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MEMOIRS
OF A
CHEQUERED LIFE.



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MEMOIRS
OF A
CHEQUERED LIFE.

BY
D. 47
CHARLES STRETTON.

"Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven?
Hopes sapp'd, home blighted, life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the soul of those, whom I survey."
Osborne Harold.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1862.

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DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION,

TO

LADY LEEDS.

IN dedicating this Work to you, my dearest sister, the narrative of a brother's life—and you well know what a life of vicissitudes it has been—you will find that, amongst the varied incidents here related, there is not one calculated to raise a blush upon a woman's cheek.

“Nothing extenuate or ought set down in malice.”

The various events I have endeavoured to portray are strictly true ; and although those events occurred in both hemispheres, and embrace all classes, from the exquisite of a London drawing-room to the gold-digger of Australia, there will not be found one word that is objec-

tionable. The coarse slang of convict life is softened down as much as the carrying out the narrative would admit; the names of persons are changed, and that of counties also, in many instances, where the scenes of events described took place in England.

You, who have ever loved me with a sister's love, will gently pass over the errors of that brother, who, with all his faults, is thought to possess one redeeming quality, kindness of heart; although "whole vices and half virtues are in him combined." He trusts that a moral may be drawn from the perusal of this life of errors; and that by "showing up vice in its own feature," a warning will be given to the young, and a lesson impressed upon the mind of all, that *no real happiness can exist, no pure pleasure can there be without alloy, unless it be based upon virtue.*

4th June, 1862.

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MEMOIRS

OF A

CHEQUERED LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Harrow School.—Baneful System of Credit.—Games and Amusements.—Melancholy Occurrence.—In Trouble.—Fear of Expulsion.—Pugilistic Encounter.—Punishment of Flogging.—Epsom Spring Meeting.—Departure from Harrow.

I WAS born of parents in whose veins ran gentle blood, and was the youngest of five children : my father was wealthy, my mother was the daughter of a clergyman, who held a living in Essex ; but God in his wise dispensation decreed that we should lose that father when I had barely attained my fourth year. Yet, in return, we were doubly blessed in our remaining parent ; for never did mother fulfil her duties to the letter more accurately than that honoured lady, and never was there one to whom that endearing name is attached, more devotedly,

more truly loved, than she has ever been by us all. Alas! when I say all, there are but three remaining: God has taken two of my brothers unto himself. I must here mention that one only of the five children was a girl.

I shall pass over my earliest days, by merely remarking that home tuition was succeeded by my being placed at a "crack" school in the certainly beautiful, but decidedly suburban (if not to say cockney) neighbourhood of London, Clapham. And to my Dominie (should he still exist) I beg to tender my grateful acknowledgments for his early training: he was a clergyman, and an LL.D. Three years were considered as amply sufficient in a private establishment to fit me for entering upon that little world of itself, a great public school. Harrow was the one selected for my début; and ever proud shall I feel (although so humble a member of that institution) that I have studied within the same walls which have resounded to the recitations of a Byron, a Peel, a Palmerston; have suffered on the same benches which have witnessed the castigations of a D——, a Nor—by, an A——n.

Oh! those were glorious, and they were happy days! ere contact with this evil world had contaminated the innate goodness of disposition which I will arrogate to myself I did possess; for I yet feel that I was "born to good, and warped to wrong."

Harrow was my bane. Should this meet the eye of any "old Harrovian," will he not bear me out when I assert that the system of "Find" bills of the period of which I write was the nucleus of ruin to many young men? that the first germ of thirst for attaining that which was desired, without feeling the pressure of present payment, was implanted in the breast? that a degree of misplaced independence of character and of action was engendered? He will not, he cannot deny it.

I do not mean to say that all fell victims to that baneful system; but I will maintain that my first error in respect of incurring debt took its origin from the method alluded to, but which I believe at the present day to be wholly discontinued. It is not for me to inquire whether our charities (I allude only to those great scholastic institutions, the *public* seminaries) are con-

ducted in the spirit of the intentions of the founders, or not. Take, for instance, Eton, Winchester, Westminster, and Harrow; has not malversation been the order of the day? Did John Lyon, honest John Lyon, who founded the last-named school in the year of grace 1571, temp. Elizabeth; did he, I say, ever intend that a school, the fundamental principle of which was charity, should be alone accessible to the rich? Did all, or any, of those celebrated academies (which, by-the-by, have certainly "turned out" some of our greatest statesmen, most profound theologians, and acute lawyers,—to say nothing of sailors and soldiers); did any of their founders, from Royal Henry down to John Lyon, the London merchant who founded the school I was at, ever intend that the poor should be excluded the benefits of which their liberality had laid the foundations? Certainly not; but such is the case in most instances.

Well, I have said that my first step on error's ladder was to be attributed to my introduction to Harrow. It was so; and how true is the old French proverb, "*Ce n'est que le premier pas*

qui coute ;” and how easy does each step in the descent of error’s ladder become !

Well, gentle reader, my term of *study* was passed much in the same way as that of my school-mates, of whom there were about three hundred and fifty. Cricket, raquets, and bathing, filled up our leisure hours in the summer ; football was the ostensible amusement of the colder season ; but we had other divertissements, of a more dubious character. I have no doubt that many of my contemporaries will remember an old lady, a Mrs. W——e, whose abode was made “out of bounds ;” which means to the uninitiated, that any boy discovered entering that house would be punished. This old woman had seen better days — had held a responsible situation ; but from some little dereliction of duty (which it is not my business to inquire into) had forfeited the respectable if not lucrative position that she had for some years held about the school. Disgusted with the masters at the loss of her place, she first started in the confectionery line, and well to do she appeared, whilst her shop was conducted under the semblance of decorum ; she was an admirable cook, and gave unlimited credit to her

customers. It is not to be wondered at, then, that there were many on her books; *I* was well in, for one; but who will credit that this old dame made a far better income by keeping a sort of menagerie under her bed, in the shape of a badger, game cocks, rats, et cetera, which we were solicited to inspect? How often have I been stopped, when passing with other boys, with the greeting, "Good morning, young gentleman; have a little pastime after the two (meaning after the school-hours)—cockfight, badger bait? Walk in: do but come and see my rats." Who could resist her entreaties when there was the additional inducement of a good meal upon tarts, which we might pay for when convenient?

Those were some of the doubtful amusements to which I have alluded. Smoking, of course, filled up a large vacuum of our idle time; but tandem-driving was considered to be the "*ne plus ultra*" of our enjoyments; a pastime which impressed infinite zest from the certainty of its being followed by a flogging—if discovered.

Pardon me for a slight digression. I made allusion to our *bathing*: yes, we did bathe, but the water in which those ablutions were per-

formed, was artificial, being a long straight piece, verging from eight feet to four feet in depth ; this was dignified by the name of "*Duck Puddle*," and yet in that abominable "soup" (for it was about as thick, and exactly the colour of *potage de pois*,) I had the sad lot to witness the death, by drowning, of the eldest son of a Cornish baronet. Will it be believed that we could not save him? If my memory bears me out correctly, the poor father came down, on the evening of the melancholy occurrence, and took the body of his beloved son (heart-broken as that parent was) back to London in his carriage, without any inquest being held ; he paying the fine in preference.

But to my story. Tandem-driving was the amusement most followed by your humble servant. I had no taste for badger-baiting, duck-hunting, or in any downright cruel sport ; and with impunity, for a length of time I followed my darling foible.

There was at Harrow, during my time, a boy whose features appeared to have been cast in the same mould as my own ; the same were we as to height, and as near as possible

of the same age ; the same may be said of our hair ; and, alas ! he was as great a pickle as myself. Now this scion of a patrician house was as fond of driving as I was ; and as ill-luck would have it, he was seen by my tutor, some two or three miles from the school, in a dog-cart, with a chestnut and a grey (my tutor was on foot, and therefore unable to catch him), and believed him to be me. I was taxed with it, but stoutly denied it. In this instance my protestations of innocence were successful, and I was not punished for the fault of another ; which frequently was the case, as the sequel will show.

A fortnight had barely elapsed, when my double was again the unintentional cause of trouble to myself. Returning at the early hour of three in the morning, after attending his *club*,—yes, his club,—and of which I was an original member, he was met by my tutor again, who, seizing him by the collar, greeted him with the exclamation of “You desperate boy ! I have caught you at last.” I know not whether Delville (for that was his name) at the moment thought of the words of the first, and the great Napoleon : “Give me the man with a three

o'clock in the morning courage." Whether he trusted to effect his escape, by being mistaken for me; or whether he was anxious to try a passage of arms with my tutor, I know not; but it is certain that he dealt my preceptor a fearful blow on the nose, knocked him down, and fled.

It is necessary here that I should state that I had myself been present at the club orgies of the previous night, and had arrived safe in my own rooms. I may as well mention also, that the club rejoiced in the euphonious cognomen of "Red Nightcap."

Well, as I have said, I had reached my rooms in safety, as I thought, and had commenced working up my Homer for first school, when in rushed my tutor, furious as a tiger, white as his shirt, and utterly incapable of utterance from excess of passion. Rising from the table, and quite forgetting that I still had on my head the red cap, emblazoned with a pot of porter standing on two crossed pipes, all in gold lace, with the exception of the froth, which was admirably imitated in silver, and which did much to heighten the effect—yes, quite forget-

ting the figure I must have appeared to my infuriated pedagogue, I calmly awaited the commencement of his attack.

“You insolent, you outrageous youth! you dare to strike your tutor, do you?” were his first words. “Take off that cap, sir!” advancing to seize it, but which I in the mean time flung to the further end of the room, and which fell on the head of one of the other occupants of the apartment: “to-morrow, you shall be double flogged, and then expulsion shall rid the school of such an intolerable scrapegrace.”

“I never struck you,—I never even saw you, sir!” were my words, uttered in reply.

“What! add lies to your other disgraceful conduct?” he rejoined: “have you not been out to-night? did I not collar you? What means that fool’s cap? give it to me this instant!”

Fetching the unfortunate bonnet rouge, I handed it to him, protesting solemnly that I had never seen him, much less struck him, but not denying my absence from my room. Unfortunately my protestations only added fuel to fire; his anger increased; and, threatening the direst vengeance, he rushed from my apartment,

taking with him my beautiful cap, which stamped me as a member of a secret society.

“What’s up?” were the first words which startled me from my reverie, after throwing myself into a wretched chair, minus the seat. “What’s up, old fellow?” echoed three more voices. “What the d——! ’s the matter?” said a fourth, which makes up the complement of our dormitory. “I am done, old fellows!” I replied; “you will know all about it to-morrow; and I shall have to leave Harrow.” Refusing to answer any more questions, I flung myself on my bed; and with no very enviable anticipations awaited the ringing of the school-bell.

The remaining hours were decidedly not pleasant ones. The prospect of a double flogging, to be followed by expulsion, was by no means an incentive to increased exertion on my part, to the getting off my Greek with more than ordinary correctness. I do not pretend to have been a good classic; history and data were my forte; yet I must admit that I know of no school which will surpass Harrow, if the young recipient will but receive all that is ready to be crammed into him.

Yes, heavily indeed passed the three hours, which succeeded the interview with my tutor. It was strange that the remembrance of Delville's former scrapes did not at once point to him as the cause of my unpleasant position : but no, with all my knowledge of that young gentleman's proficiency with his fists (which his frequent encounters behind school had attested), and of his daring and habitually reckless manner, even then I could not believe him guilty of so gross an insult to one of the masters.

I was at a perfect non-plus ; so, ceasing to rack my brain in useless attempts at discovering by what agency I was placed in my uncomfortable position, I tried to sleep away the time ; but futile were all my endeavours. The image of my mother was continually before me ; that mother so much beloved ; the one of all others that I should least wish to grieve : and the knowledge that a few short hours (if expelled) would bring me disgraced into the presence of her, whose look of sorrow would cut me to the heart, rendered me miserable.

At last the great bell rang, and I felt that it *toll*ed the knell of my departure.

Springing from their beds, in which my companions had enjoyed a refreshing sleep—that sleep which youth alone can know in its integrity, and which to my eyelids was denied; they and I succeeded in making *la grande toilette* in a remarkably short space of time, and joining the gathering throng, we entered the schools.

My first thought was to find one of the members of the Red Nightcap Club; and chance threw Delville in my way.

“Here’s a pretty go, old fellow!” were the opening words of the long tale that I had to unfold, and which was instantly stopped by a wild laugh, and a hurried description of his fracas: “Oh! such a lark! Barron met me as I was returning from Mother Louth’s. He evidently mistook me for you; seized me by the neck with those wiry fingers of his, and nearly throttled me. Luckily, it was by the Cloisters, and nearly dark, (for day, as you know, had not broken); so, feeling that it was my only chance of escape, I downed him, and bolted. I only hope that I have put my mark upon him; I don’t forget the time when he heard the third form.”

“Heavens! then ’tis you, Delville, who

have unwittingly smashed me!" was my rejoinder. "What an idiot I must have been not to bring that face of yours to my remembrance! Oh! it's all up, and I am to be double flogged, and expelled, all through you!"

"Never, old fellow, never!" he replied; "don't be so quick: I'll give myself up—I don't care a rush for a flogging. I was attacked by a man in the dark, you know, and it is to be presumed that I did not know who that person was; well,—remembering the motto of my family, of which I am very proud,—‘Nemo me impune lacessit,’—I——" Here the cry of "Going up! going up!" put an end to all further conversation,—that cry which indicated the *cortège* of masters, arrayed in their gowns, coming up to school.

Taking our seats in the fourth form (Delville in the upper remove, I in the second), we patiently awaited the issue. Strange to say, that morning I was not called on to "go on" with my Greek. Luckily for me, perhaps, it was so, as I had not learnt one line; and who could, or would have done so, labouring under the expectation of a double flogging and the chances of expulsion?

