been some excuse. As it is, I perhaps deserve to lose my life for such a trick.”

The young girl seemed hurt and awed by this speech, and shrank away to her uncle’s arm.

“So,” he went on, “Captain Diamond, you know these ladies?”

“Know them!” said the captain, smiling, “Egad I do, well. They are my new nieces, just come to me from France, and who are to do me the honour of staying with me. I am going to give up being a solitary good-for-nothing bachelor *in sæculorum*, sir. But, now, wasn’t it the oddest thing in the world that you should come across them, and that we three should come to know each other in this sort of way? I really can hardly make it out.”

“O, uncle, and if you knew how kind this gentleman has been, how he risked his safety to help us,” said the young girl, with a wonderful fervour and a half-shy air, and addressing this speech, not to her uncle, but to Mr. Tillotson.

But he had become abstracted. “As I said before, you make too much of it. It is a mere trifle.”

“So is every thing good that you do a mere trifle, Tillotson,” said Captain Diamond,

eagerly. "If he gives a hundred pounds to a charity, it is a trifle. If he does some other fine thing, that is a trifle also. We don't think them trifles, I can tell you, Tillotson."

Mr. Tillotson was looking up and down wearily. These compliments were tiring him. "I must go and look after my things," he said. "I am glad to have been of some use to somebody. But I hope you won't think of it any more." He bowed to the ladies, and went away.

The young girl looked after him wistfully, and with mortification in her face. "He won't let us thank him even, uncle," she said, despondingly. "How odd of him! One would think we had offended him."

"That is only his way, my dear," said the captain, earnestly. "He is the most noble, generous amiable fellow. I am so glad he is come back. And you must help me to shake him up, dears, for his life is very gloomy. You don't know all he has gone through. Some of these evenings, when we are all sitting by the fire, and you, dears, have nothing better to do than to listen to me, I'll tell you about him. Now shall we get a cab?"

"O, then he *has* a history," said the younger girl, eagerly.

"Poor, poor fellow!" said Captain Dia-

mond, with deep feeling. "But come, we have had no time to talk to each other. Let me look at you, dears. I am so glad to have you with me; I am, indeed. And now you won't mind waiting here while I go and get the luggage?"

And Captain Diamond, putting them in a safe place under the clock and out of the crowd, limped away towards the luggage van, looking back now and again to encourage them.

CHAPTER II.

MR. TILLOTSON "GOES HOME."

MR. TILLOTSON had left the White Hart very early. It was a gloomy shivering morning, and as an ancient country fly drove him up to the station, he saw the great cathedral looking uncomfortably through a bluish atmosphere. He went his way out of that town more hopeless and cheerless than he had entered it.

He had a lonely carriage—one all to himself—from whose window he could see all the objects of the country: the raw stone houses, the cold bridges, the stray brick house standing by itself (emblem of his own condition), sweeping by, all wrapped in the same blue uncomfortable morning tone. He looked back, and he saw the same tone upon his whole life; he looked forward, and it was there before him also. He might have been in a penitential cell, and could not have been more dull and hopeless.

Gradually the day began to brighten. They passed many towns and stations. At a great

junction they stopped, and he got out, and he felt so dismal and so disinclined to his own company, that he thought he would walk about, and go on by another train. He walked about the place listlessly, scarcely saw any thing beyond the signs and labels of shops, and came back in time for a later train. The later train took up people who had come on from the Continent. He found it full of travellers, with the marks of the rough usage of the steam-packet upon them, with more of wrappings and packages than there was of the traveller, and very different from the fresh, smooth, well-brushed company who came in and got out all along the road. These seemed to be invalids fresh out of an hospital.

In this crowded train Mr. Tillotson had been "put" where there were some ordinary travellers, and where there were two tired ladies, with wraps and packages and a weary jaded air, which showed that they also had come from the sea. One was young, black-haired, and bright-eyed; those eyes were brighter yesterday, and would be as bright on the morrow. The other was elderly, cold cheeked, sharp faced, and about eight-and-thirty. To-morrow or yesterday would not make much difference in her looks. Mr. Tillotson sat opposite the younger black-haired girl, saw that she was restless and talkative, and

carried a bag carefully on her knee. When she was not talking, she had her eyes very often fixed upon him.

They were tired with their voyage, and talked of its troubles; at least the elder, who was always tired and worn, seemed to have some extra lines and shades of fatigue on her face. She spoke very little; the other, with a curious eagerness and vivacity. Mr. Tillotson, after a few moments or so, had dropped them out of his view, and was soon in as perfect solitude as when he was alone in the carriage.

The younger girl was always wondering and supposing whether some event would happen, or where they were going—a kind of wonder that was put half in the shape of a question, and always with an inquiring look at the calm dreamy unconscious face that was opposite to her.

He was soon awoke into life by a voice saying, “Perhaps this gentleman would tell us?” He started. It was only some common question about the time of arrival. He had a kind of half sad voice, which had got this key from the habitual tone of his mind, and the younger girl listened with deep attention while he told them the little he knew. He then relapsed. But she was restless again very soon, and had another question; and on the question followed a little nar-

rative of a couple of sentences long. "We have lived a good deal abroad, and are coming home now; so we are very ignorant of every thing. It seems much drearier," she went on, looking out of the window. "There seems no sun here."

"Why do you return?" he said. "I have been abroad also, and could fancy being very happy there. You should have stayed where the sun is brightest. We should all keep in it while we can."

The two women were silent for a moment. The younger sighed; then the other spoke. "We are obliged, unfortunately, to return. Our last friend died six months ago at Dieppe."

Then Mr. Tillotson, for the first time, saw that they were in mourning. He looked on them both with deep interest and compassion. The younger girl read these feelings in his face, which seemed to warm up. "I am very inconsiderate," he said. "I did not mean to put such foolish questions. But the fact is, I live out of the world as much as if I were in one of the little French towns."

He was not at all disinclined to talk now, for he felt drawn towards these two women whose situation was like his own. There was a frankness and freedom, almost childish, about the younger, which was really pleasing, and she told

about their affairs and misfortunes with a confidence that was often wisdom. The elder was her half-sister. They were going to stay with an uncle whom they had not seen for years. There was a generous sympathy, and an invitation to confidence, in Mr. Tillotson's manner. Gradually other passengers dropped out, and the three were left in the carriage. They fell on their Dieppe life, and how happy they had been at that town, then not spoiled by fashion and exorbitant prices—it was the bright black-eyed girl who was narrating their little history—but she could not get further. Her eyes filled up suddenly, and, biting her lips, she looked at the trees and houses flying past the window. They were stopping. It was another junction, and she jumped up hastily. "Come," she said to her sister, "let us get some tea."

Mr. Tillotson, though young enough, had lost the enthusiasm that would have made him fly from the carriage and return with a cup in each hand. He let the two ladies pass from the carriage, and remained behind, still thinking of many things. He might have been sitting before a cold grate, looking hopelessly into the sunk-down ashes.

When the bell rang, they came back hurriedly.

The tea, as was usual with such tea, was hot and thin, and unlike known tea. They settled themselves in their places, and the bright-eyed girl was about describing pleasantly what had been given her to drink, when, with the first jerk of the moving train, she gave a cry, and clasped her hand. "The bag!" she cried. "I have left it in the refreshment-room—all our money—every thing!"

She started up and ran to the window. Mr. Tillotson, suddenly aroused from a dream of St. Alans, was saying calmly that it was sure to be found, when she called out, "And our mother's picture, and all her letters! What *shall* I do?"

He rose hastily from his seat, opened the door in a second, and, though the train was beginning to move a little fast, had jumped upon the platform. But there was an iron pillar, one of a long series that kept up the roof, and against this he was swung, and the two sisters, who with clasped hands had rushed to the open door, saw him stagger back as if he had been struck by some terrible blow. That was the last view they had of him; and this was the little story they told the captain.

They were never weary of repeating their thanks, at least the youngest, the captain saying that "it was really, now, as gallant a thing as he had ever heard of. Just fancy, my dears," he

went on, "if you had Tom there, with his old leg in the way. And I am so glad, Tillotson, it was *you*, now. 'Pon my word I am."

But Mr. Tillotson was already looking absently about, even wearily. His heart was far away, perhaps. "Don't mention it," he said; "don't say any more. Indeed, it is nothing. You have made far too much of it. And now," he hesitated, "would you excuse me. I am afraid I must go now. I am very glad you recovered your bag."

At this moment their maid, a tall, gaunt, rudely-made, masculine woman, came up, and said that all their "things were in." The captain saw the eyes of the young girl wistfully following the retreating figure of Mr. Tillotson. Something struck him, and he limped hastily after him. "My dear fellow," he said, "I beg your pardon. Now, where are you going? To the chambers?"

"Yes," said Mr. Tillotson, smiling sadly, "to the old den."

"You won't be settled down there till to-morrow," said the other; "and I tell you what, now, come and dine with us. As good a duck, Tillotson, as ever was killed, and a little haddock. Do, my dear fellow. It'll be a charity to help an old fellow to amuse those two nice girls—"

"Some other day, some other time," said Mr.

Tillotson, wringing his hand. "You are too good to me. But another time."

"Ah! this is always the way. You are such a stand-off man. Well, the next day. Give us *one* day—the day after to-morrow."

"I will, then, my dear captain," said he; and at last got away. He got into his cab, and in a few moments it became for him a cell as gloomy as the carriage had been. The darkness was now setting in, and with the departure of bright day, yet gloomier thoughts, which had kept themselves in reserve, began to rush on him. Then the cab stopped at some old-fashioned chambers, in an old-fashioned run-to-seed square. The old chambers were handsome enough, having been once a nobleman's house, and had a "grand stair" that was magnificent. But they were not let, and were even going out of fashion—as unfashionable quiet chambers. The air of that great hall and stair seemed charged with ghosts of spectral noble men and noble women, who had attended routs and parties, and crowded up in George the Second's day.

A porter, who sat in a black-hooded chair, put on an affectation of decent joy at his return, and went before him up the white stone staircase. That was an ascent of time, and he had to shade the light from the grand draughts which floated up and down. It was a lonely passage; they did

not meet a soul. Thus what had been the noble lady's boudoir was reached, where a fire was indeed burning, but smoking, and having a cold air; and then the porter went down to wait upon other gentlemen, and, closing the door, left Mr. Tillotson to the company of cold shadows and ghosts for the night.

CHAPTER III.

MORE ABOUT "THE CAPTAIN."

CAPTAIN DIAMOND had genteel lodgings in Wimpole Street, where he had lived many years, and where he was regarded with a mixture of respect and affection by all who were concerned in the establishment. By the landlady who took his monthly rent; by the maid-servant who brought up his breakfast—he dined always at his club—whom he remembered sumptuously at the pecuniary festivals; and by the occasional lodger whom he met on the stairs, and who was coming down from cheaper regions, very much upstairs. The inquirer below was told that "the captain" was in, or would be in by and by; it was for "the captain" that breakfast went up, and for "the captain" that the servant ran out in her cap round the corner. For by this name he was affectionately known, though, in truth, he was only a lieutenant, but a lieutenant in the enjoyment of full pay, having quitted the army forty years before. That

transaction was, in truth, something of "a job," and would not bear a moment's inquiry now. But at that time, the captain's sweet temper and plain goodness had made for him many fast friends in his own profession; among others, Sir Thomas Cameron, then Colonel Cameron, who afterwards got to the Horse Guards, and got Tom Diamond into the "Royal Veteran Battalion," with full pay, without a second's hesitation. He was himself very merry on the score of this corps, whom he called "the Fogies."

Often and often he met old brother-officers of this type, who greeted him with delight and affection unusual among men, and who pressed him obstreperously to dine with them and stay with them. And if he ever wanted money he had no lack of friends to look to.

The fiction of the captaincy, which was so scrupulously supported by those below him, always gave him a little pain. "I have no right to it," he said very earnestly and simply. "And they may well laugh at me; but what can I do? It is so hard to explain, and to be explaining it every time. And they do it out of good-nature, you know." His friends were very earnest on this point, and held to this dignity as if it were a point of faith. But he never would adopt it on his card, or endorse the little deceit in his own

writing, but was always plain "Mr. Thomas Diamond."

Besides being the friend of Colonel Cameron—afterwards Sir Thomas, K.C.B.—he had known plenty of dashing officers of the Prince Regent's era—such as Colonel Lascelles, Captain King—afterwards General King, and governor of islands—Trevylian, and many more. The captain had a surprising delicacy and unselfish sensitiveness; and though often led on to talk pleasantly of his exploits with those officers, beginning with evident pleasure, yet would check himself timorously, as if he were wearying his hearers with his "old stories." And though they were indeed entertaining, and full of colour and character, he could only be got to go on, under protest, as it were, and with a struggle between two feelings—that of fearing to disoblige or of tiring—which was almost amusing. There was a family or two with whom he was distantly connected, and where there were children, and by them his coming was always looked for as a holiday, and on the day of the visit videttes, posted at the window, looked out anxiously towards six o'clock for the half-stooping figure that came limping up so quietly yet so steadily to the door, and with a cry and a united scamper, gave notice that the captain was at hand. By elders of this family

he was sometimes called "Tom," and by the younger ones he was sometimes, with glowing cheeks and a blush of shame and humiliation, taken in confidence with reference to sudden pecuniary embarrassments. On such occasions the nobility and the delicacy of the captain's behaviour excited a tumult of delight—a delight that could not find words. For the captain had an old crimson silk purse, made for him out of an officer's sash by a lady years ago, which came out, and in which his thin pale fingers explored. Gratitude was on *his* face at the kind confidence that had been reposed.

"Now, my dear fellow," he would say, diving into the narrow opening of the long crimson purse, "this is what I like. This is really what I am proud of! Now mind, if you do not *always* come to me in this way, you and I are two."

But the real time of jubilee was when "Tom," coming back from the country with a small modest old black portmanteau, would be induced to stay a night or two with one of these families. For he always gave leave to his landlady, who, he said, was a "poor struggling creature," to let his rooms in his absence, and sometimes his return would come about awkwardly, in the very middle of such a lodger's tenure, so that he would feel himself bound to go to an hotel for a night or two, or to

accept the hospitality of these friends as described. They would sometimes remonstrate with him a little warmly on this weakness, saying, "If I were you I wouldn't do it. It's perfect folly of you! I think you are far too good, uncle Tom. I wouldn't put myself out in that way, or let myself be made a hand of in that way, and by a woman of that sort." To which uncle Tom would, with a little confusion, plead his old excuse, "Ah, the creature! she has to struggle so to make up her little rent and taxes. My dear, it's no trouble in the world to me. I rather like going to the hotel."

"Turning you out of your *own* room!" the lady would go on, warmly, "your *own* room, for which you have paid!"

"Ah, the creature," uncle Tom would say again. "A fellow that was in the front parlour went off three weeks ago, and owing her a month's rent, which she was counting on to pay her taxes, the creature! I assure you she was crying for an hour in the room, telling it to me."

"And of course you paid them for her?" said the indignant lady. "I am ashamed of you. You are like a child about your money. It should be taken from you, and kept for you."

"No, no, upon my word, no," said the captain very eagerly. "No, no. I am not that sort of

man. I would not do *that* for her. 'Pon my word, no."

But there was a belief that amounted to certainty in the minds of all there that he had paid the crying landlady's taxes; as indeed he had. And with this he was not in the least soft or foolish. Among these stories, which he was reluctant to relate, were several associated with the shape of "Satisfaction" then in fashion among gentlemen, in one of which he himself had been principal, and out of which he had come, as the phrase went, "with flying colours." But in many more he had assisted as "friend" with great "pluck" and tact, and either pushed the affair to extremities, or arranged it happily, as the occasion required. Some of these which bore a little against himself—as in the instance of the constable's coming up and arresting him, to his astonishment, as he stepped out of the coach, with a shining mahogany case under his arm—he told with much humour and happy simplicity.

The children, however, would always look upon him as a Great Commander, and for a long time associated the lameness with a mysterious wound received in battle. Their eager and earnest questions on this subject he often turned off with a smile, but though often pressed for details of the action, could never be induced to enter upon

it. The parents' eyes were always on him, and through that wonderful delicacy with which he was leavened through and through, he felt that in some way their dignity and pleasure required that the little legend should be kept up. And so it was, until one of the boys, growing up, asked him in a sort of confidential way, as between man and man, and then it came out that "Tom" had got his injury leaping across a ditch with his gun, when he had put his hip "out." In truth, he was always in gentle protest against these military "honours" which his friends would affectionately press on him for his reputation with the public.

It was quite natural, therefore, when he heard of his relation dying at Dieppe, and leaving these two girls, that he should think of hurrying over to help them. But he got ill suddenly, and was shut up in his room for weeks, during which time the maid and landlady attended on the captain anxiously, and an old military doctor—Gilpin of the—th—came, and went as he came, sturdily refusing fees. During this season the patient suffered deep distress of mind, apologising often for all the trouble he was giving. But he was strong, and very soon was "on his legs" again. Then he wrote to the two orphan girls, insisting that

they should come to him—for a time at least; that it would be a real favour; that they would oblige him and cheer up an old man by their society; until these girls—what with their grief scarcely yet abated, and not allowing them to think much over any thing—began actually to believe this uncle of theirs, whom they had never yet seen, was a poor lonely cast-off man, actually pining for human company. He made all preparations with the delicacy of a woman, transacted matters with his landlady for increased accommodation, and even made out a little maid to look after their dresses and dressing. No one was so thoughtful, clever, skilful, and successful in managing, as “the captain.”

He kissed them as he got them home. “I am so glad to have you both. And so this is the little heiress?”

Her bright eyes were shooting about restlessly, and she laughed with great enjoyment. As soon as she had turned away again—for a new object attracted her every moment—the other drew Captain Diamond aside, and whispered hurriedly:

“Don’t say any thing, dear uncle, about the property to *her*. I’ll tell you afterwards.”

The captain, with a wise and almost knowing expression, squeezed her arm. “I forgot! . Leave it to me,” he said.

The captain had arranged every thing at his lodgings for the two ladies. The accommodation was happily of that expansive kind which would fit any number of guests; and in counsel with his landlady, and all the time fingering his sash purse nervously, he had entered into a treaty for her best rooms. Though the change was profitable to herself, she did not regard it with much favour, and upbraided him a little impatiently. As if, she said, he had not enough to do to take care of himself! Ladies—relations or no relations—were quite fit to look after themselves. That was her idea.

The captain was getting alarmed. It would be fatal if the landlady had prejudices against his charges. "My dear Mrs. Wilcox," he said, "you don't know what trouble they are in. I don't think they have a friend now on the face of the earth that they can ask to do a hand's turn for them but myself, Mrs. Wilcox! And only think, they have a lawsuit with it all, which has gone against them so far. So we must be very tender with them, you see."

He had been busy, therefore, for some days before their coming, arranging things, trying to set out the drawing-room, so as to have less of an old bachelor air, and getting in a handsome supply of all manner of stores. A little queer

quaint old garde de vin, the gift of Sir Thomas—then Colonel—Cameron, and which lay under the sideboard, had been replenished. This little piece of furniture, it once occurred to the captain, had “legs” infinitely too long, and, fetching out his tools, at which he was very fairly skilful, he had devoted a whole day to laborious shortening of these limbs, and produced a monument of amateur carpentry.

Both the ladies who had come to him called him uncle, though only the eldest Miss Diamond was his niece proper. The younger, Alice, was only the daughter of a nephew. Miss Diamond was rather tall, a little gaunt and thin, with a staid cold manner, and a practical turn of mind. She spoke very little, and was always steadily engaged on some work of solid and arduous character, from which she often looked up to let her cold eyes settle on a speaker, and see whether he seriously meant more than he said. It was only when they returned to the young girl that a tinge of softness and warmth came into them, and she tried to modulate the rich harsh key of her voice.

Alice was about two-and-twenty, but looked seventeen, for she had an almost childish face and figure. The face was pale, so oval, that, when years came on, it would surely grow sharp

and pointed. She had a tiny waist, and "no *chest*" to speak of. Elderly maidens said that she had a "flighty" manner, and had been badly brought up. She had indeed a restless way of speaking, and a pretty volubility and freedom of comment not pleasant to "well-brought-up" elderly persons. She was very fond of gold and silver trinkets, and of decking herself out with laces and such things: the whole of which was to be laid to the account of her being spoiled by her friends calling her "the little heiress;" it being known for several years that she was to succeed to the great Davis property—a succession now, alas! very doubtful.

CHAPTER IV.

“THE CAPTAIN’S” NEW MENAGE.

WHEN he had thus got them home he was delighted. By that time they discovered what a soft and gentle nature his was. The elder girl, or woman, was of a calm business-like temper, and fell into the “ways” of the house within an hour.

Alice went about at first in a sort of little enthusiasm. She hurried from this room into that, and praised every thing eagerly. But presently the enthusiasm abated, and she was sitting on a chair silent, and with her eyes roaming absently. The captain was restless himself. He limped about the room, settling this thing and that, stopping before them every now and then to say :

“Now I hope, dears, you will make yourselves comfortable, and do what you like. And as for the rhino”—this was a familiar word of his, and he held up the crimson purse—“we won’t spare him. When this is run out, we know where to look for more,—and more to the back of that.”

“You are so good and kind, uncle,” said Anne,

quietly. The other went over and kissed him, then sat down again.

“You know,” said he, wistfully, “I am so ignorant of all this. An old bachelor, living by himself so long, gets rusty. It will be a real kindness, dears, if you will take all *this* off my shoulders.” And he held up the crimson purse. “I don’t know prices, and they will impose on me. Will you promise me, dears, and help an old fellow?”

Yet for one who was so dull and helpless in housekeeping matters, he had ordered a surprising little dinner. Uncle Tom had been in Paris shortly after the peace time, and had often supped at houses of great repute with his friend (then) Colonel Cameron. Some of his best stories were founded on his adventures in that country, where, indeed, though blundering sadly, he had won the respect of the natives. They said he was *bon enfant* after all.

At this little inauguration dinner, too, we may be sure there was the most inspiring wine to give a sparkle to their meeting. The elder girl told him about their Dieppe life; and when the dinner was gone, and they were at the fire again, told him, to his deep sympathy, about the later and more distressful passage in that Dieppe life, which he accompanied with many an “Indeed I know!

O yes! My poor children!" using his amber Indian handkerchief very often. The younger girl sat with her knee held within her clasped hands, listening mournfully, but she added no details to the narrative.

"Ah! you poor things, all alone there," said uncle Tom, poking the fire violently. "Why didn't you write to me? I had only to get into the train, and then the packet. I'm the best sailor in the world. But those doctors kept me. I'd like to have seen old Dieppe again. What a gay place it used to be. And the Eaterbleese-mong? We stayed a night there, I and Colonel Cameron, and bought some of their ivory-work—along the Port—to bring home. The colonel and I were walking along the pier, when an old fisherman, or fisherwoman, egad, we couldn't tell which, they dressed so alike—But I always *will* get into my old stories. But, my dear girls, you must keep up. Every one, they tell us, has their little peck of trouble. Look at poor Tillotson, that got you your bag—"

Now a little colour came into Alice's face. The hands were unclasped, and the knee fell. "And what dreadful thing has *he* suffered, uncle?" she asked.