The time occupied in getting through the morning lessons gave me ample opportunity for making up my mind how to turn this scrape to some advantage. A happy thought struck me—to take the flogging, and, that over, to protest my innocence. I knew the manly, noble character of Delville, and that he would not allow me to be expelled for a fault of his; so I had only to watch for an opportunity to speak to him, and implore of him to suffer me to have the punishment, and then to leave it optional with him whether he gave himself up or not. Should he decide upon doing the latter, I felt that I should possess a very enviable position; so dismissing all thoughts of the future, I looked for the coming of the monitor.

I had not long to wait. He came; the customary nod was given, with the intimation that I was “to wait;” and ere ten minutes elapsed, the clock struck, and school was over.

Delville’s anxiety for a moment’s conversation was as great as mine; and let it be sufficient to state that we had an opportunity of discussing the matter, and that in spite of his earnest entreaties, it was arranged according to my wishes,

on consideration of his proving my innocence after I had received the punishment, by candidly owning himself to have been the delinquent.

The reader will naturally feel curious to know why I should be so desirous of taking the punishment justly due to another. The fact was this : Epsom Spring Meeting was near at hand, and most eager was I to get there. I felt perfectly sure that Doctor B——, after he was fully convinced that I was innocent, would forgive me (as was his wont) my next flagellation. My ardent hopes were realized, for a time. It is true that our head-master disliked me personally ; he was nevertheless an honourable and an upright man, but he invariably showed the interest he had in me, when punishment was to be inflicted, by selecting a new birch rod, one that was not divested of its buds by prior use, and of singularly long dimensions.

Oh ! how well I remember that old oak cupboard, the receptacle of those rods, coeval with the building of the school ; the old hall, too, panelled with oak, where an inch of space can scarcely be found whereon the scholars of the present day may carve their names. How many

glorious names are cut in that old room ! How many, who have there left the memento of their youthful days, now lie mouldering in the dust ! “ Their names live after them.”

I have before said that school was over ; the grim old hall was nearly cleared of its occupants ; but, on looking round, my eyes rested still on four, who evidently had some business to transact—the doctor, his monitor, and two youngsters, who were doomed, it was soon manifest, to be partakers of my morning’s repast.

I will not deny that I felt an inward exultation that there were two other recipients, and who would be able to testify to my stoicism. One by one were we called up to lay ourselves upon the benches—the juniors first. I happened to be the senior, therefore the last, which enabled me to verify that, which we all believe to be a myth, viz., that the head-master must not raise his hand, in striking, above his shoulder. He did not.

With intense interest I watched the amount of physique applied to my young friends, and began to flatter myself that my suffering would not be very great, if the force with which their quota was given was not increased in my case.

How vain were my hopes! how different the application, as regarded myself (which I so intensely felt, but did not see), with that which I had only *seen* administered!

Well, reader, flogged I was and double flogged, if not to my heart's content, certainly to give an immense amount of satisfaction to the reverend gentleman, who so ably did his duty.

Not a word escaped my lips—not a movement evinced that I felt the slightest pain: I had nerved myself to stand any amount of punishment, and to have my say after it was over.

The last lash had scarcely fallen (for each knew the number he was to receive) when up I sprang, and to the utter astonishment of the great man, commenced readjusting my unmentionables in his immediate presence—an unpardonable offence, as we were expected to scramble off, making a sort of peripatetic *demie toilette* before quitting the schools.

“Move off, sir!” thundered forth my executioner.

“Doctor B——” I replied, in the mildest of

voices, "you have flogged me for that which I have not done : all my protestations to my tutor, sir, were unheeded : now I have been unjustly punished."

I was merely told, in reply to my solemn declarations of innocence, that the case should be inquired into—which was done ; and to make an end of what I fear must be dull and uninteresting—the life of a school boy—I will only add that Delville confessed ; received the same punishment that was inflicted upon me ; that neither of us was expelled ; and that I had my next flogging forgiven, thereby making myself safe, as I thought, for my projected visit to Epsom.

The day of the Spring Meeting arrived, and I managed to be there (having previously contrived to get on the sick list) ; and had I returned direct from Epsom, I should not have been discovered ; but meeting with some young friends in London, I was induced to remain over two days ; was finally met by my tutor at eleven o'clock P.M., whilst riding up Harrow Hill ; was ushered immediately (late as it was) into the presence of the head-master, who hap-

pened to be sitting in conclave with some of the assistant teachers. I had, of course, nothing to say in my defence, but to urge in extenuation the punishment I had received for that which I had not done, and the promise given of my next fault being looked over. It was of no avail. My tutor pressed this last scrape with such venom, that the doctor yielded to his views, that the time had come for my dismissal. I was then informed that I was "no longer a Harrow boy."

Before I conclude my school reminiscences, I must bear honourable testimony to the generous feeling exhibited by the monitors, who offered (if I was spared dismissal) to be answerable for my conduct for six months! This, I would not listen to, but the refusal was couched in terms of the deepest gratitude.

I shall pass over the parting scene, which took place at the gates, with my school-fellows, as ensconced in a yellow postchaise (that thing of bygone times), with my tutor by my side, I wended my way to Gloucester Place, Portman Square.

CHAPTER II.

Begin Life at Sixteen.—Pros and Cons as to my Future Life.—A Veritable Portrait of a Private Tutor.—A Private Tutor.—Arrival at the Parsonage.—The Livery Servant.—The First Dinner.—Studies.—Good Fishing.—A Country Inn.—The Boar's Head.—The Jolly Boniface.—Jolly's Daughters.—First Love.—Jealousy.—Pike-Fishing.—Declaration of Love.—Bidding Farewell.

AT home, and with my mother. How puerile these words must fall upon the ears of the “blasé'd” man! I fancy I see the contemptuous smile, the sneer of many of my old associates—yes, gentle reader, of *friends*—the companions of my orgies, of my errors, if not of my crimes.

Sixteen years had barely passed over my head, when I may fairly say I commenced life; and a chequered one that life has been: a life of wanderings, a victim to circumstances, as well as to foibles. I will not attempt in the slightest degree to hide my faults, for “their name is legion.” I said that I was sixteen—mark me; I was a decade in advance of that. Harrow had made me a man before my time.

Oh ! that I could recall the misspent days, not only of my youth, but of my maturer years ! how differently would they now be passed ! how different would be the character of the man who writes this life ! But we all say that, when arrived at a certain age. Enough, that I trust a change for the better has taken place.—“It is never too late to mend.”

To return to my story ; and a strange jumble of fun and sentiment, the sublime and the ridiculous, it will probably prove. However, it is true ; and those who know me, are well aware of the vicissitudes that have fallen to my lot ; and, generally speaking, of the remarkably good luck, which has stood by me in really extreme cases ; far greater than I deserved.

Well ! I said that I was at home, and with my mother ; but there was another in that house who had great power over me, in the capacity of guardian ; the only one of three then alive, to whom my father had bequeathed us five children as wards ; and a better one never existed. The same I may say of the other two, but they had died some years prior to the period of which I write. He certainly fulfilled his duty ; and I,

to my dying day, shall entertain the strongest feeling of affection for his memory. This gentleman had become my stepfather, having married my mother. He has passed away to another and, I trust, a better world.

Of course, what was to be done with your humble servant, "Pilgarlick," became the principal subject of discussion? You may fancy there was no end to the pros and cons, for by this time it is to be supposed I *was* a Pickle. I "own the soft impeachment"—for my scrapes were daily becoming heavier, and in beautiful gradation. The bar, the Church, et cetera,—ay! "sword, gown, gain, glory"—all were discussed; but all to no purpose.

"He never will stick to a desk," said my mother.

"I doubt if he will ever shine in the pulpit," responded my guardian.

"Well, there's the navy, or army; and you are aware, my dear, that an illustrious person has stated, that there is one fool in every family. Why not send him to sea?" chimed in my beloved parent.

"Madness! he would not be one week with

his ship; if indeed you ever succeeded in getting him on board. I tell you that Charley is a veritable eel: he will slip through your fingers when you have the least mistrust of him; and, indeed, were he on the very eve of entering upon a profession that might be chosen for him, or even one that was of his own choice, he would be off with the last person he met, who used the slightest persuasion, and gave him to understand that some fun, as he calls it, was in prospect. Why, was it not only the other day that his eldest brother put down his establishment?—pardon my laughing, and don't look so serious, my dear Jane—‘boys will be boys:’ well, William, you know, in his absence discharged his two liveried thieves, who were sponging on him; sent his dog-cart back to Beaumont's, and his three horses to Rimell's; and this boy is not yet seventeen! Where he gets the money from, is indeed a mystery to me. I acknowledge his good qualities, nevertheless, with all his faults; for I fancy that they spring more from the head than the heart. And yet the boy is no ass! Let him go to some private tutor in the country; London is no place for him, and the sooner he

is out of it the better ; and this very day I will apply at Bohn's Library, on my way to the 'Home Office,' and trust, on my return, to state that I have been successful."—Thus ended the colloquy.

A few days subsequent to the conversation I have related, whilst lolling on one of the sofas in the front drawing-room, of which I was the only occupant (my mother having just quitted the room), I was startled by the door being suddenly opened, and the butler announcing a gentleman whose name I could not catch, but whose appearance stamped him at once as a tutor. I had then as good an eye for a member of the Church, as I have now for a sheriff's officer. He was the drollest-looking mortal I ever beheld, and yet it was the attire, more than the man himself, which attracted my attention. A slight sketch of his costume will suffice, and I will begin with his feet, reversing the order of things. He had low-quartered shoes ; white cotton stockings, encased in long black, elastic, tight pantaloons ; a black swallow-tailed coat, and white neckcloth. The man himself was not so bad-looking, had he been

properly dressed. He was upwards of six feet in height; excessively attenuated; with short reddish hair, and no whiskers.

But we must not judge by appearances.

Rising immediately from the sofa, I handed him a chair, stating that my mother would be back directly; and fortune favoured me by the almost immediate entrance of that lady, and thus a tête-à-tête was avoided.

I had now merely to listen to the commonplace questions and answers that must invariably pass before the arrangements for a transfer can take place between the parent and the one who was to be the future guide of her son's conduct and his studies.

In half an hour all was settled, and that day week was fixed for my departure from home.

The county of Kent was that in which my tutor held a curacy, some fifty miles from London; and a very pretty part of that fertile shire it was. I do not believe that any idea of emolument entered into my tutor's head when he received me into his house as his pupil; it was companionship he wanted. I dare say the reader will laugh at the last sentence, and think

what a queer companion I must have made him : we were certainly not "Arcades ambo."

However, strange as was the outward appearance of the man I have endeavoured to describe, I have seldom seen one who could shine in society more eminently than he did, and more especially so over the dining-table; not that he was given to making too free use of the good things of this life, for he was rather abstemious than otherwise, but being a first-class man at Cambridge, highly connected, and with great conversational powers, which much travel in foreign countries had vastly assisted, he was really a delightful companion—a thorough gentleman.

On the day appointed, I arrived at the town of Ashwell by the coach which left London at nine o'clock A. M., and which was esteemed a fast one, doing the fifty miles in something under seven hours—and was safely landed at an old-established hostelrie, yclept the "Saracen's Head." My foot had scarcely touched the ground before I was accosted by a most extraordinary character in the garb of a livery servant; his age might have been about

nineteen ; and if his master (for this was my tutor's man) was strange in his attire, what shall I say of his factotum ?

His coat was drab, which evidently had been made for a former servant, whose height must have far exceeded that of the creature who tendered me his services ; his knee-breeches, of black velvet, were far too long and too full for the legs, which were displayed in white cotton stockings : his hat was new, and was embellished with a broad silver band, which contrasted strangely with the round rubicund countenance beneath, and which, with his rustic manner, betokened his late elevation from the plough-tail.

A few minutes sufficed to point out my luggage to the porter of the hotel ; and desiring him to bring it to the residence of the Rev. Mr. Mount, I made my way, accompanied by my strange guide, to the outskirts of the town. Most agreeably was I surprised, on arriving at my tutor's house, to find so cheerful an abode—for such it was ; and although abutting on the road, the gardens were large, and remarkably well kept ; added to which, the walls and trees

were covered with fruit, which, to a youngster of my age, was a great desideratum.

I had not been many minutes in the room into which Job had ushered me, when my tutor's wife entered, and welcomed me (if I may call our meeting a welcome), stating that her husband was unavoidably absent, having been suddenly called to his cure, but that he would return in the evening; and that knowing the hour the coach would arrive, dinner would be ready in half an hour. She was accompanied by a little girl, about ten years of age, the only pledge of affection with which Providence had blessed my tutor and his better half—at that time the most disagreeable of all naughty children.

The dinner passed off stiffly enough on both sides; and lingering but a very short time over some dessert, I walked out to view the premises.

How little did I then think, whilst wandering about the grounds, that the fact of the introduction into that house would be so fraught with unhappiness to one person! how little did I believe that one of the turning events of my life,

was to date its commencement from that day !
Such was the case.

But of this I shall have much to speak before long, much that is painful, much that at first sight will not redound to my credit, as far as my heart is concerned.

Late in the evening my tutor returned home, and half an hour's conversation upon general topics put me perfectly *en aise* no allusion being made that evening to my studies.

Being perfectly satisfied, I made up my mind that Mr. Mount was just the sort of tutor that I required ; took my candle, and went to bed.

The following morning, after breakfast, found me "cramming" Greek, Latin, and French ; in all of which languages Mr. Mount was a proficient ; and I really believe that I learnt more in the four hours a day that I studied with him, than I did with twice that number with any other person, either before or since. He had the happy knack of attaching his pupil to himself, by treating him as his equal in years ; he was, as I have before stated, a polished man, despite his attire, and one whose society was much sought by the leading county families ; and he dis-

played great kindness towards myself, by intimating that he visited nowhere without his charge. It will be surmised that I was invariably asked to accompany him.

Time flew on agreeably enough; my four hours per day study became part of my existence, and was by no means toilsome, as it was optional with me how that time was divided.