"O, a long business, dear—as long as one of my old stories. I know all about it. And I

believe it is a sort of secret—a secret that every body knows—but I suppose I may tell you, dears; they won’t hang me for it.”

“He has it in his face,” said the young girl, eagerly. “I was sure there was a mystery there.”

“Poor fellow!” said the captain, reflectively; “I know the whole thing. His uncle, Colonel Tillotson, was in a regiment with me at the time, and was dreadfully distressed about it. And he changed for foreign service soon after, and I don’t think ever *quite* got over it. Dear me!”

“And what was it, uncle?” pressed the young girl. “Won’t you tell us?”

“Well, it was this: Henry Tillotson was a wild, foolish young fellow. We were all that, I’m afraid, in our day; it used to be the fashion, you know. But every one was talking of him, and I am afraid, dears, he was any thing but what you call respectable. His mother was a quiet, gentle creature, and tried all she could with him; and his father threatened him, even. Colonel Tillotson, then captain, often spoke to me about it, and I had every stage of the business. The mother, poor thing, I saw was fretting herself to death about it. But my lad went on from bad to worse. Now, would you ever think it of that gentle-looking fellow?”

“Scarcely,” the eldest answered, firmly.

Alice did not reply, but eagerly waited for more.

“It’s a queer world, you know, dears. O! it was very unfortunate altogether,” uncle Diamond went on, sadly. “And yet I believe nobody was so much in fault, after all. After one of the break-outs, worse than usual, there was a scene, and his father regularly turned him out; went further, I think, than he ought to have done. The poor woman fell down half dead, and her son ran to her, distracted; but Tillotson—the father, I mean—put him out very harshly, I think. The son went away, desperately, to foreign countries. Went on worse there, I am afraid; and at last, in the midst of one of his bouts, heard that his poor mother was dying off fast, of a broken heart. He was going to set out all in a hurry, and in a dreadful state, when he himself was caught by a fever. Then, some one there—a consul, I believe, for he hadn’t a soul with him—wrote over about his state, saying that there was very little hope for him—and then—and then there was the *other business*. But these are all dismal old stories, my dears.”

There was a silence for a few moments. The young girl remained in her favourite attitude, her hands clasped round her knee, and her eyes fixed devotionally on the teller of the history.

“You may imagine,” he went on, “what a

sobering *that* was for him, when he came to himself. It changed his life—changed his ways—changed his face, even—in a day. Before it, he was wild, extravagant, and a boy; after it, he came home just what you saw him yesterday. I hardly knew him. Dear, dear, it’s a queer world! He’s now like a hermit; shuts himself up, brooding over all his sorrows. What’s the use of it? Look at me, now. Here am I, an old fellow, with no business to be thinking of such things, and yet, I confess, I like life, and to see people, and go about. I wish,” continued uncle Tom, “we could persuade him, and bring him round in some way. Poor fellow! But when he tells you, as he told me a month ago, that he was pining for death, and looking to it as the happiest moment, I don’t know how to take him, or what to say to him.”

“Pining for death!” said the young girl, sadly. “O, how dreadful! Surely something could be done, ought to be done, at once.”

“That’s what I say, dear; only I’m not up to that sort of thing. Between ourselves, dear, I believe I only make the thing worse. It requires a light touch.”

They were tired with their journey, and presently went to bed.

For a long time after, the captain sat at his

fire, smiling pleasantly in great good-humour, smoking his clay pipe, and addressing a chasm in the live coals with a sympathising "The creatures! the creatures!"

CHAPTER V.

A NEW INTEREST.

BEFORE breakfast the next morning he was down and busy, limping about from the fire to the table, deep in hot rolls, and hot muffins, and toast, and various fried things that were simmering before the fire. In the morning the captain was always particularly bright and almost glittering, being surprisingly smoothly shaved, and his whiskers oiled and curled to glossiness—an operation which he performed with a small French iron, purchased in Paris during that visit after the peace. For “the captain” took care of every thing he had, and kept it to a surprising age. He shaved himself with wonderful smoothness, and took great pride in his razors, the sharpening and stropping of which instruments, for friends, was a favourite pastime of his during the long evenings. He always wore a high black satin stock which buckled behind, and out of which rose his sharply pointed collars—every thing about his throat being braced up with military stiffness. About these

little points—namely, about “the captain’s” collars, and “the captain’s” razors, and such matters, the servants were jealously and mysteriously careful, and even took pride; though, indeed, it was not likely that the good and gentle soul would be angered by any neglect in such matters.

This morning, then, the captain was down early, busy with the cares of preparing a breakfast, that for quantity would have sufficed for a party of tired and hungry troopers; for he was of that old school that deems lavish hospitality to be the highest and most perfect expression of love, friendship, kindness, and the heartiest good will. His niece, however, was with him in a moment.

“You recollect,” she said, “dear uncle, what I whispered to you at the railway station, about not mentioning the trial to Alice. Poor child, she does not know of it yet.”

“Not know it?” He stopped short in his walk. “Well, so best, so best! I see now, though I didn’t then, I confess. I thought I might have been putting my old foot in it, as I do sometimes. So you haven’t told her? Well, it would only worry the poor thing, after all.”

“That was what we thought. She will know it in full time; though Heaven knows how we are to tell her. Her poor little soul is set upon

being an heiress. And O, uncle," she went on, laying down her work, "I have yet worse to tell you about her."

"Worse? God bless me!" ejaculated the captain.

"About three weeks before we came away she began to complain, all of a sudden, of restless nights, and that she couldn't lie on her side. Well, we got all the French doctors, and they came and examined her, and one of them, the cleverest man in Dieppe, told me plainly that he thought one of her lungs was 'touched,' and that we must be very careful of her."

The captain looked wistfully at his shining copper kettle, now singing merrily on the hob. He did not know what to say for a moment. "Ah, my dear," he said, "those French doctors are all botches, regular botches. My God!—surely there was poor Hammond, who went up with me in the dilijongs, and who felt some stings about his heart. Boulay, the French doctor, told him he couldn't last a month—not a month. Well, Hammond lived twenty years after that, and was sound as a roach in his heart to the day of his death; though, to be sure, we might have very well misunderstood the gentleman, for, between you and me, my dear, we couldn't muster half-a-crown's worth of French between us."

“Ah, but, uncle, an English doctor says the same.”

“Well,” said he, a little nonplused, “many of *them*, too, are botches enough, God knows. I tell you what, my dear. We’ll just take a cab, and go off straight to Doctor Gilpin, as good a man as ever stepped. I know what *he’ll* say. Little Alice touched, my dear! Folly!”

Thus he dismissed those fears; he fell very soon with delight into this new life. The two girls made him their study, made little alterations which they thought would bring him more comfort, little surprises which threw “the captain” into almost a distress of gratitude and acknowledgment.

One of those first days he came to the elder girl. “I am going to ask you to help me,” he said. “Do you know, I am *afraid* they make a fool of me in shops and such places. I am sure I give double what I ought to give. Now, my dear child, I want you to help me.”

“Dearest uncle,” the elder girl said, “this *is* kind. I am so glad you have come to me. I was dying to ask you.”

“Then here,” said he, pulling out his crimson purse, “would you, then, take charge of this? Lay out whatever is enough for the week, and spare nothing, mind. I like every thing of the *very best*, and *plenty* of the best. It’s a way

I have always had. I'll look after the wines *myself*," uncle Tom added, apologetically. "For I *think* I know a little about wine. Colonel Cameron and I always went together to the vaults to taste. There, there, you are doing me a *great* favour." And he put the crimson silk purse into her hands, and limped away hastily.

The younger girl was still silent and quiet. That morning she asked her uncle would he come out and take her for a walk. She wanted to see some of the shows of London. Her uncle was thankful and grateful for this honour done to him. He received this lady's orders with the old gallantry of Louis the Fourteenth's day. He went to fetch his finest apparel, and the bishop's hat, which lay under a bandanna handkerchief for occasions of state, and the gray thread gloves, which rested on the curl of the bishop's hat. The two sallied out; the bright-looking girl in deep black leaning on the arm of the gouty, fierce, half-military old gentleman, who limped smartly along.

They saw the shows, and spent a pleasant morning. Uncle Diamond was thinking wistfully how he could propose a pastrycook and an elaborate meal, for he had that fine old chivalry in him whose creed is that too great honour, in every way, cannot be paid to a lady who honours you with attention, and he believed in the now

old-fashioned gallant faith, that ladies, once in the society of gentlemen, were to be altogether ignorant of the existence of money. We now, it seems, furnish them with a regular reckoning.

Suddenly the young girl, still leaning on his arm, looked up into his face. "And that poor Mr. Tillotson you were telling us of the other night. How dreadful! I have hardly got it out of my head. No wonder he cannot bear to look back."

"Poor, poor fellow!" said he, in deep compassion. "I knew you would pity him."

"I saw it all in his face," she went on, "as we came up in the train. I was sure there was some horrible mystery."

"Well now—it was scarcely his fault, after all," said he. "He got into a wild set. There was a dreadful fellow who had got influence over him, and forced him to do as he pleased. No, no. Poor Harry Tillotson! He *never* was bad. I always took his side."

"I am sure you did, uncle. And now, is it not dreadful to think that he should go on this way so long, and perhaps go on all his life? How long ago is it?"

"O, let me see. November, December, January—it must be ten or twelve years ago, now."

"Why, it will settle on his mind," she went

on, eagerly. "It will become a mania. People have gone mad before now from dwelling on such things."

"Very true. Most sensible, dear," said he; "a very just idea. And the worst is, what can we do? I have tried to reason with him, in my simple way, over and over again."

"But something *should* be done," she said, excitedly. "His mind should be diverted. He should be talked to—*made* to go out and see people. I am sure he likes you, uncle, and would do any thing for you. You could talk to him."

"Ah! you don't know, my dear child. I have tried all that; though *now*, indeed, if we could get him to come up to a little dinner, it would be different. I never thought of that."

The young girl allowed him to work this conclusion out for himself without interruption.

"Egad, we'll do that," said he, simply. "You wouldn't mind it? It is really a charity."

She turned away her head, blushing, and a little ashamed of this half intuitive deception, and said, "O, not in the least."

"You saw him, you know," he went on, "coming up in the train. He is a nice fellow—a good fellow. I know you'll like him. If you and Anne there would humour him a little!

Upon my word I *do* pity him, and wish from my soul that I could find some way of helping him. You see I am not clever—never had the education. They always told me, ‘Tom Diamond, you’ll never fire the Thames.’ But *that’s* a very good idea, and I never thought of it before, and I’ll go this very day.” And he went off at once to ask his friend.

Mr. Tillotson refused, wearily but gently. But the captain was not disheartened. “But now,” he added, almost imploringly, “would you *do* something for me? *Would* you? No, you wouldn’t.”

“Indeed I would,” said Mr. Tillotson, smiling.

“Dine—see people—that’s all. Make a beginning with me, now—with Tom. *Do*, there’s a good fellow. Look at me, now, with those two girls, the creatures! Upon my word, my heart bleeds for them. I don’t know how to entertain them and amuse them. And it *is* very hard on them to be shut up with an old fellow. Come to-morrow—do.”

Mr. Tillotson took his hand. “The idea of *my* entertaining ladies! My dear friend, I would do any thing for you. But don’t ask me—I am out of place—not suited for that. I tried it some weeks ago, and it didn’t do. I am as well as I am.”

“Try it again. You must, to oblige poor Tom Diamond. You promised, you know. Come, make it to-morrow for a beginning. One of our little dinners, you know. I’ll give you a lobster at ten o’clock, in a despatcher. You know I can do that sort of thing.” (And so he could; it was a very pleasant sight to see the captain with his “despatcher” on the table, limping about the room, bringing his lemon, and cayenne, and his little seasonings from many quarters and corners, and then lighting his spirit-lamp at the proper moment. And, to say the truth—as, indeed, General Cameron and other officers often protested—there was no one who could prepare that delicacy like Tom Diamond.)

Mr. Tillotson at last gave in, wearily. “I am not very well,” he said. “Something is coming over me, I don’t know what. But I’ll come.”

“Nonsense, my dear boy,” said the captain, heartily. “I am very much obliged to you, I am indeed. It is truly kind of you to come and sit with an old fellow. And they *are* nice girls, too. I pity them, the creatures! No father or mother, and so gentle. I am not up to this sort of thing, you see. Good-bye, Tillotson. Thank you.”

When uncle Tom returned home, and in great spirits announced this news as a triumph

of diplomacy, it was received very calmly by the elder girl. But a flush came to the cheeks of the younger. She was happier and more talkative for the rest of the evening:

On the next night came Mr. Tillotson, still looking ill. But he was making an effort. "Doing too much," said the captain, looking at him anxiously. "You must take care of yourself. 'Proper vitum,' thus something goes on in that way, but old Stubbs, our schoolmaster in the country, was always saying it. It means, that it is very foolish to be losing one's life entirely for work. He always rolled it out like thunder. But he was an uncommon good scholar, I can tell you; which, between you and me and the post, dears"—a favourite colloquialism of the captain's—"I never was."

It was a very "nice" little dinner, which, with a pardonable inconsistency (minding his declaration as to incompetency), the captain had wholly "designed" himself. But by way of suggestion; as, for instance: "Don't you think, my dear, that a roast duck would be a good thing? I don't know a better thing, in its way, than "the apron" of a duck and green peas."

Mr. Tillotson talked agreeably, and tried hard to talk agreeably. He told them about the cathedral town, then about his travels somewhere

abroad. To which the captain listened devoutly, nodding his head now and again, and saying: "See that, now. Most entertaining. Like a book, I declare!" The young girl scarcely spoke, but kept her eyes fixed on him; which Mr. Tillotson was quite conscious of, and seemed to resist in a little way, for he kept his face turned away from her all the night, and addressed himself more to the elder Miss Diamond. This ground she tried very often to recover, with all sorts of restless arts, starting into the middle of sentences, and sometimes breaking into a curious volubility. But without the least effect. Did Mr. Tillotson, who was very sensitive, detect the meaning that lay under this sort of attention, or did he suspect unreasonably? Rude, or even politely neglectful, he could not be. But there was an indistinct manner of his, which, to her, was quite intelligible. Captain Diamond, however, had little instinct of it.

"I am very glad to have you in this way," he said, "and it is very kind of you to come. I can't tell you how you entertain us. Don't he, Alice? It brings up the places, you know. Don't it, Alice?"

"Yes, yes, uncle," said she, eagerly. "I see it all perfectly—as if it were in this room. Do, do go on!"

“I have no gift for story-telling or description,” he said to Captain Diamond. “My dear friend, you never heard me celebrated for that. My friend Diamond, I see you like to have your joke at me.”

“Joke or no joke, I think our little Alice paid you a very handsome compliment. She herself describes very well, I can tell you. What was that about the Feet at Havver?” (So the honest gentleman pronounced “fête.”) “I declare to you, Tillotson, I never read any better in a regular book.”

“I daresay,” said he, indifferently. “I am sure of it. I can quite believe it. All ladies excel in that.” But he showed no desire to hear a specimen of this gift.

Captain Diamond sighed, and moved uncomfortably in his chair. “And now,” said he, changing the subject hastily, “tell us, in *all* your adventures did you ever meet any princess like those in the story-books—any one whom you lost your heart to? There, that will interest the ladies. Come, now, which of the French ladies was it? Ah, my boy, out with it? Come.”

Mr. Tillotson shook his head. “Never,” he said. “What French lady would trouble herself with me? I never fell in with an adventure of *that* sort, and never shall, I suppose.”

“Nonsense,” said the other seriously. “Is it a fine soldier-like fellow like you! I am sure you will, if you only look for them. And now, in St. Alans the other day? I declare, dear, I shouldn’t be at all surprised. Do tell us about *that* young lady, Tillotson.”

This was all accidental on the part of Captain Diamond. But Mr. Tillotson seemed to be uncomfortable. He was not well either. The young girl’s eyes, stealing over, saw his confusion.

“Ah!” she said to herself, with a start, “*there* is his secret. Some one down there!” and her foot went down impatiently under the table.

Then, of a sudden, she became quite restless, and even bold. “Won’t you describe this lady?” she asked him. “What was she like? Where did she live in St. Alans? Uncle, you told us that you were there once.”

“Quite right, dear, so I was; was billeted there two nights, in the year——No matter. I and Knox were put together over a saddler’s. I assure you, my dears, there was as nice a saddler’s daughter there as ever you could ask to see. I was a young fellow then, and not long joined, but I know, for a long time after, I was quite dismal about the saddler’s daughter. Ah! I see you all laugh at me. Very well. There’s my

confession for you ; and after that, I hope, my dear Tillotson——”

Mr. Tillotson had risen to go away, with the young girl's eyes still on him. He turned his face from her impatiently. “My dear friend,” he said to the captain, “a thousand thanks for your goodness. But I am a wretched guest, and don't know how to be agreeable.”

With the younger girl he shook hands last, and coldly.

“He is not well, I suspect,” said the captain, evasively.

“Ah! do you know, nunkey, it struck me that there was something in that about St. Alais.”

“No, no, uncle,” cried the elder; “he is not thinking of such trifles. That I could see.”

“I *wish* he was,” said the captain, wistfully; “from my soul I do. It would take his thoughts off. No, you are right, dear; and, do you know, I believe I oughtn't to have joked him about it.”

“Why, uncle,” said the younger girl, with her cheeks flaming, “do you suppose he is a girl or a child, that cannot bear a joke? Really, that is too good. I mean,” she added, hastily, “for him, not about you, dear uncle. But it *is* rather absurd if a gentleman's feelings are to be held so sacred.”

“Of course, dear,” said the captain gently.

“And I think you are right. Egad! I had to rough it myself, and to bear plenty.”

“Then why should he set up for this air of suffering? If we were all to do it, what a world it would be! And when there are so many in *real* distress—the poor and the unfortunate—”

“O, Alice!” said the elder Miss Diamond, in remonstrance.

“Well, we won’t be too hard on poor Tillotson,” said uncle Tom; “and, besides, I truly think he was not well, the creature!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE END OF A LOVE.

THAT visit to St. Alans was always before Mr. Tiltson. It had, indeed, coloured his life strangely, and no one could guess how much. The men who met him in business always knew that he was "a curious, mooning, stand-off man," and those who knew him still better, said, "the fact was, you know, he had got a blow some years before, a domestic business, which he had never got over." But none of them could divine the new trouble he had brought away with him. Down at that little, remote, dried-up, crusted, rusted little town, he had left behind him, as in an ancient, old-fashioned, but precious little shrine, his new-found hopes, something that lived and burned, something that had light and warmth, to which his heart was drawn back with an inexpressible yearning, as he now walked among the cold corridors of the world, and laid his fingers on what were to him merely cold statues. He had found new thoughts, new in-

terest,—something that seemed a complement to, and that would repair his own jagged and shattered poor heart, something that seemed to whisper to him, “Live once more, enjoy light and the cheerful fires of life. You are young, and happiness may come back once more. The past is not so hopelessly gone!”

Strange to say, the more the distance increased, the picture he had left behind increased in all the glow and intensity of colour and happiness. Between his eyes and the cold rows of figures and dry reports, now becoming more and more barren every hour, it stole in softly, and finally took the place of all else. From the board-room—from the Babel of discussion over discounts and exchange, with glib tongues and wits keen as razors, and sharp eyes all about him, he alone abstracted, was far away, looking back to that soft picture of the golden-haired girl floating so tranquilly from duty to duty. And when he came back to what was about him, he found himself as in a jail, with windows barred, the iron at his very heart. Some strange voice seemed to whisper to him that happiness was now finally gone from him for ever, the very last chance that was open to him, and that now he had best cast himself into the arms of despair.

This, after all, was but a morbid tone of thought, wrought up daily more and more by constant harping and dwelling on the one theme. His health was poor at all times, and the habit of living alone worked on him still more.

“Why,” he often said, in his lonely room, pacing up and down, as his habit was—“why could I not have been left as I was? I was content with my old stock of miseries; this dull preying on them and turning them over had become habitual. I was content with *that* wretchedness, and would have gone to my grave satisfied with my round of trouble. But now, to have this glimpse of paradise presented only to be snatched from me, which would have restored me to sensible, practical, peaceful life, made me useful, given me tranquillity—to have this hope taken from me! Surely it had been better to have been left as I was, with all my old misery!”

This was nearly his nightly meditation in his gaunt room in the bachelor’s house as he paced up and down—a foolish, profitless parading that would end foolishly, as a friendly doctor warned him; not very profitable for his soul, either, as a friendly spiritual physician would have told him, from pulpit or confessional—a state of mind certainly to be pitied.

“My dear Tillotson,” said Mr. Bowater to him, clearing away some specks from his own coat with the double glass, “I want to speak to you. You see, I remark you are not in good tone latterly. Now, really you should make a push for it. We all have our battle of life, and we all know that you have your peck of troubles.” Mr. Bowater pronounced this phrase with great musical emphasis, as if it were part of that peck of malt which Willie had brewed. “A peck of troubles. I know——”

“Yes,” said Mr. Tillotson, sadly; “but——”

“Ah! but yes, though,” said Mr. Bowater. “I assure you there is but one remedy—work. Keep the mind going, my dear friend. When I missed the Medway Dock Estate offered to me, I give you my honour and soul, for literally next to a song (you know what a property it is now!)—I was going to stint myself—give up going out to dinners, and that sort of thing—when a friend recommended business—hard, earnest business. Well, I followed his advice, sir, and here I am. Now here’s a chance for you. Suppose you take home these reports, work through ’em, figures and all, abstract them, and tell us what you think of it? You’ll find it hard enough for your teeth, my friend, but I’ll swear you’ll be—let me see—three-and-a-quarter per cent better.”

This was really kind advice; and, going home, Mr. Tillotson turned it over. He might try it, he thought, and so he plunged eagerly into the reports. It was a very hard nut indeed, as Mr. Bowater had said. He attacked it bravely, and sat up very many nights hard at work, until at last, after one long night, it *was* cracked. He came with it in this state to the office, very weary in mind and body, and not, as may be conceived, in the least benefited by Mr. Bowater's remedy.

It was a report on an Indian branch of the bank—the “Bhootan Foncier Extension Branch”—which required the aid of rupees and Indian exchanges, and referred to ryots, and such things.