I had not been many days located at Ashwell before I discovered that there really was some good pike and perch fishing to be had in the neighbourhood, and chance brought me in my wanderings to a very pretty village; distant about seven miles from us, where I was frequently to be found.

It was one of those truly lovely hamlets so peculiar to our own dear island; a district into which no machinery had found its way, and where the blighting influence of all that is attached to steam and its concomitants, had not then reached.

Never did I see a more vivid picture of rural life; the village girls with their bright shining faces all radiant with health; the country lads with their sunburnt cheeks, white smock-frocks

and stalwart limbs, so typical of rural contentment. I said that fishing brought me to this village, and in the first instance it had done so; but there was another attraction more potent by far.

Like most country places in England, the nearest house to the house of God was the public-house; and I can assure my readers that this house of entertainment deserves some little description.

It was evidently of the Tudor era, and antecedent to the reign of our Elizabeth, by the date over the porch, which indicated 1527, a year memorable for the giving up, by "Bluff Hal," of all claim to the crown of France, for the paltry pension of fifty thousand crowns.

Oh, that I had the descriptive powers of the author of "de l'Orme," whose delineations of particular spots are, perhaps, unequalled! With what delight have I dwelt upon the vivid pictures that his imagination conjured forth! Would that I had his pen, that I might describe the scenes of events, the actual spots, where so many extraordinary circumstances in my life have taken place; but I write facts, not fiction.

The Boar's Head (for that was the sign which, creaking, swung over the old porch) was in truth a house of the olden time, with all its gables, mullions, and trellis-work ; the garden, too, told a sad tale of departed greatness ; its antique yew trees, which had been, of yore, well trimmed, now running wild, betokened it to have been the residence of the lord of the manor ; and well to do, the occupier of that house appeared. Our "Boniface," who rejoiced in the name of Jolly, was exactly what the landlord of a country inn ought to be :—he was burly, frank, good-tempered ; one who knew everybody, from the squire down to the veriest youngster who could snare a hare. He was likewise butcher and horse leech, was on excellent terms with the rector of the parish (who, by-the-by, was a pluralist, and non-resident) ; added to which, he was the great pacificator of the village ; and in whose house, whatever might be the amount of noisy cheerfulness, the noise of cavil or of strife was never heard. "He would not have it," was his expression ; and his athletic form was at all times a guarantee of comfort and respect. He was, indeed, a capital fellow.

This worthy, of whom I have been dilating, was blessed with a large family—not only in number, but in growth; yet no one could deny that they were a fine family. A widower himself, he had brought up six children, two sons and four daughters; the boys, as he called them, were great manly fellows, and were chiefly occupied in farming, and they stuck to their duty: the farm was but small, situated in the midst of one of the best game districts in England; but never had a Jolly been brought before the magistrates as a poacher.

Now for the girls: how shall I describe them? well, they were much about on the same scale as the majority of the country women I have met with in Holland—yes, regularly Dutch-built; with the same pink-and-white complexions; not traceable to the same cause which affects the denizens of “The Low Countries”—humidity, for the neighbourhood was particularly dry; hair remarkably dark; eyes the same; and with dispositions which approximated to that of the father; displaying good temper and great confidence.

To return to my story. My visits to R——

were becoming more frequent. I have before confessed that a stronger feeling than my love of fishing had drawn me thither—Oh! reader do not laugh—it was love! Yes, as I thought —love, and first love, too.

With that vanity with which all boys of that age are imbued (I must own I considered myself excessively good-looking, and unfortunately I had been told so), I had formed a strong suspicion that the eldest of old Jolly's daughters rather more than liked me; in fact, that she was fast falling in love with me; and it is certain that a feeling, perfectly new in my breast, was engendered—it was a sort of “all-overishness” that affected me.

I cannot say that my appetite was rendered less hearty, neither was my “drinkytite” (a word taught me by a young lady) at all lessened; it was a disagreeable, unsettled feeling that had taken possession of me.

Well, it is very certain that Betsy (that was her name) showed an unmistakeable flutter both on my arrivals and departures, and there was no concealing, on her part, that she did not look on me in the light of an ordinary visitor.

Flattered I was. The very idea of my being loved ! and by such a big girl ; with such red cheeks, and with such arms—arms quite capable of carrying me anywhere, if requisite,—and smiled on by those dark eyes, quite overpowered me. I felt—yes, felt, that I really loved.

I have before stated that all the girls were remarkably buxom, but my Betsy surpassed them all in good looks, as well as size. This, and her untiring attention to my little wants, finally determined me to make my honourable passion known ; but it was not until that monster, jealousy, with its green eyes, attacked me, that I knew the extent (as I thought) of my love. Oh ! who can tell what I felt in accidentally witnessing a pair of impertinent arms encircled round my loved one's waist ? The act of her even handing a casual customer any refreshment, was wormwood to my feelings ; but that any one should touch Betsy—oh ! it was more than I could bear !

The real case was this : I had just arrived, and had put my pony into the stable, when having seen him fed, I strolled into the house with the ostensible intention of having a slight

luncheon before I commenced my fishing (but, if the real truth be told, to see my loved one), when, on passing a door which was partially open, I heard loud voices, and on looking in I saw that which I have just related.

Yes, Betsy in the arms of another; but against her will. How I inwardly blessed her when she, with Herculean strength, flung herself from her would-be lover!—with the emphatic expression of, “Ha’ done, will you? Keep your hands to yourself: none of yer liberties with me.” How solacing those few words broke upon my wounded spirit! I longed to be alone, to clasp her to my breast, and to tell her how much I loved her.

Frequent letters I had written to the same effect, but as frequently were they destroyed; for, young and verdant as I was, I had my suspicions that the sex were not wholly to be trusted; that they were liable to commit small breaches of trust, where their feelings were not entirely enlisted, by making fools of their admirers.

Annoyed, beyond measure, at the scene I have described, I returned to the porch, where I

had left my rod, and with it started, unseen by any in the house, for the river.

I had now come to the firm determination of unbosoming myself that very evening, if I could but find her alone. For two consecutive hours did I spin my minnows in that river without a run, when, just as I was reeling up, to return, a pike took me, which, after slight play, I landed. He was but eight pounds' weight, but in good season; and with this trophy of a wretched afternoon's sport, I returned to the inn.

Smile not, you of the "gentle art," that I should mention so trivial an occurrence as catching a pike: there was no fly-fishing in that neighbourhood, and I had not then studied "Ephemera." The rivers of Wales, of Scotland, and of Ireland, had never then been visited by me; Lochs Tay, Ericht, and Garve, in the Highlands, I had never seen: the equally good Loughs of Corrib in Galway, and of Glenties in Donegal, had never then found me by their shores.

But years have passed, and now where is the salmon stream or trout loch of any note that is unknown to me? Pardon the digression; it

is vanity, I own, that urges me on; for I am proud to say, I fear no rival in the "gentle art."

To my delight, I found Betsy sitting alone in our favourite spot—the old porch; she was reading. On seeing me, she rose, and with cheeks redder than ever, from her blushes (after questioning me as to my sport), asked me if I had seen the gentleman who was in the house about the time that I must have arrived. I candidly told her that I had; that I had also been an unwilling witness to the struggle with that person, and how pleased I was that she had resented the insult in the way she had done. I then asked her who he was; in reply, she told me that he was a gentleman farmer of the neighbourhood; that he often came to the house; and that those delicate attentions, which had so much hurt my feelings, were indiscriminately bestowed upon all the four sisters. That confession rather lessened the jealous feeling which, I own, had taken root in my heart; for that young farmer was as handsome a fellow as I have ever seen.

Taking my seat by her side, I requested

to know what book it was that appeared to interest her so much ; she replied, that it was a book of poetry ; and I found that she was reading the by no means *new* metrical composition, entitled “ Edwin and Emma.” I then asked her if she was fond of poetry : she said, that it was her passion ; she then put the same question to myself. I told her I was also a lover of rhythm, and immediately began to rack my brain for the few bits that I had learnt, thinking that it would break the ice, and give me an opportunity of declaring my boyish passion.

The sun was just sinking upon one of the loveliest days that I ever remember. Time and place were both decidedly suitable to an avowal of love ; and I felt that, however difficult the task I had before me, the time had arrived for me to declare myself (remember, this was my first attempt at love-making) ; and resolved I was, not to leave her until the avowal was made : and how well I succeeded, I leave the reader to judge.

I began by worming from her the actual extent of her poetical lore ; and finding it by no

means deep, I made up my mind that the first attack should be a poetical one; but being anxious that she should believe all my effusions as extemporaneous from my brain, I took the liberty of altering certain few words from the originals, just as occasion suited me.

Taking her hand, as we sat together, I gave it a gentle squeeze; and, by way of a commencement, began to dilate upon the loveliness of the sunset; the squeeze was returned, and she also agreed with me in everything I ventured to assert upon the beauties of nature.

“Betsy,” I began, “so you are fond of poetry, are you? do give me one little bit of your own making; for I am sure you can write verses: in fact, I do a little in that way myself.”

Edging herself away, and gently releasing her fat hand from mine, in which it was partly enclosed, she replied:—

“La! now, don’t now—I can’t—indeed I can’t: I never wrote no poetry in all my life.”

Winced slightly at the few double negatives she had given utterance to, I thought I would

try : and looking up into her face with (as I considered) the most bewitching of smiles, breathed forth the following little bit of Byron :—

“There is a dangerous silence in this hour ;
A stillness, which leaves room for *my* full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control.”

“No, does it now?” was the scanty ejaculation my beautiful lines drew forth. (I felt that I winced again.)

“Betsy ! I love you !” I gasped forth. “Oh, Betsy ! can you return the ardent, the undying affection of the man (?) who throws himself on his knees before you ?” (suiting my actions to my words).

“Oh ! does you love me, sir ? (another wince) ; and will you make me your own lawful wife ; and never leave me ; and in church too—and a lady ?”

“Doubt that the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt *I rove*.”

This last ebullition of feeling, on my part, was enough : she flung her fat red arms round my neck, kneeling, as I was, at her feet ; her head fell

upon my shoulder, and I was half smothered in ringlets. I was happy—at least I thought so ; the only drawback to that felicity, which assuredly is always attendant upon an avowal of a reciprocity of affection, was the frequent *slight* grammatical errors my poor dear Betsy was guilty of. Still I trusted, by careful watching, soon to be able to teach her to speak his Majesty's English with perfect precision—a task I have since found to be more arduous than I bargained for. At times, I endeavoured to persuade myself that those little “*lapsi linguæ*” were caused by the nervousness naturally accompanying the confession of her love for me ; so I resolved to be as happy as possible.

I little thought how short-lived would be my love, and how very soon my vows of constancy were to be broken. Evening was closing in, and I had some miles to ride ; so imploring Betsy to keep profoundly secret all that had occurred (and which, by-the-by, she told her sisters the instant that my back was turned), I clasped my fat *fiancée* in my arms, ran to the stables, put the bridle on my pony, and galloped back to Ashwell.

But—

“ Oh! was it right, or kind, or generous
To woo—yet wound : to sue—yet sting the heart ?
Whose only weakness was in too much faith !
Honour is love’s vicegerent upon earth.
Was—was it honourable ?”

My ride home was soon accomplished. The same kind reception as ever, awaited me at the hand of my tutor ; and discussing a hearty supper, I turned into bed, and dreamt of Betsy.

CHAPTER III.

A Visitor.—The Visitor's Family.—A New Flame.—Conflicting Feelings.—Revisit the Boar's Head.—Conversation with Mine Host.—Parting with my First Love.—My New Flame.—Encounter Mr. Kennett in the Public Reading-room.—The Postmaster and his Wife.—Encounter the Fair Object of my Search.—My New Passion.

A FEW days subsequent to the event I have just related, a gentleman visited my tutor. It was late in the evening when he called; but I soon perceived that he was in orders, and a very clever man; he was by no means young: he remained until late. On his departure I remarked to Mr. Mount that he appeared to be a most entertaining person. My tutor then informed me that he was a celebrated scholar, and that he had written several theological works, as well as some on botany; added to which, he said, "he is a first rate musician;" at the same time I learnt that he held the living

of Stamfield, some fifteen miles distant from us. Upon my inquiring whether he was married or not, I was answered in the affirmative; and that he had one only child, a daughter. "But," said my tutor, "you ought to see her, not on account of her good looks only, but as a specimen of what home tuition can do, when properly carried out; she has never received any other education than at her father's hands. She is very young, about seventeen, and excessively good-looking: her father sees very little company at his rectory; but they are coming into town to reside for some months: of course she is the idol of her home. I have but once passed an evening in her society, and I own I thought her charming; she is all naïveté, without a particle of conceit." The subject was here dropped.

I know not how it was, but from that moment the image of this beloved daughter (ideal as it was) was ever before me. I was afraid to be too minute in my inquiries. I knew not whether she was short or tall, dark or fair; I only knew that she was the idol of her parents, and kept in partial seclusion; at least, so I

judged, from my tutor saying that but very little company was received by her father.

This young lady had interested me beyond measure, and to such an extent, that no excursions had been made to Ruckford for upwards of a week. Conscience told me that I was behaving unkindly to the poor girl whom I had, but a few days before, vowed such undying affection for.

I confess that poor Betsy's frightful mistakes in grammar excessively annoyed me; but still I believed that she really was fond of me, and I tried to fancy that I loved her. However, I determined, the following day, to ride over to Ruckford; and went on thinking of my secluded beauty—my ideal idol.

The morning was fine; and immediately my breakfast was finished, I started (having asked permission) for the village residence of my fat lady love. I had hardly got out of the town, and in sight of that great public nuisance, the turnpike-gate, when I saw a pony-carriage, in which were two persons, a gentleman and a lady. My thoughts continually running on Miss Kennett, and fancying that every clergyman

drove an unpretending one-horse affair, I made up my mind that these were the persons that I was so anxious to meet, and so I immediately cantered on. I was right.

I recognized Emily's father, and raised my straw hat as I passed; but my eyes were riveted upon the face of the daughter. I knew not whether my bow was returned or not, for I had no eyes for any one but her.