“Why, bless me, Tillotson,” said Mr. Bowater, when he saw him, “what have you been doing to yourself? You should take care, you know—not push the thing too far. Well—done it? Capital! For here is Mr. Mackenzie just fresh from Calcutta, and you can settle the whole thing with him. Go into that room, Tillotson, take the reports and Mackenzie with you, and not a soul shall disturb you till you are done. There.”

Mr. Tillotson and the Eastern Mr. Mackenzie withdrew into the room. They both went into

the routine of business, the former putting his hand very often to his forehead. Soon the table was spread out with papers, and books of papers, and great reports, and files and docketts, all bearing on the Eastern Bhootan Branch of the great bank. Mr. Tillotson, with an effort, however, went through it all mechanically, but still with great practical sense. For, as Mr. Bowater said, "Tillotson, when he *chose* to lay his mind to a thing, was about as good a man of business as you could light on at any desk between this and Temple Bar." As he turned over the papers listlessly, and listened to the ceaseless flow of Mr. Mackenzie's explanations, delivered with a strong Scotch burr, his eye fell upon a little sheaf of papers pinned together, and on one of which he saw the name "Ross." He took it up eagerly, turned them over one by one. They were all bills, and a letter or two.

"O, that fellow" said Mr. Mackenzie, interrupting himself; "you are looking at his little account. He gave us trouble enough, he and his friend. A nice pair. I was up at the hills at the time, or we should never have 'touched' them."

There was interest in Mr. Tillotson's eyes.

"We were glad to compound with him on any terms, and, as it was, he 'did us' shame-

fully. But I was up at the hills at the time. Mrs. Mackenzie, you know, was just then on the point of——No matter now. When I came back, however, I soon frightened the pair, and I think I would have saved every shilling for the bank without noise or trouble, only then came the Bhootan scrape, which disposed of all our chance.”

“What scrape?” said Mr. Tillotson, eagerly.

“O, you heard it, of course,” said the other, “though I believe it was kept out of the papers—I mean, about torturing the Coolie. They were half drunk. He and his friend came home one night and found this Coolie fellow hadn’t got something ready when they had ordered. The way they tortured this poor devil—sticking fusees under his nails, burning his eye-brows, writing his name on his back with hot wood—it was the most barbarous thing you could fancy. The man died of it.”

“And was there no punishment?” he asked.

“O, the thing was talked about, and an inquiry spoken of; but they managed to get the relatives out of the way. Then it *was* inquired into, and it was too late. A little money goes a great way in Bhootan. But I had it from my servant, who knew it all, and, I believe, saw some of it. Ross, he said, was like a savage; his friend Grainger was trying to save the poor devil.”

“Grainger?” said Mr. Tillotson. “To be sure. I have met him.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Mackenzie, “he’s a great traveller. But that Ross, for a young man, is the most dangerous, ill-conditioned savage I ever met. I almost think the sun had something to do with it. It seems at times like drink on him; but, sair,” added Mr. Mackenzie, in his strong native accent, “it is the drunkenness of a bad hairt and evel paissions.”

“And did you know any more of him?” asked Mr. Tillotson, a little eagerly.

“Not I, so much as others,” said Mr. Mackenzie, moving his papers restlessly, as if they were now losing time. “There were all sorts of stories, you know. There was that business of Mrs. Macgregor, which I know of myself, for poor Sandie told me himself when he was lying heart-broken on his bed just before he died. All that was vairy, vairy bad. A young and winsome creature ruined, ruined!”

“But these may be stories—”

“I can gie you chaipter and vairse,” said Mr. Mackenzie, “at another time, sir. It would shock your very ears to hear all I could tell you about that young man, and then his behaviour to the bank, sir, beyond all—”

They went back to the Bhootan reports. But Mr. Tillotson was very abstracted and restless, and

could hardly follow the details; so much so, that Mr. Bowater, later, was inclined to retract the handsome commendation he was giving of Mr Tillotson being a "first-class man of business." When the day was done, Mr. Tillotson said, anxiously, to the Indian manager, "Could you spare me an hour in the morning, and tell me more about what you have been saying, and with more particularity? All this concerns a person in whom I am interested, and who it is very right should know something of it."

"Indeed; then I can," said Mr. Mackenzie. "His pairsonal behaviour to the bank was simply outrageous, and ought never to be forgotten. I'll come, sir, and give you chaïpter and vairse."

Mr. Tillotson went home in a perfect ferment. Long he walked up and down his room that night, and turned over matters until his head was in a fever. It was surely a matter of duty with him to caution one he regarded with such ineffable interest. In the morning, Mr. Mackenzie came with details, and very fair proofs in his details, and left Mr. Tillotson quite satisfied. Then began his inward counsel, his walkings, and his tempestuous reasonings. The course that was opened to him was obvious. "But what," he thought, "will *she*—so generous, so noble, so magnanimous—think of such a secret denunciation of one who might

stand in my way?" Still the absorbing feeling of all was love for *her*, and to this, before post hour came, he determined to sacrifice every thing.

It was the first letter he had ever written to her. He wrote it ten times over, and then, at last, it was sent. Unknown to himself, it assumed a vein of exquisite and melancholy tenderness; in every line it betrayed the extraordinary passion that was nearly consuming him. He told, however, very plainly what he had heard. He himself might now speak, he said, without ambiguity or reticence, for reasons that she well knew. It might, indeed, appear to her that what he wrote was dictated by suspicious motives; but it was a sacred duty with him to speak. Then he sent it away. To that letter he never received an answer.

Day after day rolled by. Weary night followed weary day. He had looked for an answer absolutely "by return." She who was so tender and delicate would surely not let a superfluous hour go by without telling him what she thought. There went away a day and yet another day. He began to torture himself in a thousand ways to explain this; and, at last, after a week, arrived at *the certainty* that, shocked at what he had done, she could not trust herself to write freely, either

in approval or condemnation, and forbore to notice his caution at all. Then the step he had taken showed itself with almost appalling deformity, as it were, in black shadows upon the wall; and it struck him almost from the first how ill any one would receive such a communication as to the past life of a future husband, and he murmured to himself in despair, "Always a fool—always to be a fool!"

Another two days went by; and one night, passing his blank vigils, a letter was brought in to him—but not the one he waited for. It was from Ross, dated from Ireland, where his regiment was, and whence it was shortly to embark for Gibraltar. It was a strange mixture of rage and calmness, and seemed to reflect the character and moods of the man as he spoke. It began in a friendly way: "Dear Tillotson," and went on: "I have heard of what you have been at latterly, and write this to give you fair warning. Don't busy yourself with my concerns. I suppose you think because you have done a little twopenny-halfpenny service to me—and any gentleman, let me tell you, might be exposed to be taken in that way—you can go on any way you like. By heavens! you shall not. I won't take it from you, or any other man. *You* set up to be a virtuous, pious, preaching fellow,—*you* do,—and I suppose

you think it right to go sneaking about picking up stories, and writing them down to them. I wish you joy of your trade, my friend! I think you have found out it won't advance you much in *that* quarter. You are welcome to go and scrub and grub, and fish out what you can about me, and you won't fish much, I can tell you. I won't stand it longer, though—I tell you that. Do you think I forget the night you struck me in that mangy dirty town, and you came to me whining, and pretending you didn't know who it was? I'll be even with you, Tillotson, by G—d, and pay you back that cut before I die, mind me. And I suppose now, because you think I am shut up here in these infernal regions, that you can go on with your old sneaking tricks? Now, *don't* think it! (I suppose you saw we were ordered abroad to Gib?) And don't go on; for if I hear a ghost of a whisper that you are sneaking about and trading on my absence, I'll come back and give you a lesson that you'll rue to your death, or will *be* your death—I don't care which."

He had forgotten to sign his name; but it was easy for Mr. Tillotson to know who it came from. Yet on his mind all this string of incoherence made not the least impression; he was reading on, waiting, hoping to find something that concerned him more nearly. But he never found it, and

here he was at the end, with the certainty that she had treated his caution with the contempt it deserved, that she disdained to reply to him, and that she thought his behaviour unworthy of an honourable man. "It is quite clear," he said, with a sort of relief; "it is all explained *now*." As for the mad letter he had just read, it as completely passed from his mind as if it were merely the symbols and letters in which the other greater blow must be conveyed. He never thought again of that Ross, who was only speaking according to his frantic nature.

Down at St. Alans, at the old rusted sanctuary of the Cathedral Close, there were strange troubles gathering about the Tilney family. One thing was coming after another. The young golden-haired girl happened to be out on some usual mission when the post of that day came in. Mrs. Tilney alone was at home, in ill humour with the troubles the world was heaping on her, and saw this strange letter, in a hand which she seemed to know, and, above all, directed to Ada, who rarely received one. Not caring to be subject to any social restraints in reference to a person of such unimportant consideration, and thinking it was rather too much that she was to be "hoped up" with the pangs of curiosity in addition to her other

trials, she presently opened it, and read Mr. Tillotson's secret letter. She was a little alarmed when she saw of what a confidential sort it was; but the alarm presently gave place to anger. Mr. Ross's prospects had brightened a good deal of late, and she hoped that some profit might be got for the family out of his ultimate success. She never relished Mr. Tillotson from the first. He had not paid her that implied homage, even to past charms, which she expected from every man, in some degree. She did not love Ada, and his preference for Ada, now revealed to her officially for the first time, to the prejudice of her own daughters, inflamed these feelings. "I'll have neither art nor part in it," she said to herself; "let her look out for herself." There was, besides, the difficulty of re-sealing; for withal she stood a little in awe of Ada, who would have calmly denounced such a proceeding; and as the readiest course, destroyed it. But she went beyond this, for she wrote a little note to Ross, telling him to be on his guard, for "that fellow Tillotson was going about ferretting out stories about him in India, and writing them down to us here."

CHAPTER VII.

ILLNESS.

THEY did not see Mr. Tillotson at the captain's house for a long time. Day after day went by, and they heard nothing. At last, Captain Diamond had put on the bishop's hat and the gray thread gloves, and limped away on what he called "his three legs," on a private expedition of his own. The private expedition was to the grand office of the Foncier Bank, in whose halls there was, as usual, a crowd—a crowd of angels with pens behind their ears, and fluttering wings of paper in their hands, who were flying to and fro, and bringing joyful or evil tidings to man. Captain Diamond stopped a stout and apoplectic angel in a scarlet waistcoat to ask for his friend.

"Mr. Tillotson, sir? Not here to-day. Not been here since a week—a little unwell. Like to see Mr. Newton?—if you step this way, sir."

For one of the grand principles of the Foncier Company was to welcome every body with warmth,

and a part of their capital was set aside for insuring politeness and attention.

The captain walked away in trouble. "I was sure of it," he said. "I saw it in his face that night. And I declare I ought not to have joked him, poor fellow."

And having called a cab, he drove off to the chambers where Mr. Tillotson lived.

They were not fashionable, but they were out of the way, and at this time of the year the rooms were not "very well let." It seemed a grand solitude. There were mahogany doors, and under a black hood in the hall a porter sat and took in messages. It had been Lord Mogador's in the old times.

"He's not been well at all," said this functionary. "You see, he's been overworking himself lately at the bank, sir," he added, getting out of the hood and becoming intimate and confidential with the captain, as every one was sure to do.

"Ah, now! Is that it?" said the captain, with deep feeling, and reciprocating this confidence. "Do you know, I was afraid so. He dined with us not long ago, and I was afraid then. Now would you take him up this card?"

He found Mr. Tillotson up, with his hand to his head, sitting at his table. "This is very kind

of you," said the latter. "I am trying to fight it off, you see, and I hope I shall. Those accounts and figures make my head swim, so I am trying what a little change will do."

"But, my dear friend," the captain said, looking round despondingly. "*This* is not the way to fight it off. You don't call this a change. No, no. This is the way to bring it on. This is the way to be beaten."

"Well, and if I am," said Mr. Tillotson, "perhaps it would be all the better."

"But it isn't, it couldn't," said the captain, eagerly. "You mustn't give in to this sort of thing. You must rouse, my friend. There was poor Tom Hammond, who went off just by giving way. Have you seen any body?"

"No, no," said Mr. Tillotson. "There is nothing to see any one about. They would only laugh at me. No, no, I shall be all right soon."

"Then see—come up to us," said the captain, "and take a bit of dinner. Do now. Oblige old Tom—come. The girls will amuse you. And little Alice—who is a sweet child, and the life of us all, was a little sore about it—between you and me and the post. You know women—the creatures!—they feel every thing. God knows, they all suffer enough—from the Post itself—and do

you know, Tillotson, I should always like to spare them when I could."

"Indeed, what you say covers me with confusion," said Mr. Tillotson; "but you believe me when I tell you I hardly knew what I was saying? And give my especial apologies to Miss Alice."

"Apologies, nonsense. But I'll tell them. Then you can't come? No, I suppose it would be better not. Very well. Now, now. You must take care of yourself. I wish to God you were out of this. It is very lonely, isn't it?"

"The landlord is not flourishing," said Mr. Tillotson. "I and another gentleman—a barrister, I believe—are his only tenants. It would be cruel to leave him, you know."

"Well, promise me to see some one. Let me send Gilpin to you."

Captain Diamond, however, had to leave without obtaining any satisfactory assurance. But he had a second interview in the hall with the tenant *of the hood*, who by this time seemed to have a sort of personal regard for him, and who laid his hand on the captain's arm, as he impressed on him that "the poor gentleman neglected himself sadly, sadly, sir!" And with him the captain agreed, and, going away, made him promise to come straight to his house on any emergency. The

captain knew enough of human nature not to trust exclusively to this sudden intimacy or mere feeling for the porter's recollection of this promise.

He went home with this news, and told "the girls" at dinner. "Poor fellow! And he made his apologies to my little girl there in so gentlemanly a way. I saw he was ill, though I don't know exactly now what he did. I think he was absent or inattentive. Was that it, Alice?"

This was asked in perfect simplicity. But she fell into confusion as perfect.

"And I," she said, warmly, "was so sharp and pert to him. I know I was. Was I not, Anne?"

The elder girl, working, answered quickly, and without lifting her head, "I thought not. I never remarked it."

"But *he* remarked it, you see," she said, getting up, and going over to the fire. "*He* saw it. Upstairs I could have cut my tongue out. And he was ill all the time."

"Poor fellow! yes," went on the captain; "and if you only saw the lonely place he is in! Quite dreadful! I know I'd sooner be sent off to an hospital! Better to have company about one, any day. I declare I got quite a shiver when I saw him in that lonely place, without a soul to look after him."

The younger girl stopped in her walk, and looking at her uncle with wistful, half-tearful eyes, said, "O, uncle! how dreadful! Ah! don't you pity him?"

The captain looked at her back again. "Give me the hand," he said (one of his pet phrases). "Give me the hand, dear. You are a good girl."

At that moment the maid of the house came to the door, and said a man was below wanting to see the captain.

"Who can he be?" said he. "What *can* he want?"

And he lifted himself, as usual, by a sort of leverage, by the aid of table and chair. These little motions and gestures were all part of the man, and necessary to the idea of him, in those who loved him.

"Don't you know?" the young girl said, heartily. "Don't you see? It is about Mr. Til-
lotson. He is ill; he is worse."

"God bless me!" said Captain Diamond, bewildered at this marvellous instinct.

"Tell him to come up here, Mary," she said, decisively.

The porter came up. "I thought it right to come to you, sir," he said, "as you told me" (this "telling" was scarcely the sole reason);

“but he’s very bad to-night. Had to take to bed about an hour after you left. And, between you and me, sir, I think it’s something like fever.”

“And did you send for no doctor?” the young girl said, excitedly.

“He wouldn’t hear of that, miss. He bound me up solemnly. He said he’d leave the house if—”

“And did you mind him?” she said, almost scornfully, and turning away from him. “I suppose you would let him die to obey his instructions.”

The porter was sent away presently, gratified with a glass of wine “after his walk.”

“I am exceedingly obliged to you,” the captain added, with great courtesy. “It was very kind and considerate of you.” For he seemed to forget that there was another inducement in the case besides kindness and consideration.

“Now, uncle,” said she, “what is to be done?”

“Give me the hand,” said the captain. “Quite right. What *is* to be done? We must bring the poor fellow a doctor. That is the first thing. See. I’ll go for Gilpin myself.”

And he got up and went to his room, whence he came limping with the gray gloves and bishop’s

hat. On the landing a figure met him, and said, softly and confidentially, "Nunkey, may I go with you in the cab, merely just for company?"

"Who's this?" said the captain. "Ah, Alice. To be sure, and glad to have you with me. But won't you be afraid? It's a rough night."

"Thanks, my dear nunkey. I'll fetch my bonnet in a second."

She was not indeed fifty seconds "getting on" her bonnet, and took her uncle's arm downstairs.

"Good Alice," he said, in the cab. "Give me the hand. You are a girl of spirit; and I don't wonder at your liking poor Tillotson. God knows I feel for him."

They went for Dr. Gilpin first, but found that he was out. He was to be in in about half-an-hour for the night, and the captain left a message for him. Then they went off to Duke's Chambers.

"I can't leave you in that cold cab, dear," said the captain, limping down the step. "And I should be afraid," he added, doubtfully.

"I am not afraid," she said, springing out. "There is no infection, dear uncle. I can wait below."

"Ah, yes," he said. "That's just it."

And in the porter's room, where, however, there was a light but no fire, she stayed while her uncle went up.

He found his friend in bed inside another room, tossing miserably. It was indeed a fever. His eyes were fiery, and he hardly knew the captain.

“He’s worse by far than when I left him,” said the porter.

The captain had some knowledge of elementary physic, and some old-fashioned remedies as drinks and such-like, and was presently limping round the room, trying to look up any thing that would be useful for his composition. He did not find much. “Egad, I wish Gilpin would come. His head isn’t high enough, poor fellow,” he said, with deep compassion. “We might get a cushion out of the next room.”

In the next room, which was half dark, a figure stole up to him. “God bless me,” said uncle Tom, “what’s this?”

“O, uncle, it was so cold and lonely below. And how is he? Is it so bad?”

“Well, he’s not well, and I don’t like it, dear, you know. And you feel for him, I’m sure you do. If I could find a cushion, now—”

She was looking for one in a moment, and found one. “I am sure,” she said, wistfully, “I could be useful in some way. Is there nothing I could do?”

“I’m sure you could,” said the captain. “Ah, there’s Gilpin. I knew he’d come.”

Gilpin, the friendly doctor, went in, drew aside the curtains, held the light close to that pale face, did the customary "feeling," and touching, and pressing, satisfied himself, and then came into the middle of the room. The captain and the old porter waited eagerly and anxiously to hear his report.

"Why, this is fever—nervous fever," he said; "and he must have had it on him this week past. How did you let him go so far?"

"We could do nothing with him," said the porter. "He never looks after himself. I saw it coming on him; but you might as well talk to the wind as to him."

"Nervous fever," said the captain, anxiously. "That's a bad sort of thing—eh, doctor? What do you say?"

"Can't say any thing now, captain," said the doctor, writing. "I should have seen him before now. But we must only try and patch up as well as we can." He finished the prescription. "You must get a nurse," he said, "of course. This is a very ticklish matter, Diamond, I tell you plainly. Is that a nurse in the next room?"

"No, no. God bless me!"—inventing, with extraordinary readiness, a legend to cover his niece's situation—"it's only a little maid of ours, whom, as we were going the same way, you know,

I thought I might drop at a shop." For the captain, though he would have scorned a falsehood for any ends of his own, was always ready in the cause of affection and chivalry with the most fertile invention.

"Now, see, my friend," said Gilpin, holding out the wet prescription. "Get this made up, get the nurse, and with this he may do very well for the next couple of days. The fact is, I must go down to the south to-morrow, and can't get back for some time."

"My goodness!" said the captain, aghast, as if his departure withdrew all medical aid from the world; "sure you won't throw us over, Gilpin?"

"I'll tell you," said the doctor, rising. "If he should get suddenly bad—but I don't think he will—send to Dennison, Sir Duncan Dennison, the Queen's physician. There is only one man in London knows nervous fevers, and that's Dennison. It's miraculous! If you can't get Dennison—and it's very likely you won't—why you must try Stony, or some of the rest."

The doctor was going. "My dear Gilpin," said the captain, busy with the purse, "how kind of you—how good of you!"

"Nonsense! my friend," said the doctor, putting back the purse. "What are you at? All in good time."

A muffled little figure went hurriedly to the window as they passed through the next room—the figure of the little maid, whom the captain was bringing to a shop. He looked sharply at her, and went away.

That, indeed, proved the beginning of a terrible nervous fever which seized on Mr. Tillotson. For hours he was tossing and writhing in its grasp. With difficulty Captain Diamond brought away his niece, and quietly put her in the cab, with all sorts of assurances. The declarations he put into the doctor's mouth—with a most delicate end—would have astounded that practitioner. "On my oath, my dearest little girl, he said so. Be up and down at his work the day after tomorrow, or the next day after that at furthest. On my oath, yes!" But this romance was all superfluous, for the supposed maid had been at the door, and heard the true verdict.

Yet, for the case of a person who was to recover and be at his work on the day after tomorrow, the captain was singularly nervous and anxious. When they came down to breakfast, they found that he was already gone, having left word that he would be back "soon." He did not return until nearly four; the little girl had an anxious, restless time, running to the window.

The elder Miss Diamond, in the drawing-room,

talked very confidently to comfort her. "He is strong," she said, "and is sure to get over it. Men always get over these things."

"I hope he will," said the other devoutly, still looking out of the window, "*for the dear captain's sake.*"

"Yes," said the elder girl, gravely, "uncle Diamond would grieve dreadfully."

But, in the bedroom, the grim Martha Malcolm had a different sort of comfort. "What a pother!" she said; "he's neither kith nor kin to any of us, and must bear his trials like any other man. The whole house turned upside down, the captain gone without his breakfast, all for a counting-house fellow, that has money enough to buy friends ready made. What work it is!"

"Ah, but, Martha, think of the poor creature lying there, without a soul to go near him! If you knew his story, how he has suffered—"

"And why didn't he make friends of his Mammon? Ah, I see it's wasting time talking to *you*, Miss Alice. It's ill talking to those as won't care to listen, and for good reasons of their own."

The colour rose to the cheeks of the little pale girl, but she said nothing. She heard the voice of the captain below, and ran down. There was a change in his face to the greatest cheerfulness and heartiness.

“We’re getting along,” he said; “rallying like a house afire. O, he’ll be as well as a roach; let me see,” the captain said, fixing on a date carefully—“by next Friday.” Then his face (as if a spring had relaxed) suddenly fell into a very mournful expression, quite inconsistent with such good news.

“Ah, you are only telling me this, uncle,” she said, impatiently. “I *know* he is bad.”

“On oath,” the captain was beginning.

“Yes, I know he is ill,” she went on, excitedly; “and what is the use of trying to deceive me? I *know* that he is very bad indeed.”