She was, as my tutor said, a very handsome girl; but it was more the excessive sweetness of expression that attracted my attention than anything else; of course I could not form a perfect opinion of this fair young creature, from the hasty glance I had in passing.

With my mind totally wrapped up in the lovely face that I had for the first time seen, I hastened on to Ruckford.

The feelings I had were conflicting. Had the father returned my salutation, unnoticed by me, from my attention being so entirely absorbed in regarding his daughter? or had he refused to acknowledge that he had ever seen me before? I knew not what to think.

Then, again, poor Betsy's form came before

me ; the girl to whom I had but just spoken the first words of love—yes, of love, as I then believed—that had ever passed my lips.

My ride was by no means a pleasant one.

I was not callous-hearted ; it was vanity, and a want of stability that was then, and for many years has been, my bane ; but the vanity has passed away, and stern reality is all that remains.

In three quarters of an hour I was again at that old porch, which, from the first time that I had entered it, had been everything that was beautiful in my sight ; for it was there I first saw Elizabeth Jolly.

How different were the feelings in my young breast on that occasion ! The whole place seemed changed.

The same sun shone as brightly that morning as it had done on the evening when I last saw it ; the same cheerful voices I could hear ; and, above all, the good-tempered laugh of the honest old landlord.

Giving a “whoop” as I rode up, I waited the coming of the ostler. The first person that ran out to welcome me was poor Betsy. I felt my heart grow cold as she eagerly hastened the

coming of the old man to take my pony: I jumped off, and entered the house with her.

No rod was with me that day, which seemed to astonish her excessively, as I had never been there before without all the paraphernalia of a fisherman, albeit that it was but "pike" and "perch" to catch. I did not appear, I verily believe, in her eyes, the same person minus my creel.

Entering the bar in preference to the private room offered to me, and telling Betsy I would see her shortly, I ordered a glass of brandy-and-water, believing it then, as I do now, to be a panacea for the "blues."

I soon found myself in conversation with old Jolly and his customers. They were all apparently very respectable men, and seemed to pay me marked attention: perhaps the attention I received at their hands was intentional, as far as obscuring the small quantum of sense nature had endowed me with.

However, it was not for upwards of two hours after my arrival, that I sought any interview with the poor girl, to whom I, only eight days before, so poetically had sworn undying love.

I was privy to all her little manœuvring for

me to leave the bar, and the company I was with, to join her; but I was literally tied to my seat. Conscience told me that I was acting wrong, and made me dread being alone with her. At last, I mustered courage, and amidst the winks and suppressed laughter of my friends, I managed to gain the room where Betsy sat alone. She was just the same good, kind-hearted girl, and was the first to revert to the conversation of the last evening of our meeting.

The repeated glasses of alcohol I had imbibed, had by no means rendered my brain clearer than usual, and what was then the real opinion that poor girl formed of her lover, upon his first visit, after the confession of his love, to this day I have never known; but I remember my passion was no longer expressed in plagiarism, for my poetical vein had totally deserted me.

I did not attempt to retract one word that I had said, when she asked me, with tears in her eyes (real tears), if I loved her—for I swore I did. I muttered something about my mother, and being under age, when she pressed me upon the subject of the *happy day*; and beginning to feel anything but well, I rose, and,

by sundry "tacks," reaching the rope, I rang the bell, when the servant entering, I ordered my pony.

I, to this day, remember the peculiar look depicted upon that young woman's countenance, as I rose to say "Good-bye:" it was not that smile of sadness which usually accompanies the parting of lovers; it was not half anger at seeing the man (?) she loved in a state of semi-intoxication; no—it was downright astonishment at the alteration which had been effected in my manner, in so short a space of time.

The pony was brought to the door; I mounted, waved my hand to Betsy, and with an unsteady seat galloped off to the town of Ashwell.

We never met again!—But I heard from her, and shall have to revert to her.

With a slight headache, I rose early in the morning, and had all my lessons prepared before breakfast. Luckily, the ride home, and the freshness of the evening air, had nearly driven away the effects of the spirit I had taken; and Mr. Mount discovered no alteration in my manner. I mentioned the fact to my tutor, of my having seen Mr. Kennett and his daughter;

no allusion, however, was made by that gentleman to the subject, and by one o'clock in the afternoon I was my own master.

My first thought was to discover the residence of the family in whom I was so much interested. I had little difficulty in effecting that; and delighted I was to find that the house they had taken was in the main street, and therefore not far distant from us.

How I walked about the town that day, in the hope of catching one glimpse of that sweet face—that face that had so bewitched me! I was doomed to disappointment: day after day the same ill success attended me. Every shop that was likely to be visited by ladies, I daily entered. The circulating library in that town was really above an average; like all provincial shops of that description, it was a regular “*omnium gatherum*,” for there was nothing that you required that would not be forthcoming, from a grand piano-forte to the smallest of good tracts: that shop was the one of all others most likely, I thought, to afford me a meeting; but even there no success attended me.

My tutor had kindly put my name down as

a subscriber to the reading-room ; a kindness I duly appreciated, but a place of réunion I seldom visited, as in those young days the newspapers were dry reading to me.

However, one day, walking up the main street, I saw Mr. Kennett enter those rooms : he evidently saw me, but either did not, or would not, remember me. I felt hurt ; and, in truth, my pride was wounded, as I began to believe that he studiously avoided a recognition.

Determined to know the worst of my suspicions, I also entered the rooms, and there was the man, whose bow alone was above all price in my estimation, in deep conversation with two or three of the antiquated *habitués* of our town, arguing over the price of wheat.

Walking up to the table, I took the first paper that my hand was laid on, and sat myself down. Mr. Kennett turned round, regarded me steadfastly, and bowed. I was delighted. The ice in this instance is assuredly broken, I thought ; but if I was so pleased by the simple bow of that gentleman, the reader may judge of my joy at finding myself in actual conversation with him. Addressing me in that manner so peculiar

to the well-bred man, he said : “ I think I have had the pleasure of seeing you before ? ”

I replied in the affirmative.

“ You are a pupil of Mr. Mount’s, are you not ? ” I bowed assent.—“ A most worthy and a clever man,” he added.

Turning himself round to an elderly gentleman, who was a banker and grazier to a large extent, sitting next to him, he went on : “ It is now at eighty-four shillings the quarter, I believe.” I threw down my paper and left the room.

Thus, for a time, were all my hopes of knowing more of Mr. Kennett, or his daughter, dashed to the ground.

Day after day the same routine of study was continued, and each day brought me no nearer the fulfilment of my most ardent wishes—an introduction to that family.

But chance at last brought about that which all my endeavours had failed to do.

One of my brothers, in age only one year and a half my senior, sent me a present of some money. My memory will not bear me out whether such things as “ registered letters ”

were in existence or not, in those days ; but I remember that my signature was required on the delivery. I happened to be out at the time. However, the postman left that letter, with a request that I would call at the office to testify to the due delivery of it. I did so. The postmaster of that town was a most obliging, civil person (which was not always, at that period, the case), and his wife was one of the kindest of women. They had a large family.

Truebridge, the postmaster, was a tradesman keeping an ironmonger's shop. In the afternoon of that day I called as requested, and signed the document. Requiring some gimp and hooks, for the manufacture of trolling-tackle, I thought I might as well purchase them at once, and gave the necessary order. As there were several persons in the shop waiting to be served, I remarked that I was in no hurry, but would go in and see Mrs. Truebridge, until he was more at liberty. I was requested to do so. I ought to mention that I had the entrée of the house, and that the entire family were at all times glad to see me. Of course, the usual "tittle-tattle" of a country town was discussed : births, marriages,

deaths, the last ball, the last market, &c ; when chance threw us upon the new comers ; and I inquired whether the family who had taken the house opposite was known to them.

Mrs. Truebridge replied, that she not only knew them, but that one of her daughters was going into service with them.

I was, of course, delighted : a chance was at last opened, and fully determined was I, not to throw that chance away.

“ Do you know Mr. Kennett ? ” inquired Mrs. Truebridge.

“ I do so far know him, that we have met twice ; but he appears so averse to enter into conversation with me, that I am at a loss to discover whether it is dislike to myself, or that he feels he cannot condescend to hold converse with one so young as myself ; more especially, as I hear he is so very clever,” I replied.

“ He is indeed clever, and as good as he is intellectual,” she continued. “ His wife was once a very handsome woman ; and she is good, too. I remember her when she was tolerably young ; she is the same now in everything but in years. But, tell me, have you never seen

the daughter? She is my beauty—she often runs in here, and is so kind to my youngest ones.”

“But hear me, Mrs. Truebridge,” I said. “Why on earth do they keep so close? they never see any company, I understand. The first time I met Mr. Kennett, was at our house; it was one evening; and I so much liked him: he interested me much; but now—since then he hardly appears to know me.”

“Oh! if you knew more of him, you would like him the more,” she went on: “his thoughts—yes, I believe he thinks only of his wife and daughter,—and yet he is much liked by the parishioners at Stamfield.”

“I fear I shall never know much of him, for he is the most indescribable person that I have ever met; and he keeps me so dreadfully at arm’s length, that I——” Here I was stopped by a little girl running into the room, all radiant with joy, exclaiming, “Mother, mother, here’s Miss Emily! here’s Miss Emily!” Rising from her seat (which movement was instantaneously followed by myself), Mrs. Truebridge was about to quit the room, to request that young lady to

enter, when who should appear at the door but the form of all others I so long had desired to see? Yes, that form which phantasy had coloured as perfection. Yes! it was true; we were in the same room together at last.

Seeing a stranger in that room, the young lady immediately drew back, and, in the sweetest accents, begged Mrs. Truebridge to grant her five minutes' conversation: they left together. In less than five minutes, the mistress of the house was back; and upon my offering my apologies for having been the unwilling cause of preventing the young lady making herself at home, as I was given to understand she always did, Mrs. Truebridge said, "You have nothing to be sorry for, sir; Miss Kennett merely called to say, that whenever Maria could be spared, her mother would be glad of her services. She was in a great hurry: she asked me who you were, and I told her that you were the young gentleman who was reading with Mr. Mount; she merely added that she believed her papa had met you there. Nothing more was said, at least as far as you were concerned."

I remained upwards of an hour, chatting with

the postmaster's wife and family. I was fearful of saying too much, but managed to instil into Mrs. Truebridge's mind a conviction of the immense interest I felt in the young lady, whom it appeared I was doomed never to know.

CHAPTER IV.

Visit to the Postmaster.—Description of my New Passion.—Game and Poachers.—A Tinker-Poacher.—Sporting Adventure with the Poacher.—Encounter my New Passion with my Tinker Companion.—Wish to Avoid her.—Dialogue with her Father.—Present the Father with some Game.—Invited by the Family.—The Poacher in his Cups.—The Poacher's Insolence.—Success of the Sport.—Conflicting Passions.—A Gratifying Invitation.—My New Passion.—Promotion of my Tutor.—The Fair Maid of Kent.—The Poacher Pardoned.—My Visit to the Postmistress.—The Dinner-Party.—My Delight with Miss Kennett's Sprightliness.—My Embarrassment.—Merriment of the Young Lady.—Very Happy.—Pleasant Leave-Taking.—Was I Loved?

WEEKS had passed, and the month of September had fairly set in: I remember it well. Mr. Kennett and his family had returned to the rectory of Stamfield, the repairs of the house having been completed, and which was the cause of their coming to Ashwell. I confess that I was as much a stranger to the family, on their departure, as I had been on their arrival.

One day I called on the postmaster's wife, and was informed that the family would be back

the following week ; that their stay would be but short, as they merely came on account of the visitation about to be held, and because our town was not so far distant from the city of Rochester as his own parish.

I have said that this young lady, who had so thoroughly engrossed all my feelings, was remarkably well-looking. It is true ; and a hasty sketch of what she was, at the time in which I write, may at once bring her before my readers. She was rather tall, "*bien prononcée*," yet not in the least "*en bon point*," with a profusion of fair hair, which slightly tended towards auburn : her skin was beautifully white—but her eyes ! how shall I do justice to those splendid organs of vision, which were the admiration of all who had seen her ? They were of the darkest blue, fringed with the longest and the darkest lashes. They were eyes I had never seen before, as the companion of fair hair, and have never since seen ; and which I believe to be very uncommon : her hands and feet were in keeping with the rest.

Doubtless, many of my readers will think that the description here given of this fair young girl,

who has had so great an influence over the whole of my life, is merely what one reads of as that of many a heroine in a novel. I beg to say it is not so. I have no heroine, and I write the truth; she was as I have stated her to have been.

The family arrived, and again took up their residence *vis-à-vis* to my old friend the postmaster. The time was drawing nigh when my fondest hopes were to be realized—an introduction—a veritable introduction to the fair maid of Kent; but how that introduction was brought about, it is necessary that I should recount.

It had been my habit, during the first visit Mr. Kennett made to Ashwell, to walk up and down continually before his house; a breach of decorum that I would not now be guilty of; but at that time I was excessively “verdant.”—My peregrinations had not passed unnoticed, more especially so, by the one of all others, by whom I wished every movement of mine to be watched. Those attentions, albeit they were indelicate, had their due weight. Mrs. Truebridge had, woman-like, not failed to impart all that I had said in praise of the young lady

to her mother, and had even gone so far as to tell Emily herself. That of course had its weight. My worldly position was well known in Ashwell—that I was a youngest son; that upon my reaching twenty-one years (I was going to say, years of discretion), I should be entitled to a great deal of ready money. That perhaps threw something into the scale towards gaining favour. Yes, everything about me was known; and, I verily believe, more than I was aware of myself. Certain it is, an interest was created. I do not wish to insinuate that the interest I speak of emanated from worldly or selfish motives. Mr. Kennett was too well known, and his love and pride in his only daughter too well appreciated, to believe that he would ask any one to his house in the hope of ultimately settling that only child in life.