“Well,” said uncle Diamond, “perhaps he is not so well as he was; but he’ll do wonderfully yet. Why, God bless me! I have known men stretched there on the broad of their backs for weeks, and not a bit the worse—not a bit.” Then the captain’s voice fell into a feeling key, and with a look of deep compassion he said, “My poor little girl, we must take these things as they are sent. My heart bleeds for that poor Tillotson, it does indeed. But we *must* pull him through.”

But the next day, after the captain came back, all his powers of deception and cheerful little mendacities could not disguise the truth. It was a raw, piercing day, and the captain, in a very thin great-coat, limped along steadily to wait on his friend.

He said he would be back at four, "with tip-top news." But that hour had long passed, and he did not return. There was an anxious face at the window looking out watching the gusts, and the east wind piercing the walkers through and through. At that moment, when they were just thinking of dinner, the captain drove up in a cab, which he kept waiting at the door. He came in to them with a curious, wistful look.

"Gilpin's not come back," he said; "very odd, ain't it?"

"You know he wasn't to be back," said the elder Miss Diamond.

"No, to be sure," said he, with alacrity. "What an old Tom-the-Goose I am! Always the way with me. I should forget this lame leg of mine if it wasn't fastened to me."

"And how is he to-night, nunkey?" said the young girl.

"Not so well," said he dismally; "not *quite* so well, I mean, as we could all wish, you know. Between you and me and the post, I wish Gilpin *was* back."

"I knew it would be this way," the young girl cried, impulsively. "Of course he is not back, and won't be back. What *is* to become of him?"

"Here is dinner, sir," said Martha Malcolm,

suddenly appearing at the door, "cooling and half spoiled, while other people are running about the town. Take my advice, captain, and leave him to the regular doctors. Let him pay them, and they'll get him through."

"At any rate, uncle, you must eat your dinner now."

"Dinner!" said uncle Diamond. "Lord bless you! I've dined two hours ago. Had a chop at The Son and Heir. As good a couple of chops as were ever cut off a loin. By the way, dear, you don't remember the name of that surgeon to a palace, the fellow that waits on the royal family when they're sick, do you? Mere curiosity, you know."

"Ah," said the girl, starting, "then you want him? So he is bad, very bad?"

"No, no. On my oath, no. I wasn't thinking of it. It was only to ease my own mind. Egad, I had forgot. There's the wig to be dressed, —old Tom's,—and I'll look in on our patient as I come round."

They told him the name, accepting his little fictions. The captain, when he was out of earshot, bade the man drive "as hard as he could go" to the square where Sir Duncan Dennison, Bart., physician in ordinary to the Queen, resided. It was now a little after seven, and a servant, evidently in his evening suit, threw open the door.

The captain, not in the least awed, put his card into the menial's hand, and bade him take it in to his master. There was a half-crown under the card. "And see, my man, I'll be obliged to you to get this done at once. Case of life and death, you know. And, see, don't mind about getting out his own horses. I'll bring him off myself."

The servant smiled at this pardonable ignorance, but told him very respectfully, letting the half-crown into a rich plush treasury, that he was very sorry about it, but it couldn't be done or even thought of. "Fact is," he said confidentially, "Sir Duncan has a dinner to some of the 'Ousehold, and he's a dressin', sir, at this moment. And you see, sir, in fact, I run up in a 'urry, taking you to be one of the company."

The captain's face fell. Still he was of that school who believe that money, like Hannibal's hot vinegar, will move even rocks, and he felt in his pocket for another half-crown.

The servant saw the motion, and was so really taken by this simple liberal gentleman, that he said with sympathy, "It ain't no use, I tell you plainly, sir. Sir Duncan's got dinner-company coming, and wouldn't stir 'cept for her Majesty. I dusn't do it, sir. Very sorry indeed. Beg pardon, sir; but there's fust carriage."

"Fust" carriage was indeed now clattering up and plunging to the door, and Captain Diamond,

seeing that it was hopeless, limped hopelessly aside out of the blaze of such glories.

He was in deep trouble, and hardly knew what to do. The words of Gilpin seemed to ring in his ears like a bell, that there was no man the equal of Dennison for the treatment of nervous fever. There were surely other men as good, except only for that positive declaration of Gilpin's, and the captain had a reverence, next to what he had had for the commander-in-chief, for the oracular opinions of medical men. He was in a dreadful puzzle and trouble, for both apothecary and nurse had jointly and severally declared that the patient was every moment getting worse.

He came back to the house about nine. The young girl who had complained of headache, had been got to go to bed, under an offer, voluntarily made by the elder Miss Diamond, that she would come and repeat such news as might come in.

The captain came in with his troubles written on his face. He looked round cautiously, to see was "his little girl" present.

"My heart is broken," he said. "My dear, I don't know what to do. What would you say? Wait for Gilpin—he may be back to-night—or get in another fellow? Ah! if we could only get hold of that Dennison. Wonderfully tip-top man, I'm told. Can do any thing with a touch. It's very unfortunate."

“ My dear uncle, I should say get in some less skilful doctor, who will do well enough.”

“ But then we can have Dennison to-morrow morning, the first thing ; and this fellow may turn out a botch, and spoil the work for him. And the poor fellow may be getting worse every moment. She’s abed, is she? Glad of it, poor little soul. What are we to do?”

Neither uncle nor niece could hear the light steps nor see the little slight figure wrapped in a giant’s cloak which was at the door.

“ Damn that pampered Queen’s doctor !” said uncle Diamond, with sudden rage and imprecation. “ What business has he to be filling himself with meat and drink, and givin’ his dinners, when there are Queen’s subjects dying in the country, and a touch from him would put a poor fellow on his legs ?”

“ Suppose, dear uncle, we sent back to Dr. Gilpin again. He might have come back.”

“ Very sensible, my dear,” said the captain, rising to get his shovel-hat. “ Ah, see there now ! Woman’s sense ! Give me the hand. The very thing.”

“ But you must not go yourself,” said she. “ You are wearing yourself out.”

“ I like it,” said he. “ I like this junketing about in cabs ; I do indeed.” And away he went once more to Dr. Gilpin’s.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EXPEDITION.

NOT long after, Miss Diamond went up to the younger girl's room and found the door fastened; so she was fast asleep, no doubt. Though she could hardly have slept in the jingling, clattering cab which was carrying her away to the square where the great doctor resided who was Queen's physician, though he had only a small fraction of the royal practice, it being shared among some six other of his brethren. A cold night, with cold air coming in through the crevices of the ill-closing doors and windows, and the fairy figure inside shivered sometimes a good deal, still she was warm in heart and excited; and that small face, as the cab turned a corner sharply, was flashed on by the street lamps, and showed an anxious and eager air, until at last it drew up at a yellow house, where it seemed as though a funeral was about being "performed," and one of the doctor's own victims was about being carried out.

Heavy coaches, with solemn horses, and drivers

buried in capes, seemed to be bivouacking in the street; only they appeared to be mourning-coaches with lights, and it was to be an illuminated funeral. Solemn footmen, who seemed yet larger in stature from the darkness, hung about the steps. These gentlemen set down the little lady, who tripped courageously from the cab and went up the steps, as the young lady who was to superintend the "Hice." It was the same "gentleman" who had opened the door to the captain that opened the door now to her. He had a large experience of human nature; drawn from the human nature that came between two and four—the doctor's hours; and saw at a glance that she was a good deal above "Hice." When she told him what she wanted, he shook his head,—almost laughed. Then the soft influence of the captain's half-crown, still down in the plush-regions, seemed to bring back quiet and subdued tones. "Really it can't be done, miss. Sir Duncan 'ud pack me off in the morning. There's great company, there, from the 'Ousehold," he added with mystery. "Better come in the morning, miss; first thing."

But she was now well in the hall. She had found a new courage that made her do things that surprised herself, from the force of her absorbing passion. At this moment came a burst, and a roar

of confused and hilarious voices rushing out. The "gentlemen" were going up; and the alarmed servant almost pushed her aside out of sight, and then hurried away himself.

The noisy procession trailed up in a kind of affectionate order, for two, and sometimes three, seemed interlaced together in a "winey" way, and a tall, thin gentleman, with a flat back to his head, and a high collar to blue coat and gilt buttons, broke from one of these combinations, and, to Alice's alarm, came down again towards the front parlour to fetch something out of his coat. She was shrinking behind the door, and a clarety aroma foretold that he was coming. She could hardly get out of the way without showing herself to the others, and in great affright, knew not what to do, when the tall gentleman started back with a loud "God bless my soul!"

He looked amiable and good-natured, and, with a confidence almost childish, she ran to him and said: "O, sir! you can help us here. He is dying—ill——"

"God bless me again! Dying! who?"

"Mr. Tillotson. Don't you know?" she said impatiently. "They wish to have this great doctor, and have sent me. A word from you and he will come."

"Tillotson dying, and I never heard! How

wonderful are the ways! Are you sure, my child?" he said, with as much concern as was consistent with a pleasant saturation of cheerful claret.

"O yes, sir," she said, "and we are losing time. If you would only ask the great doctor."

"I'll do it; leave it all to me. Dear me, poor Tillotson! And here we are merry-making in there, over real '54 claret, while a fellow-creature—formed to *His* image—— Leave it all to me." And he hurried off.

The way in which he imparted his news to his host was not unskilful. He came in mysteriously.

"My dear Dennison," he said, "I don't like this—pretty girl waiting below—private interview. Seriously, though, a dear, amiable, dying poor—devil, without a friend in the world. Only think! that has endeared every single creature on the face of God's earth to him by simple unostentatious charity—simple unostentatious charity! To think of that man lying on his bed of death, and without a mother's son that cares—tuppence for him. Called to his account in the ledger,—there's what we all come to, Sir Duncan—the great, the pious, and the good—and leave not a rack behind!"

Not conscious of the extraordinary contradic-

tions in this statement, Mr. Tilney led Sir Duncan down. Sir Duncan was an elderly man and an old beau, and was not at all displeased at the imputation of the visit from the "pretty girl." A portly gentleman, all rich pink and staring white (pink in his face, white in his waistcoat), seemed to come out of a cloud before her. She threw back a little hood she wore, told her story eagerly, and came up very satisfactorily to the description Mr. Tilney had given of her.

"What do you want now, my dear?" said the Queen's physician. "You see I have got friends here."

"O, sir, I know that, and I don't know what you will think of me. But *he* is ill—is dying, perhaps."

"Well, my dear, there are a good many dying about us here; but if we were to take to leaving our dinners for them, we'd be soon dying ourselves, my dear. And who's *he*?"

He was all moist with good humour, this Queen's physician, under the influence of the famous "bin."

"Ah, sir, if you would be so kind, just for a moment, as uncle Diamond says—a mere touch of your little finger would do—a dreadful nervous fever—"

Through all the claret this favourite subject,

and the implied compliment to his reputation, came. Nervous fever was his weak point. Wonderfully accomplished as he was in that department, he yet needed a few little touches.

“Is it far from here?” he asked, getting his hat.

“Then you’ll come?” said she, joyfully. “O, how kind—how good of you! He is saved!”

He looked at her a moment through the pink clarety film. A comic twinkle came into the moist eyes. “Ah! I see,” he said, and began to repeat, “The little part, That’s called the heart—Nice doings, egad!”

She coloured up. “No, no—indeed, sir, it is not that.”

“Not what?” he asked with pretended astonishment. “Ah, little rogue! Come along. Cab here. All right. John, whisper Mr. Tilney that I’ll be back in twenty minutes.”