It was now nigh the end of September, the visitation week had passed, and still the family remained in our town. The part of the county in which I was residing was noted for game, and poachers. My good and easy tutor allowed me to amuse myself as I listed; the banker and grazier (before alluded to) had by this time made me his

“young friend,” as he was accustomed to call me, and habitually asked me to dine with him once in every fourteen days. Rare “feeds” I had ; but to crown all his kindness, he had given me permission to shoot over that part of his property which was not preserved, always “bar-ring” the pheasants.

Within two hundred yards of our residence lived a tinker—a stationary one ; he was, indeed, at the head of his profession. I do not mean as a mender of pots and pans only, but of poaching. Well, this man procured for me a brace of pointers for the sum of twenty pounds ; (H——, the tailor of Bond Street, paid for them). “They were,” he said, “dirt cheap ; none of your slow, gentleman-like dogs : you shall see how they’ll work a hedgerow ; and they can chase a bit, I guess.” Desirable qualities those, I considered ; and thus they became my property. They were really good-looking dogs, and remarkably “fine in the stern,” as my tinker friend told me a dozen times a day.

It was a beautiful morning when I set out to meet Tom Fleming, for a trial of my new dogs. It was arranged that our meeting should take place

at the back of an old barn, half a mile out of town, on the Rochester road. It was not likely that I wished to be seen parading the town with such an attendant; for in truth Tom was the personification of his class—he was every inch a tinker; his face had seen no water for at least a fortnight; his dress was half keeper, half knife-grinder, and he had on his head that which has now become the wear of a gentleman, a veritable “wide-awake;” his coat (I forgot to mention it) rejoiced in an excess over the usual number of pockets, and of very large dimensions. The skirts of that coat were not divided, so thereby he could stow away a brace of hares easily, without the slightest suspicion.

Yet Tom was, in his way, a good fellow: I liked Tom; he taught me much, and was half instrumental in gaining me the introduction to the one I so much loved.

“Fine morning,” says Tom, as I came up to the place of rendezvous; “the birds will lie well to-day; we’ll try the stubble first, and drive them all into the twenty acres: they’re in turnips this year. This time last season I had a rare day’s sport in that ’ere field; it was under seed

clover then ; but somehow we were interrupted, and had to cut."

"Well, Tom," I said, "let us be off;" so, crossing the road, we entered a large stubble-field ; and a likely place indeed it was for birds.

"Hold up ! hold up !" cried my tinker friend ; and away dashed my two beauties, as he called them, each dog taking a hedgerow to himself. They were soon round the field, when they began to quarter their ground as systematically as any "gentleman's" dogs would have done ; but the first field was a blank.

"Ware fence !" screamed Tom, as Jip topped a bullfinch into the very twenty acres of turnips that I have before alluded to. "Come back, you d—d brute !" Jip, to my astonishment, hopped back again almost immediately, at the persuasive request of my elegant attendant, and came crouching to his feet.

"Ye'll break fence, will ye ? I'll teach ye better." And taking the unfortunate dog by the ears, he nearly shook his head off.

"That's enough, that's enough, Tom," said I ; "don't thrash him ; I hate to see a dog licked ; and you make such a deuce of a row, we shall

have Lord W——'s keepers down upon us directly."

"And what do you care for any such like of them? hasn't you got leave over all Squire Jerrod's property? What do you care for the keepers?"

"Why, look here, Tom: it's true that I have Mr. Jerrod's leave to go over any part of his land that is not preserved; and I am bound down to leave the pheasants alone when October comes in."

"Pshaw!—can any one in the early part of the season tell a partridge from a young long-tail, I should like to know? I couldn't, I knows, and I knows summut."

"But look, Tom, I have no certificate; and we might be pulled up, and fined."

"Eh! eh! ch! The d—l! We must be cautious, I see. Never mind, we'll beat these twenty acres, and then bear off for the river: all there's Squire Jerrod's."

Our mode of proceeding being thus arranged, we opened the gate, and entered the field of turnips.

I must here mention that Tom appeared to

scan each hedge with remarkable pertinacity, and at last his manœuvres became apparent. I was at some little distance, when I saw him draw from his capacious pockets two queer-looking articles, which, in a very short time, he put together and brought to his shoulder; the weapon appeared to resemble a gun excessively. I stood for an instant watching him—when I heard a very slight report, and he instantly rushed to the hedge. In a very few seconds I was by his side, when, to my astonishment, I saw that he had a hare in his hand, and that the queer-looking weapon was an air-gun. Before questioning him as to its use, never having handled one before, he explained to me, in his strange jargon, the great advantages it possessed over my more lawful fowling-piece.

“This here bit of an air-gun I’ve pumped for eight charges,” continued Tom. “I always carries him; it don’t bark like your thing, and bring keepers down on us.”

I will not, however, weary my readers with the long tirade I was doomed to listen to as to the merits of that illegal arm. Unscrewing the barrel from the stock, Tom replaced both in his

pocket, and we proceeded to beat the turnips. In less than five minutes I heard Tom cry out, "Soho! have a care, Jip. Walk up, sir, walk up, and give 'em a family shot." Attending to his instructions, I walked gently up to the dogs. Jip had got the point, whilst the other *did* "back" (which is something to say for a poacher's dog), when up rose the whole covey; both barrels I discharged at them, when one bird alone fell to the ground.

"Confound it!" says Tom, "that's bad work." Marking the birds, we saw them alight at the further end of the large field. Having recharged, we proceeded to follow them up, when my companion stopped me (eager as I was), by quietly putting his hand upon my shoulder, and at the same time making this cool request:—

"Now, sir, does you want birds? it'll never do to go home with an empty bag: just lend me the loan of that 'ere piece of yours, for just a bit, will ye, sir?" I looked at him. The dogs had again got a point. What was I to do? In truth, I did want birds—and, besides, I was, I own, exceedingly dubious as to my own powers.

Well, I gave up the gun to him, and we walked up to the dogs—again was the covey flushed ; Tom fired, and two birds fell to his first barrel, and one to his second.

“ Well done, Tom ! ” I exclaimed.

“ Hold hard, sir—hold hard ! ” said Fleming, putting his hand so as to screen his eyes from the sun, and intently watching the remaining part of the brood as they flew away. “ They’re all down again, and if I can but kill the two old birds, I’ll have ’em all.”

We immediately started after them ; but it will be sufficient when I say, that seven brace and a-half of partridges, and one more hare did Tom bag in his favourite field, “ The Twenty Acres.” I have seen many good shots in my life, in England, the Highlands of Scotland, and in Ireland also ; but I never yet saw a better than Tom Fleming. It is not that I judge him by that one day’s sport, for, subsequently, I had many opportunities of witnessing his prowess. Poacher as he was, he was a fair poacher (an anomaly) ; but I must not lose time in endeavouring to prove how the tinker was half a legitimate sportsman.

To continue my story.

“Well, Tom,” said I, “it’s high time we were off from this; let us bear towards the river. On Arnold’s ground I know that I shall be all right; and, after beating that, we can have a mouthful of bread and cheese, and a glass of beer, and steer towards home, for I am bound to be back by five o’clock.”

“All right, sir, all right, sir,” said Fleming; “but there’s a public not far off from here, where there’s an unaccountable good glass of ale—it’s not three hundred yards off; suppose as we go there.”

Granting an assent, Tom leading the way, still carrying my gun, we walked straight to the gate which brought us into the road; proceeding along which, a short distance, we came in sight of an inn, where swung a large sign, quartering the arms of the noble house of W——e. It was a very respectable-looking house of entertainment, although nothing to my dear old “Boar’s Head.” Standing opposite, were two carriages; one apparently well filled with ladies: that which the gentler sex occupied was a remarkably well-appointed barouche

—the other was an unpretentious pony carriage. Emily's form was in my imagination immediately.

Now, Tom Fleming was not the man that a youngster of eighteen years would be proud to be seen with; the tinker was not exactly the man to display as a "gillie"—there was too much of the original craft about him; knife-grinder and tinker was ineffably stamped upon that one of God's creatures.

With a heightened colour on my cheeks, I made my way towards the inn. It was impossible to get there without passing the carriages alluded to. My eyes were naturally turned on the barouche, for that carriage was the nearest, and the most resplendent. However, I passed, and in that carriage sat Emily Kennett!

If my face had coloured from a false feeling of shame at having poor Tom as my companion, and believing that I was unknown, what must it have done when I saw that young lady's eyes intently fixed upon me and my companion?

The truth is, my bag carrier did not bear the best of characters; yet, there was nothing

radically bad in him, only he was more frequently to be found in the "public," as he invariably called any licensed house, than the church. He had never done anything to bring him before the "beaks," as he was accustomed to designate all those lieges who held the questionable office of "justice of the peace."

But we must leave Tom : and my pen—I wish it was the pen of a ready writer—must note down events in which those of a higher grade are concerned. I entered the inn and, to my further abhorrence, found Emily's father in close confab with the owner of the barouche (as I afterwards found out) : they were talking in the passage. Making my way by them, and raising my cap as I passed, I was in the act of entering one of the rooms, the door of which stood open, when I distinctly heard my name mentioned : however, in I went. My first act was to ring the bell, and order some bread and cheese and some ale, as I had made up my mind to remain until the departure of the "swells," as Tom facetiously called all those who claimed unto themselves the rank of gentry.

I had not been many minutes over my

luncheon, when the landlord entered, and informed me that Mr. Kennett had inquired after me. Irritated as I was, foolishly fancying that I had lost caste by the fact of Fleming being with me, I immediately went out, determined to brave a meeting.

On descending the step, I saw Emily's father leaning over the door of the barouche, laughing and talking with its occupants. I at once made sure that I was the subject of conversation: however, directly he saw me, he advanced to meet me, and, to my infinite joy, to offer his hand.

"Well, Mr. Stretton," he said, "once again we meet. What sport have you had?"

I replied that my sport had been tolerable; but that owing to the heat, my dogs could not work, and that I had repaired to the inn, to refresh them and myself.

"You appear to have made a good bag, anyhow; I presume you are an unerring shot?"

"Yes, sir, pretty good," I replied; "and if you will accept some of my morning's work, I shall be delighted."

“But why should I deprive you of your hard day’s earnings? I dare say it is not every day that you can get that leave which enables you to amuse yourself in this manner, and I trust that the classics do not suffer in consequence.”

“No, sir; Mr. Mount is satisfied if I work four hours a day, and he is very kind to me, and I do all I can to please him, for I like him.”

“And I like to hear you speak of your tutor in the way you do; it speaks greatly in favour of both. By-the-by, Mr. Stretton, is it true that there is a chance of Mr. Mount obtaining excellent preferment in the North?”

“I have heard nothing of it, sir; and I think he would have mentioned the subject to me, had it been the case, for he treats me in every way as his equal, although I am only his pupil.”

With this he tendered me his hand, which I grasped, I need not say, with the greatest pleasure, telling him that I would run in and fetch the game: he begged me not to do so, but I was determined there should remain this time somewhat by which I might be brought to remembrance hereafter.

Hastening back into the inn, I found Tom Fleming; he was in the kitchen: the game-bag was lying on the floor, out of which I drew forth a brace of hares and two brace of partridges; loaded with which I returned to the carriage.

I was just in time, for Emily's father was on the point of starting. In spite of his refusal to take more than a hare and a brace of birds, I crammed them all in under the back seat; again he shook me by the hand, and with marked kindness of manner said, "I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at my house at Stamford: if anything should bring you to the 'Weald,' remember, I shall be very glad to see you. I have no shooting to offer to you; mine is but a dull house, and perhaps books are at a discount with you; but remember, I shall be happy to see you."

With this he drove away, without offering to introduce me to his daughter, or indeed to any one member of the party.

The barouche also moved away with its lovely load, for although I had no eyes but for one, I

saw sufficient to convince me that the other three young ladies, who occupied the carriage, were far from being mediocre.

I watched the carriage until all sight was lost by a turn in the road, and with a feeling of joyousness unknown to me before, I returned to my room at the inn.

Throwing myself into a chair, I began to collect my thoughts. "Yes," I said to myself, "I am at last invited; and you, Emily, have been an eye-witness and an auditor of all that has passed."

There was one slight drawback here again to my happiness. I had been watching Miss Kennett during the short colloquy that took place between her father and myself; and although it was evident she was deeply interested in it, I could plainly see that she herself, as well as her companions, were chatting together under suppressed laughter. This I did not relish, and I thought it odd that he expressed no wish to see me whilst in the town of Ashwell. Nevertheless, I was happy, and could think of nothing but the invitation. Yes, that invitation

which secured to me the certainty of an introduction to that one loved being.

I must now return to Tom. After musing away some twenty minutes in thinking of happiness to come, I strolled into the kitchen in search of him. I was glad to find that he had made so good an account of the provender put before him. Having but a short time before dinner which I could call my own, I told Fleming to finish his glass. I did not like to return home with a poor bag ; and safe I felt whilst the tinker was by my side ; so I determined to try Arnold's farm. "Tip" and "Ben" had received their quantum of sustenance, and appeared fresh ; so, paying our little score, we started. It struck me, before we had gone many yards from the house, that Tom had indeed not forgotten to take care of himself, for he was so excessively conversable ; and, upon my reminding him of the necessity of my being home by five o'clock, as there were some friends coming to dinner, he actually answered me by saying, "Dinner be d—d ! who cares 'bout dinner ? there's lots of time, and there's a rare piece just below the road—nothing but

feg like—rare place for a hare—let's try that first."

"Well, do as you like; but mark me, Tom, I will be home to dinner," I said.

"All right, all right; but d— me, why the d—l did you go and give them two hares to that white choky man? gentry don't care for hares—it's birds they want, and I consequently considered them two hares as my perkesite, and I wants a hare for a gentleman who wants un very bad, and he's a raal gent—and you knows un."

"Confound you, Fleming, hold your tongue, and do not bother me! Do as you like, as long as I am with you, but to dinner I will go."

"I don't mean by no means to offend, sir— young gentleman as you are; right's right, and them two hares was mine. No gentleman buys a hare."

"Deuce take you! did I ever sell a hare?" I answered, walking up to him, and seizing the barrel of my gun. Tom held his grasp, and there was a peculiarity about his look, which seemed to say, "Were you a man, I would knock your brains out." I still held on, when Tom, eyeing me for a moment, slacked his hold, and

allowed me to take it: at the same time commencing the following elegant oration:—

“Now look here, young gentleman—I came out this morning to serve you—you wanted birds:—I got ’em: them two hares I killed. Why, you would have gone on all the blessed day scattering powder and shot to the winds; and hang me, if fur or feather you’d have ever touched: and another thing, one of them hares has got a jolly hole drilled through him; they’ll think that you were uncommon near him when you shot him. I made your bag, and you knows it; but may I be hung if I ever go out with another young gentleman as you are. There are them two dogs, too, which any nobleman might be proud of; I lets you have ’em for twenty pounds, when I have been offered thirty. I did it to serve you, like; but it’s always the way—‘eaten bread’s soon forgotten.’”

Exasperated I was, irate to a degree, knowing that I had done nothing to call forth this exhibition of violent feeling on the part of the poacher. However, I deemed it the wiser plan to take his insults calmly, than to retaliate, so I said, “Home—we’ll beat no more.”

Tom evidently did not like returning before the bag was replenished, and he began to soften down wondrously in his manner; so much so, that I told him to try Arnold's ground, to get, if possible, another hare, and a brace or two of birds, but to work towards home. Drunk as the tinker was, nothing escaped his unerring aim; and long before the time allotted, the required addition to the bag was obtained. Leaving some game with Mr. Arnold, and accepting a draught of his best home-brewed, we made the best of our way to Ashwell. Fleming was evidently very uneasy; and I could see plainly that he felt he had gone too far; he became as civil as he had been insolent; however, I did not allow him to see that his altered manner was appreciated; and thus we separated half a mile from my abode. On parting, I offered him a hare and a brace of birds; the latter he refused; he had got what he wanted. I did not forget to tell poor Tom that I would be with him in the morning, and arrange with him for his loss of time. But the tinker was not greedy for money; and we parted tolerably good friends.

Arrived, and with ample time to spare, I went to my own room to make the most of myself, before appearing at the dinner-table. Our small dinner party was very commonplace; we had a real live member of parliament, and his son, who was about my own age; two clergymen, with their wives—one childless; the other, possessing two very presentable daughters.

The evening passed pleasantly enough: we had, of course, plenty of music and singing; and I remember one of the young ladies brought with her a song, which had just come out, and which certainly made a great stir in the musical world of that day. That very pretty ballad remains, even up to this time, one of our stock songs: I shall not tell the reader the title of it, for thereby my age may be discovered: this I will say—I am not yet fifty. By midnight all had left us, and I gladly retired to my bed. I could not sleep: one moment I was thinking of the lovely girl I had that day seen—and then, the figure of poor Betsy would obtrude itself, for qualms of conscience, I own, came over me; at last nature would have her way, and I slept. The following morning found me at my studies.

as usual; my tutor was in the room, when Job, of whom I have before spoken, entered, bearing two notes upon a small silver salver; the one was for Mr. Mount, the other for myself. With a fluttering heart I broke the seal (those were not the days of the adhesive envelopes), and to my delight, I found my most ardent hopes gratified—the long wished-for invitation had come at last; and I almost blessed poor Tom, for certainly he had half the credit of gaining me an introduction into that house, so difficult of access; at least it so had proved to me.

“Why, here’s an invitation from Mr. Kennett to dine with him on Thursday next,” said my tutor.

“I have received a similar one, sir,” I replied.

“Well, of course, you will go—I am really sorry that I cannot; for I have to be in London on that day. You will, I have no doubt, pass a very pleasant evening; they are exceedingly nice people, and it is a pity that they do not enter more into society. Maybe, by-and-by, they will do so, as the daughter is growing up, and they cannot keep her excluded from the world. The father and mother cannot expect to

live very many years ; and I have no doubt they would be glad to see her settled in life before real old age should have overtaken them : and we gentlemen of the cloth are not proverbial for our riches."

Each word that was uttered rendered me more uneasy : the thought of this girl, whom I pictured as perfection, being out in the world, surrounded by admirers, was quite enough to excite my jealous feelings. There was one great satisfaction I had—the recollection that I was invited to visit them whenever I should be in the neighbourhood of Stamfield ; and I made up my mind to take Mr. Kennett at his word the first opportunity.

Although I felt excessively overjoyed at the prospect of becoming intimately acquainted with this family, I was restless and uneasy. Betsy Jolly would intrude herself on my imagination, and that morning more than ever ; so much so, that I determined to ride over to Ruckford immediately after my morning studies were concluded, without giving one thought of how I was going to act, and much less of what I intended to say.

My work was soon over ; I asked permission to ride over to Ruckford, and obtained it, resolving to act up to my determination, as I thought. Ordering my pony, I sat down and wrote a note accepting the invitation for the following Thursday. Having a few minutes to spare, I thought I would walk up as far as the postmaster's house, with the hope of gaining a glimpse of Miss Emily, and, perhaps, of hearing from Mrs. Truebridge that my name had been mentioned, if only casually, by her. I was well aware that I was a favourite with the postmaster's wife, and I had no fear that she would allude to me, in conversation, in any other manner than with the greatest kindness ; and I inwardly prayed that she might be the cause of an interest being created in my favour.

The lady of the house was, however, from home ; but on looking up at the drawing-room windows opposite, I saw the object of my visit, and she evidently recognized me : she did not attempt to retire, but continued at her employment, as I thought, of attendance upon some flowers. I was satisfied ; I had seen her ; and so walked back in search of my pony.

Reaching my home, I thought it would look better if I spoke a few words to Mr. Mount before I started. I entered his study; he was writing; but looking up, with the same good-tempered smile I was accustomed to receive, he begged me to wait a few minutes, as he had something to say to me.

“I will not detain you long,” said he; “I will but finish this letter, and then five minutes will be enough for me to tell you all I have to say.”

The letter was finished, folded, and sealed, when he continued: “I have received from S—— this morning, letters which I fear will be the cause of your leaving me.”

I looked up with astonishment, as it was the last thing that I wished; and just as I was about to know the beautiful girl whom I evidently was fast falling in love with.

“The fact is this,” he went on, “a living in the north of England has been offered me, with every probability of increased preferment in the Church. I shall, indeed, be sorry to part from you, but hope frequently to hear of you. I can only say, that whilst you have been with me, you have done everything that I could wish, and

I thank you for it. I regret that the time will be so short that we shall be together, for I must be up in London as soon as I can. To-day I go to W——, and on Thursday I must be in the metropolis, where I shall see your guardian, and your mother, to whom I will not fail to give a good report.”

I felt bewildered, and grieved; for I liked my tutor.

This news, so sudden, so thoroughly unexpected, quite drove poor Betsy out of my mind, as well as the really kindly-intended visit to Ruckford; proving how much worth was my *fixed determination*.

There were still two days ere the long coveted hour would arrive, that was to introduce me to the “fair maid of Kent,” as she was now styled in our neighbourhood. I felt they passed heavily. Tom Fleming had been with me, or rather we had met, by previous arrangement, at the back of our stables; for Tom, as I said before, was not one whose appearance was most creditable. He confessed that he had imbibed, the day that we were out together, too freely, and suffered his tongue to “run wild-like, a bit.” He

said he hoped that I would think no more of it, as he was very sorry. That little amende quite satisfied me, and we were soon fast friends again. I did not think it necessary to acquaint him with the particulars of the intended dispersion of our establishment, as I was fearful, from his garrulity, my little debts would be tumbling in sooner than I wished them. So we parted, but not before he assured me that he was always at my service when I required a good bag made up, that he knew where there was a "stunning pike or two," if I required them, and informing me that he had "some sixty yards of as good trammeling as ever made a compass."

The following morning Mr. Mount started by the early coach, and I found myself my own master. I felt, however, tied to the town; no thoughts of shooting that day. I wandered into the reading-rooms, from thence into the library, and at last visited Mrs. Truebridge, and pleased I was to find her alone. After talking upon every-day subjects, and beating about the bush to induce her to begin upon that which was nearest my heart, I said, as if casually, "By-the-by, I have to dine to-

morrow at Mr. Kennett's: do you know whether there is to be a large party or not? I hate large parties."

"I believe not," Mrs. Truebridge replied. "I saw Miss Kennett this morning; I was over there; she said that you were to dine with them, but never mentioned how many more were expected. She said a good deal about you—that her papa liked you very much—but, I shall not tell you any more."

"Oh! do pray, Mrs. Truebridge, I implore of you," I answered; "do tell me all that she said."

"Well then," continued my informant, "she went on a great deal about you, about your being with that Tom Fleming, nasty fellow! She told me that she saw you the other day at the 'W——e Arms,' that you had given her papa some game, and that they had all laughed heartily, when out of your sight, at the evident misery you were in, at being seen in such company as Tom's; and at the contrast in the attire of the two sportsmen. But, I shall tell you no more, it will only make you vain, and young gentlemen have quite enough vanity nowadays."

Mrs. Truebridge's description of the mirth I was unintentionally the cause of, gave me infinite delight, in spite of the dislike we all have to ridicule.

I was liked, then, by the father; and the young lady has spoken of me in a manner that shows unmistakably that my outward appearance, is not displeasing to her. These were then my thoughts.

I now longed for the coming day more than ever, and without one thought being devoted to poor Betsy, returned home happy, but not without bidding adieu to Mrs. Truebridge, and thanking her for all that she had communicated.

At ten minutes to six o'clock on the following evening, I was at Mr. Kennett's door, having dressed myself thoroughly to my own satisfaction, and was received in the drawing-room by that gentleman and his wife, to whom I was a perfect stranger. First sight was sufficient to tell me that she was in reality all that had been said of her by Mrs. Truebridge, and with the remains of that beauty, which had so largely descended to her daughter.

Mrs. Kennett was very tall, and decidedly of

most commanding presence, but without being in the slightest degree masculine.

There was but one person in the room when I entered, besides the mistress and the master of the house; and that, to my great delight, was Mr. Jerrod, the banker and grazier, before alluded to; and on whose land Tom and I had so lately been shooting. (Was it not poaching?)

I was told that a gentleman, his wife, and daughter were expected; and that on their arrival our party would be complete. A few minutes more and the Reverend Mr. Howard, wife, and daughter were announced, and ushered in, and very delectable they all appeared; and I felt happy that our party was so small.

For the first time in my life, I rejoiced that my tutor was absent: I not only felt that he would have been a great check upon my actions, but I was thoroughly aware how small a figure I should have cut, when he commenced to launch forth on his travels, and began his descriptions of the different classical grounds that he had visited; and all given in the splendid language that he so well knew how to use.

But why lingered so long the idol of her house? I dared not ask the question whether she would appear, or not, that evening, but simply trusted that Miss Kennett was well.

I was, however, assured that she was well, and that shortly she would make her appearance. That, I felt, was very consolatory—I was not long kept in suspense; in less than five minutes the door opened, and Miss Kennett entered the room.

I have before stated the effect that the two previous *glimpses*, which chance had afforded me, had had upon my heart. What, then, must have been my feelings, when I saw this remarkably beautiful girl dressed in all that elegant simplicity which accompanies a white muslin dress, and that perfectly plain? Describe the feelings that I then had, I cannot, and I fear that my very shyness, on my introduction, must have made me appear, I may say, ridiculous.

To my great relief dinner was announced. Mr. Kennett, taking the arm of his brother clergyman's wife, led the way; the banker took that of Miss Howard, and thus I had an oppor-

tunity of tendering mine to Miss Emily ; of course the lady of the house brought up the rear with Mr. Howard.

It was not long before I discovered that my recluse, as I had brought myself to consider her, was by no means devoid of conversation ; neither did she in the slightest degree suffer from *mauvaise honte* ! I have never, through the whole course of my life sat by a more agreeable person, or with one who had more repartee.

In ten minutes I was quite at ease. The dinner was excellent. The banker, my *vis-à-vis*, (who, by-the-by, was a rich old bachelor), paid unremitting attention to Miss Howard, which of course left me ample scope to address nearly the whole of my conversation to Emily. I had now thoroughly divested myself of all shyness, and what with the effects of the few glasses of wine I had drank, and the animation of the general conversation that was carried on, I began to feel that I was quite surpassing myself in my powers of discourse. The third course was put upon the table, and with a feeling of pride I saw a hare and two brace

of partridges occupying the top and bottom of our board. I began to wonder whether the one with the hole drilled through him was chosen for that day's repast.

I knew not for certain, but I fancied that my fair partner, by my side, gave me very arch looks: and so much so, that I remember my face became disagreeably warm, when suddenly she said, looking at me full in the face—

"We have to thank *you*, Mr. Stretton, for this game, I believe?"

I bowed.

"Did you continue your sport, the other day, for any length of time, after our departure, or did you return home?"

"I remained for about a quarter of an hour after I had watched your carriage lost to all view, and as it had become somewhat cooler, I commenced shooting again, but I was home early."

"I hope," she said, "you had good sport, for you were over liberal to dear papa. Now tell me, what did you kill afterwards?"

"I—I—I—(I thought the words would never

come out)—only killed one hare and two brace of birds.”

Fixing her eyes upon me with the quaintest, and yet the sweetest expression, she went on—

“ You and your keeper seemed quite knocked up with the heat: so we all thought, and we all felt so sorry for you: has he been long in your service ?”

I drank off a glass of wine, and wished it had been prussic acid. I was obliged to answer the question, so I turned and regularly faced her; and when my eye fell upon that sweet face, I saw the difficulty my tormentor had in keeping from bursting into laughter. It is certain that my risible organs were immensely tickled by the last question, and by the dignity conferred upon Tom Fleming.