Captain Diamond, travelling about in his cab seeking his friend Gilpin, had come back unsuccessful to his friend’s rooms. He was met at the door by the porter, with great disquiet in his face. “The poor gentleman is getting worse, sir. I was going off to you, sir; for the apothecary says he seems to be in a sinking state like, and we must get in a doctor at once.”

“Run then, like a good lad,” said the captain; “or take my cab.”

The porter got his hat, opened the swinging door, and at that instant held it back, for another cab had driven up rapidly, and a gentleman with a white tie, and dressed for a party, had jumped out; had also helped out a little lady. The captain looked wistfully.

“Hope they’re going to have no fiddling or that sort of thing to-night. Poor Tillotson——”

The florid gentleman, dressed for the party, had come up to him. “I want to see Mr. Tillotson. Does he——”

“O, uncle!” said the little girl, running to him.

“Why, God — bless — my — soul!” said the captain, in the blankest astonishment.

“Uncle, uncle,” she went on, “this is Sir Duncan Dennison, and he is come from his dinner-party. O, so kindly! And, uncle, he has promised to make him well again.”

“If it’s a nervous fever — that is,” said he gravely. “Come, I hope there’s no mistake.”

“The Queen’s physician, eh?” said the captain, half stupified, and peering close into his face, as if *that* would have satisfied him of his identity.

“Ah! Come, come,” said the other impatiently

(he felt the east wind at that moment through his cambric shirt, and began to think he had done a ridiculous thing), "I can't waste time here. Show me this fever."

He was taken up and brought in to the patient. He studied the poor wasted, tossing figure before him critically. He put his head on one side, looked round at a crevice over the door with extraordinary vacancy of expression; then, with the same curious vacancy, smoothed some creases out of his dress-trousers.

The captain, peering well forward, and supported on the shorter of his two limbs, gazed at each of these proceedings as if they were to be part of the cure. "Well, doctor," he said nervously, when they had been all a reasonable time in silence—"well, doctor?"

But he was motioned into silence. Finally, Sir Duncan looked at his watch. "Lord bless me, how late it is! I must go now."

"But well, doctor," said the captain, still peering, "what d'ye say?"

"Give me a pen, some one," said Sir Duncan, "and don't speak while I am writing. I am going to order strong poisons, and a few grains, you know, make all the difference."

The captain was secretly aghast at this declaration, the bearing of which he could not under-

stand; but he assumed—as, indeed, this amiable old warrior always did—that the fault was with his own dull faculties, and, smiling on Sir Duncan in cordial approval of his alarming practice, limped over to the bed.

“Get that done,” cried Sir Duncan, “at once. Good night, little lady. You brought me out in an awful night. No matter: you were right, and I wouldn’t have missed it for a fifty-pound note. It’s the true stuff.”

“O, sir, but will he recover?”

“We’ll see in the morning. I’ll bring Slader with me from the hospital. Like to see what he can say to this. It’ll be a slap in the face to him. It’s positively beautiful; and, my dear child, you didn’t deceive me—this is the true thing. Good night.”

He was gone. Perfectly bewildered, the captain stood looking after him.

“What did he say, my dear, about being beautiful? I’m a little hard o’ hearing.”

“I don’t know, nunkey,” she said, somewhat troubled; “I couldn’t make him out; but he’s to be here the first thing in the morning.”

“Ah, yes, yes, the creature!” said the captain; “and, egad, my dear, did you remark he seemed greatly pleased?”

“O, yes, nunkey,” she said with pleasure, “so

he was ; but," she added, falling into despondency again, " it was more with me, I'm afraid, nunkey. But didn't he tell you, when you were with him in the room ?"

" Ah, to be sure," said the captain, with great boldness and readiness ; " so he did. He said he was in a fine way to recover, and would be on his legs and driving out in a job-carriage on Sunday next."

" Ah ! Did he say that ?" she said joyfully.

" On my oath he did," the captain said earnestly—" honour bright ! And now, little woman, we may go home. He is in good hands here, I know, with Mrs. Pidger. I hope they keep you comfortable here, Mrs. Pidger ; and if there's any thing you like, I hope you'll say so." The captain's fingers had drawn out the little steel bag purse.

Going home in the cab (it was getting on to twelve), the captain said : " You must be tired, pet. Ye did a wonderful deal for that poor fellow ; and a poor old botch like me, I couldn't have managed it—no, indeed. Let Tom alone for never helping a soul. Mine's the will, but not the way—eh, pet ?"

" Nonsense, uncle," she said, putting her face forward to kiss him.

" Ah, you little cosherer !" said the captain.

“ You have eyes, though, and can see. Are you cold? Muffle yourself up. Get on, sir,” said the captain, with assumed fierceness. “ You’re not going the regulation pace. D’ye hear me? And I tell you what,” the captain added, putting the shovel-hat out of the window, “ your cab’s not in a fit state, sir: there’s a hole in the door here.” Then his voice fell again into the old soft key so natural to him. “ Ah, you like him, pet? I see it with half an eye; and, upon my conscience, I like you for it—I do, for he’s as fine a man as ever stepped, and I don’t wonder you love him, my dear.”

“ O, uncle!” she said.

“ Nonsense!” he went on. “ Surely you don’t mind me no more than a priest—I was going to say an old woman, but Tom’s not come to that yet; and I can tell you Tillotson has his eyes open, such as he is, and knows when a pretty girl likes him—ay, indeed.”

“ O, uncle, what do you mean?” she half faltered. Had there been light, he would have seen her blushing.

“ There, you shiver again, my dear. Confound this cab-fellow! I’ll summons him in the morning. I could tell you something I heard the other night when the poor fellow was lying tossing and saying little scraps of talk to himself. He opened his eyes

and fixed them on me, just as you might; then he gave a moan that went to my heart—so it did. ‘What ails you, my poor fellow?’ I said. ‘All is lost,’ he replied. ‘It was a foolish dream, and she never can be mine! She does not care for me, and never did. All is lost!’ I remember those words, and got them by heart in my bed. ‘All is lost!’ says he. And though I knew *he* couldn’t know what I was talking of, I couldn’t help telling him to cheer up, for she *did* love him; and that Tom knew, and knows it now.”

“O, uncle,” the young girl repeated again, “what *can* you mean?”

“I mean that’s what the poor fellow has got ill on. He has had a struggle, and it’s worried him into this fit.”

“Ah, nunkey, how can you know it is about me? He has met plenty of others.”

This view staggered the captain for a moment; but he recovered himself. “Didn’t I hear him mention your nice little name, though—eh?”

“My name? No, no.”

“On my oath, yes,” said the captain; “I give you my word of honour—not a word o’ lie in it. O, I wouldn’t say it!” Alas, this was another of the captain’s venial untruths. “‘Yes,’ says he, as plain as I am speaking now, ‘O, how I love her, and she must be mine!’” Mr. Tillotson had

never used this form of ejaculation ; but a passage from one of the old novels drifted across the captain's brain, and seemed to him highly appropriate, and even elegant.

Had Mr. Tillotson indeed made some such disordered allusion, but was it to another name and to another lady ?

When they arrived home it was midnight. The gloomy Martha Malcolm, grim and terrible, met them at the door "This is nice gadding about," she said ; "an' you're fit for goin' out at night?"

"Once and away, Mrs. Malcolm, you know," said the captain, in high good humour.

"I have no fault with you, captain ; but she will be neither said nor led. You ought to be ashamed, miss. You're getting old enough now to have sense."

"Ah, then, she *has* sense, I can tell you, Martha. More than the full of our two old heads ; that is, I mean," he added, a little confused, "of *this* old head — Tom's, you know, my dear. Why, Mrs. Malcolm, you could be my daughter, let alone my niece. But she knows what she's about, Mrs. Malcolm, and had a little business to-night."

"Hush, uncle," said the girl, rushing upstairs. Mrs. Malcolm came grumbling on behind.

“ Business, indeed! Going after a whining, sickly, puling creetur. He’s not half a man; his head all the time drivellin’ over another girl.”

“ No, O no,” said the captain, alarmed at this allusion; “ you are a little out there.”

“ Maybe I am,” said the other coldly, “ but I know better all the time. But surely, cap’en, you should have the sense not to be dragging a thing of that sort, with a chest no thicker than my muslin cap, about the town at this hour of the night. Do you feel that wind? Listen! I shouldn’t wonder if it was her death.”

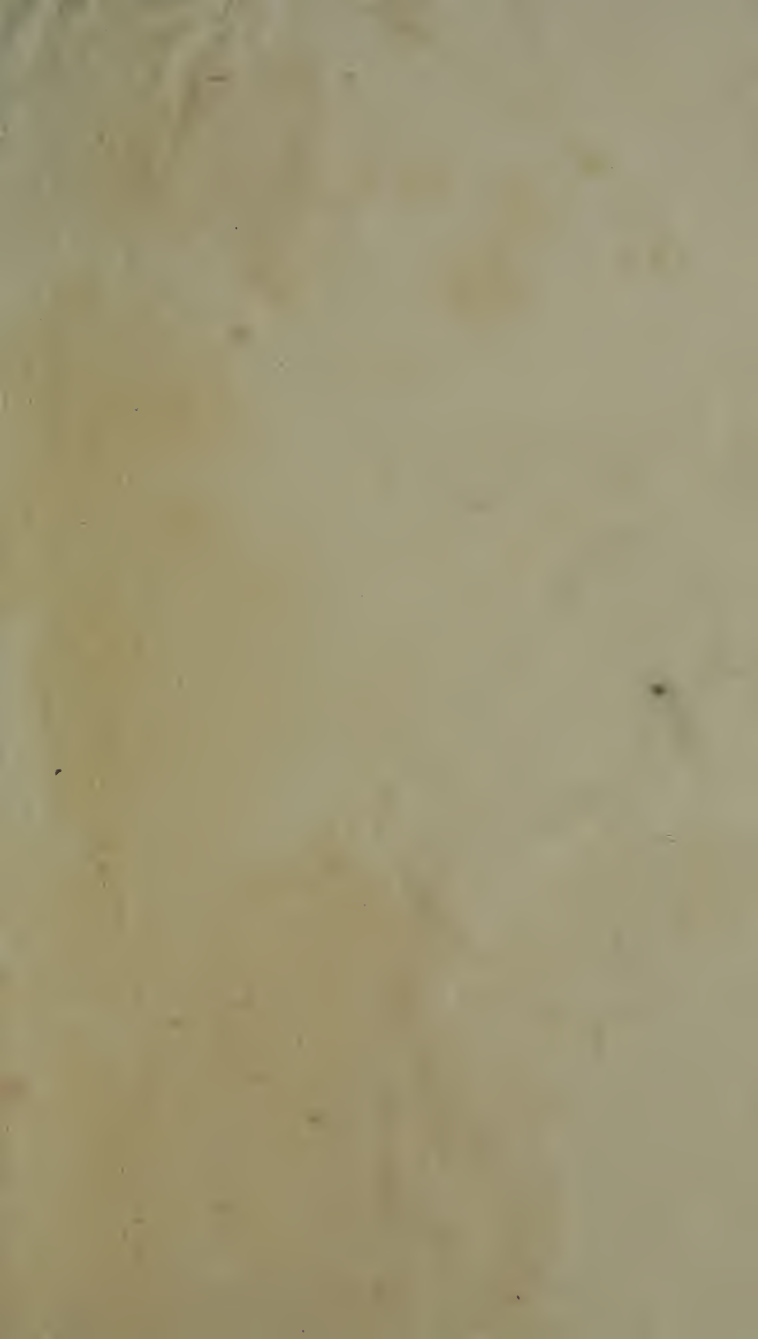
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