“ He is no servant of mine, Miss Kennett,” I said,—“ merely a man, a good honest sort of fellow, that I always ‘ charter,’ when I go shooting, to carry my game-bag.”

“ Well, I fancied, Mr. Stretton, that he could not be *your* servant. I was anxious to know, because some of the young ladies would have it that perhaps he was a sort of general domestic,

valet in and out of livery ; and, in fact, one that would make himself generally useful."

At this I fairly burst out laughing ; and, giving her a most piteous look, besought her to spare me.

"What are you young people laughing at?" was the question put to us by more than one at the table.

That question I left Miss Kennett to answer.

"Oh! papa," she rattled on, "I was merely alluding to our meeting, the other day, on the Rochester road, when Mr. Stretton and his"—(Here she looked at me again with the wickedest of smiles)—"his man—the day, you know, when Mr. Stretton kindly gave you the game."

I wished man and game at the deuce, for sitting opposite me was the very being on whose ground I had permission to shoot, but not to poach ; and was fully aware that he would never give his sanction to Tom Fleming's accompanying me in the pursuit of game over his property. I thought he looked black ; but at the time he only passed the remark, that birds were tolerably plentiful, and he hoped that I had been lucky enough to get amongst

them. But he had more to say at another time.

I became rather serious after this ; and Emily must have observed it, for she ceased to joke me ; and, indeed, the latter part of the dinner was a contrast to the early part ; at least, as far as Miss Kennett and I were concerned.

It was a relief to me when the ladies rose to retire. It fell to my lot to have the honour to hold the door for their egress. I particularly remarked, as Emily passed through, that all the fun and archness which had so lit up her countenance during dinner, was gone. She said, however, to me, *sotto voce*, “ You will not remain long down stairs.”

It was not to be expected that the conversation, which appeared to interest my elders so much, could give me much pleasure ; so, as soon as common propriety would admit of it, I joined the ladies.

Until the gentlemen came up-stairs, there was but little music. The latter part of that evening was indeed a treat ; and which to praise most, father or daughter, I knew not. The one who had the power to instil such a know-

ledge of the science, or the daughter, who, at the tender age of seventeen years, could so thoroughly master the accomplishment.

I was the first to quit the house that evening. I wished to be alone in my own room, to commune with my own thoughts, for I felt that my heart was totally given to Emily.

On rising to take my leave, Mr. Kennett, as well as his wife, expressed a hope that I would frequently visit them until their departure, which I promised to do. So, bidding adieu to all, and with a hearty shake of the hand from the banker, I made the best of my way home.

I could not help looking up at the postmaster's windows, as I sallied forth, for I felt that Mrs. Truebridge had indeed created an interest in my favour, in a certain quarter.

In the course of the evening Emily had extracted a promise that I would call in the morning, when she offered to play over some difficult variations, which had been much praised by those who thoroughly understood music; and she particularly begged that I would call early. This I had promised to do.

With what a light heart did I walk home

that night! I felt confident that a stronger feeling than ordinary friendship was entertained in that young heart towards me: it was evident from her conduct during dinner. Why, when she saw that I was annoyed, by being made the subject of ridicule, did she desist? Why did she ask me to rejoin her as soon as I could, after dinner? Why did she wish me to call in the morning? These were questions I put to myself on my way home, and, before I arrived, I had come to the conclusion that she really loved me. Was I far wrong?

CHAPTER V.

Morning Call.—My Tutor's Leave-Taking.—My Indecision.—Parting Visit to Miss Kennett.—Stunning Pedigrees of the Welsh.—Last Dinner with the Kennetts.—My Declaration of Love, and the Father's Reception of it.—Considered a Future Son-in-Law.—Accepted by the Lady.—Parting Interview.—Our Parting.—Parting with the Poacher.—Arrival at Home.—The Palmy Days of Coaching.—Southampton in 1831.—My Attachment discovered.—Sent to another Tutor.—My Brother.—My Visit to Emily.—My Visit Cut Short.—Return to Town.—My Last Interview.—Proposal to Her to Elope rejected by Her.

ACCORDING to my engagement, before twelve o'clock on the following day I was with Emily; but not alone did I see her. The promised variations were played, in which her father joined (his instrument was the violin); and most beautifully, no doubt, the different pieces were executed; but I wished to have some few minutes alone with her, whom I already, in my boyish love, began to consider as my wife. However, the fates were against me on that day, and, with a promise to repeat my visit on the morrow, I quitted my friends.

I was exceedingly dissatisfied, however, with the progress that I had made on this, my second visit, and began to think all fathers and mothers great bores, and that love-making would be very slow work, if there was to be any supervision whatever.

I had not been home more than an hour, when my tutor, true to his promise, returned; he informed me that he had seen my guardian, but not my mother, the latter being at the sea-side; that he had said everything in his power in my favour; in fact, that I was a changed character altogether (?). He then expressed his great regret that the following Friday would separate us. He begged me, in the interim, to collect any *little* debts that I might have, and to bring the separate amounts to him, when he would see them liquidated; and, lastly, he told me that he must grant me a holiday until the Tuesday following, in consequence of his having so much to do prior to his departure; he trusted, however, to see me at dinner, and then left me.

I was certainly rather disconcerted at the suddenness with which, it appeared, I was to

leave. I saw unhappiness looming in the distance; for I was confident that Mr. Mount would accompany me to London, and not give me the chance of "kicking my heels" at Ashwell, after his departure; and I was positive in my own mind that, before fourteen days had elapsed, another tutor would be provided for me. What—what was I to do? That same morning I made up my mind to tell Emily the exact state of my feelings.

The reader will naturally think, somewhat in the same hasty manner I had before done to poor Betsy, which feeling was so remarkably soon to cool.

At one moment I determined to go to the father, and at once open my heart there. I knew that, in a worldly point of view, he could find no valid reason to reject my suit; my youth, and that alone, was the stumbling-block. I never for one moment considered that a father might think some forty-eight hours' acquaintance was a short period for a young couple to make up their minds in, to become man and wife. I got confused: I knew not what to think, or what to do; so leaving all to chance (a favourite

way of mine), I walked out, tracing my steps towards Emily's home.

I have before said, that indecision was one great fault in my character; it was so, and frequently have I, when I could not bring myself to a determination in which way to act, taken a piece of money out of my pocket and tossed it up: Heads, I do this; tails, I do not.

Emily was alone, and at her music. She rose and gave me her hand on my entering the room. There was none of the fun and frolic about her that had so much delighted me the first evening of our acquaintance; if anything, she was sedate; as for myself, I felt downright dull, and had not one word to say. At last, finding the silence most intolerable, I said: "Miss Kennett, I have received bad news to-day."

"What!" she exclaimed; "I hope nothing has happened to any member of your family, or to your tutor?"

"Nothing, Miss Kennett, has happened to my family, otherwise than that they are about to have me home with them again; and nothing more or less to my tutor, than that he has been

presented to a valuable living in the diocese of Peterborough."

"I am indeed sorry, Mr. Stretton, at the first part of your information : excessively delighted am I at learning of Mr. Mount's preferment, for it will please papa. I do regret, I confess, that our acquaintance is destined to be of such short duration, for I own I had hoped to have seen more of you ; but we must submit to these little reverses. Papa will, I am sure, be sorry to hear that you are leaving our county, for you are really a favourite of his ; and to tell you the truth, after you had all left us the other evening, he took it upon himself to lecture me severely for my bad behaviour, in making remarks upon your servant—I beg your pardon—that 'good sort of fellow that you always charter when you go forth on your work of destruction.' But I am very sorry now that I did so ; will you forgive me ? The truth is, we all thought your 'dienst man' a strange creature to be companion to—one like yourself. Say, then, that you forgive me, and, like a good girl, I promise to sin in that way no more."

Rising from the music-stool, on which she

had been sitting, she made one step towards the window and returned, and sitting down again, continued in, as I fancied, an altered tone of voice : “I would not willingly offend you ; indeed, I would not ; and I am angry with myself for suffering my uniform good spirits to carry me away as they did ; but the truth is, I was so glad that we had you in our house, and I did that which I assuredly would have left undone with any other man. Now, when do you leave us ?”

“Oh ! Emily,”—the words had hardly escaped my lips, when I was stopped short by her holding up her hand, and advancing towards the arm-chair in which I had ensconced myself.

“And who gave you leave to address me in that manner ? Do you forget that our acquaintance is but of yesterday ? I ought to be angry with you, now ; but as you have forgiven me my impertinence, I freely forgive you yours.”

“Miss Kennett, pardon me ; I beg of you, I implore you to pardon me. I confess that, from the first time I ever saw you, I have suffered myself to utter your name as I have this morning done. You know not how I have prayed one day to become acquainted with you ; you

know not how I have sought but a glimpse of your person. You will never know the feeling that has taken possession of me, from the moment I first saw you at the turnpike-gate, now hallowed ground to me. God knows that I would not, for worlds, offend you ; I would not have dared to own what I have this morning done, had I not known that a few days will tear me from you—perhaps for ever : and I was resolved—ay, even to your father—to confess the love I bear you, for I can no longer conceal what I feel.”

I cannot, in words, express the look of bewilderment that pervaded the face of that sweet girl on the conclusion of this outburst ; the colour totally forsook her cheeks (she never had a great deal) : she clasped her hands together, and sat herself down on the sofa, near to which I was sitting. I saw that there was something to be told which she dared not utter, and some minutes elapsed before one or the other essayed to speak.

She was the first to break that painful silence. Looking up into my face, I saw at once that her tears were with difficulty kept down ; she

became paler still, and averting her face (in a voice so different to that which I had been accustomed to hear her speak), she gave me the following acknowledgment of the state of her own feelings.

“Charles—I call you Charles — yes — you have called me Emily—I will be as candid as you have been, but I implore of you not to judge me harshly. You will doubtless think my conduct unmaidenly, in suffering you, in the first place, to address me as you have done ; and much more so, when I confess to you—yes, to you, whom I have only known for so short a time—that those feelings of regard that you state you entertain for me, are returned.”

I sprang from my chair, and was by her side.

“Nay, hear me, and I will tell you all,” she continued—“yes, all, and without the least reservation. I said that the time was but short that I had known you—I ought to have said, since I first spoke to you. I knew of you from the evening that papa first met you.

“I, too, well remember our meeting at the turnpike-gate ; a meeting that will not be forgotten ; and I open my heart thus, to tell you

that I have heard all that you have said in my praise to Mrs. Truebridge, for which I am grateful, but fully cognisant that I was not deserving the encomiums so lavishly showered on me.

“Charles will you listen to me? Do not, I implore of you, speak to my father. What would he think?—known to you but for so short a time, and to-day an avowal of your love! It cannot—it must not be! My father was not aware that every word which dropped from his lips in your praise was adding a link to that chain which has, I own, deprived my heart of its liberty. Let me speak, I beseech of you,” (seeing that I was attempting to interrupt her): “you are young, very young; added to which, you are, you say, going to leave. Think no more of this—’tis madness—it is folly. But speak not to my father: from my earliest youth I have done nothing to offend him, and were he to know that I had listened, as I have done, to you, he would indeed be angry. Poor mamma, too, she believes me to be so good: in pity leave me; I momentarily expect them back. Go—go, I beg of you, but let me see you once again.”

Flying past me, in spite of all my endeavours to detain her, she rushed from the room—and I was alone. I did not quit the house immediately, as I was desired; I felt spell-bound, the ice was indeed, broken: and I now fully determined to tell Mr. Kennett the whole truth—to confess my love for his daughter, and to beg his sanction to our marriage when I should attain the age of twenty-one years. Little did I think what was to happen before that period arrived. Had I been a few years older I should decidedly have not remained alone, looking unutterably foolish, in Mr. Kennett's drawing-room; but there I sat, not knowing what to do. I ought to have taken the young lady's advice, and gone, but I lingered still, and sufficiently long to allow of the return of the master and mistress of the house. There they found me, still sitting on the sofa. I rose on their entrance, and was kindly met: they did not appear to notice anything remarkable in my manner, or any incoherency in my answers to their questions—even to the one question, whether I had not seen Emily? I told them that I had; and that passed off. Luckily, Mr.

Kennett had heard of the probability of a break-up in our establishment; and that furnished subject-matter amply sufficient with which to carry on the conversation. I will cut short the long, familiar discourse that took place between Mr. Kennett, his wife, and myself, and merely state that I remained for more than an hour; that Miss Kennett did not return to the drawing-room before I quitted the house, and that I was asked to dine there that afternoon, which invitation I was delighted to accept, although I remembered that my tutor had expressed a wish that I should be home to dinner; yet I knew that he would not gainsay me, neither did he.

Contrary to all etiquette, long before the dinner-hour, I was at Mr. Kennett's door, and better it would have been had I remained away, as I was disappointed in obtaining five minutes' conversation with Emily; and I fancied that everybody, servants and all, wished me any where but where I actually was—

•
“Oh! that the Gods the gift would give us,
To see ourselves as others see us.”

However, there I was : I had plenty of time

to inspect pictures, books and knick-knacks ; and I am ashamed to say that I was not above stealing furtive glances into albums and scrap-books—opening morocco cases, which I knew contained miniatures—and at last was very nearly detected in the act of cutting a drawing out of one of the aforesaid albums—owing to its having “E. K.” at the bottom. It was a pencil sketch, and apparently well done. This act of petty larceny I was deterred from doing by the entrance of the mistress of the house. In evident confusion, I replaced the album and advanced to meet Emily’s mother.

I have before said that Mrs. Kennett had been a very handsome woman. I afterwards learnt that she was of Scottish lineage, and that her pedigree was nearly as long as a Welchman’s ; and I must confess that some of the natives of the land of “Cymry” have “stunners.”

I cannot help here stating, while on the subject of genealogy, an instance of pride of birth in one of my friends who accompanied me to Australia.

Talking one day, prior to our departure for the Antipodes, on the relative antiquity of fami-

lies that we both knew, he said, "Of course you know that Christianity was introduced into the Principality by Faganus and Damianus, who were sent by Eleathurius, the bishop of Rome, at our King Lucius' request."

"Stop," said I, "who the deuce was King Lucius, and in what era did he reign?"

"The year 200; and I date one hundred and twenty-two years prior to that," he replied.

At the time, he gave me this in writing, but by some chance, in opening a Goldsmith's Geography, a few months back, I unfortunately found it in print. This I will say—his family was very old.

I must again apologize for wandering from my narrative. There was no mistaking that Mrs. Kennett was well born, and her every movement was that of a lady. Begging me to take a seat near her, she brought on the old subject—our departure. I thought that she scanned me narrowly, and fancied that Mrs. Truebridge had been at work. Few questions were asked calculated to bring Emily's name forward, and I dreaded to do so, when suddenly she arose, and walked to the fire-place: taking the rope in her

hand, she pulled the bell sharply, saying—
“Emily so late !”

This remark was evidently not meant for my ears, and I felt the blood rush to my face.

“Has not Miss Kennett returned ?” asked the mother, as a neatly-attired female servant entered the room.

“She has, ma’am, and is dressing for dinner,” was the reply.

“You may go,” was all that was said ; and she did go, and I have no doubt told her young mistress that her actions were marked.

Fancy conjured up in my brain unheard-of events about to come to pass, and I began to feel myself getting rather nervous, when, to my inexpressible relief, Emily entered the room.

“My dearest girl,” said her mother, “what has kept you so long ? Dinner is ready, and you are generally so very punctual.”

“Mamma, I have been with Mrs. Truebridge, and nowhere else,” was the answer.

“Well, I think that, considering this may be the last time we shall perhaps have Mr. Stretton with us, you might give up a small portion of the time you have spent in the society of the post-

master's wife to the reception of your papa's friend."

I was delighted.

Quietly seating herself, Emily informed her mother that she was not aware, until her return, that I was to make one at the dinner-table; and added, that she particularly wished to see Mrs. Truebridge; then turning to me, she said—

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Stretton."

Our eyes met—O yes, those beautiful eyes, with their long dark lashes, rendered more lovely by the hectic flush which I judged the visit to Mrs. Truebridge to have occasioned, were fixed on mine.

I was glad, however, when this little tiff between mother and daughter was brought to a close, by the entrance of Emily's father; and the announcement of dinner being served, effectually put a stop to any recurrence to the subject.

Emily was decidedly ill at ease during dinner. She talked little, and her usual gaiety had gone; nevertheless the conversation did not flag, and it was not long before I found myself sitting alone with the man of all others I stood most in awe.

Contrary to Emily's expressed wishes, I was

resolved to state the whole truth to her father, and before I had rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room, my heart, with all its hopes and fears, had been laid bare before him.

I shall avoid the tedium of the narration of the conversation that took place, and which occupied two hours, ere I again saw her.

It was a difficult task for me, so young as I was, to commence upon a subject which was no less than begging the hand of one's host's daughter, and I, a boy of eighteen years; but my hopes had been raised by what that daughter had told me, namely, that "her father liked me,"—yes, those words of hers were for ever ringing in my ears—"My father likes you."

That night I boldly and openly confessed that I had loved his daughter from the first moment that I had seen her; I told him of the interest that had been created by listening to the praises bestowed upon her by my tutor. I candidly unfolded to him the whole nature of my expectations, in a worldly point of view; I made him aware that I was my own master on attaining twenty-one years.—that the fortune, as youngest son, left to me was twenty thousand

pounds; and that my father having died when I was barely three years old, the accumulation would of necessity be great;—subject only to the drawbacks for my maintenance and education. I said nothing of debts contracted during my minority.

Mr. Kennett appeared perfectly satisfied with all that I told him; yet I could plainly see that my hopes, which had been in the ascendant, whilst he, apparently with patience, listened to all that I, in the fervour of my love, had to say, were likely in a great degree to be crushed, ere our conversation was brought to an end.

I had finished, and with burning cheeks, I remember, I replenished my glass and awaited the verdict which was to set, as I thought, a seal upon my happiness or my misery.

I wish the reader to remember that the life which I am now writing is strictly true: I have, in the Dedication, stated that I would—

“Nothing extenuate, or aught
Set down in malice.”

Every character that I have dwelt on, or shall have to delineate,—and they will be many,—will

be correct; and neither have I, nor will I, throughout this work, draw one face or form more lovely or more hideous than the original then appeared in my eyes, whether they be of the gentler sex or of man's sterner stuff. I have hitherto avoided the slightest colouring to the scenes I have depicted, and which as yet have been but of every-day occurrence; the same will be found to be the case, if the reader will but muster up courage to follow me in my career through the more startling incidents of mature age.

The early portion of a work, whether it be a novel or the narrative of a life, is always more or less uninteresting; but when you are denied the assistance of fiction, as must be the case in the portrayal of reality, I may be pardoned if I render my early days somewhat tedious; and yet those early days have had to do much, if not all, towards the completion of a character which I must leave in the hands of my readers to decide upon, whether good or bad: bad, I suppose, will be the verdict, but I trust, "with extenuating circumstances," as they say in France.

A long silence succeeded the straightforward avowal of my love, and the open and true statement of the hereafters I should be entitled to.

A considerable time elapsed before Emily's father spoke; at last he threw off the reverie he was evidently labouring under, and in a voice suffering from emotion, and in which great kindness of feeling was visible, took my hand and spoke as follows:—

“Mr. Charles S——, I have calmly listened to all that you had to state regarding my daughter. I should represent my own feelings in a false light if I denied that I feel flattered in the preference you have shown towards Emily above others; but it is your youth—yes, I repeat it—it is your youth alone which is the barrier. It is better, far better that this subject should be dropped, and that Emily was left in total ignorance of the sentiments you have this evening expressed, as regards herself, or that any conversation bearing upon it has ever taken place.”

“Hear me, sir, hear me!” I exclaimed; “only for an instant listen to me! Emily knows all; has confessed that she returns my affection, but

did not know that I intended this evening to acquaint you of it. Oh ! do not render us both miserable !”

Mr. Kennett rose from the table and paced the room ; there was half anger and whole surprise on the countenance of Emily’s father ; but it will be anything but interesting my recounting the arguments used on both sides, for and against, on the occasion ; it is enough when I say I so far gained my end, that before I left that room I was considered, subject to certain conditions, in the light of a future son-in-law.

Some, perhaps, who may read these pages will consider that the finale so much desired, as far as the young folks were concerned, was too speedily brought about ; but such was the case.

I quitted the dining-room to join the ladies with the most indescribable feelings of happiness. On entering the room, to my infinite delight Emily was alone ; she was reading : on looking up from her book she at once saw that I was under the influence of great excitement, which excitement was no doubt materially increased by the frequent attacks I had made upon the

decantera, to counteract my nervousness. She rose, and in an instant was in my arms : without giving her time to put one question to myself, and without permitting her to free herself from my arms, which for the first time encircled that fair form, I rapidly narrated to her all that had transpired. With a slight attempt at finding fault with me for my rashness in thus early acquainting her father of our attachment ; with a gentle struggle to free herself from the embrace which too securely held her, she burst into tears—yes, tears of happiness, and suffered me to impress upon her lips kisses as ardent as they were then pure.

For upwards of an hour were we left alone, and that was sufficient for us to make all our arrangements for the few meetings that could take place before my departure. The hour was arranged for my calling on the morrow, and I really believe that we had almost agreed as to our marriage, and the subsequent “grande tour” ere I left the house that night. Emily’s mother was the first to re-enter the room, and much pleased I was to find her manner so cordial. At once I saw that her husband had

told her all, and that she was in nowise averse to the projected union; and, in fact, I was told to make the house my own whilst I remained in Ashwell. Mr. Kennett soon joined us, and the evening was delightfully passed; how could it have been otherwise? And that night I quitted them, as I thought, the happiest fellow in the world. My sojourn at Ashwell was soon to end. I had heard from my friends, that I was to return to them for a short time, and then off to another tutor, and that the county of Lincoln was to be the scene of the events of the next four months' occurrence.

The two days prior to my departure were passed most pleasantly. I was always at Emily's side: we had agreed that I was to write twice a week, and that she was to do the same. That the letters for Emily were to be directed to the post-office, to do away with any idea that our correspondence was too frequent; but that now and then I was to send a letter direct, and which might be delivered openly. I also promised to return to see her before I started for Lincolnshire, which I knew would be at an early date.

I had hunted up all my debts, which, in the aggregate, amounted to double that which I anticipated. I made arrangements with my creditors that they were each only to send in a moiety of their claims, and that I was to pay the remainder on my next visit, *or when convenient*. All seemed perfectly satisfied, and, to my astonishment, I found my credit to stand infinitely higher than I believed it to do. My tutor—bless him!—complimented me that I had steered through temptation so triumphantly, and with a smiling countenance gave me the requisite to clear me, as he believed, and for which I was to bring back the receipts to him.

The day of our departure arrived. In the morning I paid a hurried visit to my friends; said good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Kennett; had one long and fond embrace from Emily; and not forgetting to bestow upon Maria, Mrs. Truebridge's daughter, a special proof of my friendship, as that young person was evidently in the confidence of her young mistress, I left the house.

There was no sorrow, *that time*, in the parting between Emily and myself.

There was another, who, I really believe, regretted my departure immensely; it was Tom Fleming. Poor fellow! he begged, prayed, and insisted upon accompanying me to the coach-office to see me off. He had kindly offered to take care of my dogs until I returned or would send for them, which I willingly agreed to; but first obtaining from him a promise that he would not take them out on his poaching excursions. He waylaid me as I went to the office, which, as I said before, was at the "Saracen's Head," and not wishing to hurt the poor fellow's feelings, I acceded to his wishes; but most anxious was I to get rid of him before the arrival of my tutor, wife, child, and domestics, one of whom was Job. However, I managed to have a parting glass with the poacher; and leaving him in the tap of the hostelry, I mounted the roof of the old "Regulator."

In those days the railroad whistle was unheard at Ashwell, neither did Mr. Mount travel *en grande tenue*; and the four-horse coach, just mentioned, was the one which was expected to land us safely, in something over seven hours,

at Charing Cross. Away we started, and true to its time did we arrive.

I took particular notice as we galloped along the road, for I was determined to be back by the same route in less than a fortnight.

It was at the Golden Cross that the parting between tutor and pupil was to take place; the former, with his family and suite, proposed taking up their lodgings for the night at the hotel where we alighted, whilst I had to proceed to the neighbourhood of Portman Square. It was with a feeling of unfeigned sorrow, and which I believe to have been reciprocal, that Mr. Mount and myself shook hands, on saying adieu: that he was perfectly aware that I entertained for him a very strong sense of esteem, if not of affection, I was conscious; and I remember well that it was with difficulty that I concealed the actual state of my agitation. The farewell words were spoken, and from that day to this we have never met—albeit that he has had my best wishes.

On driving up to my mother's residence, I found that all the family were at Southampton, and that instructions had been left that I was to join them there immediately.

My first thought was to sit down and write to Emily, and, of course, the letter was couched *en couleur de rose*—and beautiful, to a degree, were the chateaux en Espagne that were committed to that paper.

How true is the old proverb, "Man proposes, God disposes." How many of the sweet anticipations that I then committed to paper were ever fulfilled ! *Mais en avant.*

The following morning found me on the box-seat of that most splendidly-appointed coach, the "Red Rover," than which, none better was there on the Southampton road. I knew few that, in those palmy days of coaching, could compete with it.

I have said that few coaches could contest for superiority with the "Red Rover," not excepting the aristocratic teams on the Brighton road. Well, on the box-seat of the "Red Rover" I was—all boys like the box seat, and formerly were

accustomed to pay a premium for that elevated situation—and bound for the pretty town of Southampton.

All those who have known that provincial town within the last thirty years, will acknowledge that its vast increase in size, wealth, and importance, as a seaport, has not been attributable to the class of visitors who were wont to resort to that very pretty place years ago. It is true, Southampton is a great place now; but how different the High Street of 1831 and 1861! Steam appears to have driven all the old country families away; certainly all those whose residences were within sound of the “whistle.”

To continue: all seemed tolerably pleased to see me on my arrival, and I was happy.

I had not been many days with my family when one morning, on entering the breakfast room, I found my mother alone, who, as usual, gave me the maternal kiss, and at the same time handed me a letter, which, she gave me to understand, she had taken the liberty to read. I felt excessively queer, and I have no doubt

turned remarkably red, when I saw by the superscription that it was from Emily.

I knew not whether to "bolt" from the room, or to remain ; but fancying it more manly to stand my ground, I opened the document ; when, lo, to my dire consternation, a long lock of auburn hair fell to the ground ! My first movement was to pick it up and cram it into my pocket, but not before the eyes of the mother met those of the son. The look she gave me was full of affection ; but I could see at the same time a degree of seriousness in her countenance, which told me plainly that my course of love never would run smooth.

No further remark was made at the time, and I began to believe, after the lapse of a few days, that the letter and the lock of hair were entirely forgotten. Argus had eyes, and so had my mother ; and such was not the case.

Not many days after the little event narrated, I was given to understand that I must proceed to a place called Bullingham, in Lincolnshire, and that the Reverend Mr. Welford would undertake the management of my studies, and the guidance of my conduct.

I was told at the same time that my tutor elect, was the author of certain celebrated sermons, which did not at that time in the least degree exalt him in my opinion, I am ashamed to confess. Upon inquiring whether there were any other pupils, I was told that there were two, and that one of them was the nephew of a very dear friend of my mother's.

No sooner did I know the day which was fixed for my departure from Southampton, *en route* for the fenny country, than I wrote to Emily, advising her (what a frightful commercial word !) of my early appearance at Ashwell, but begging her at the same time not to reply to it, as I was sceptical as to the due receipt of my letters.

The day came that I was to say farewell to Southampton, and again I bade adieux to the most affectionate of mothers and to the best of guardians.

But there was one to whom I said farewell that day—yes, one, to whom I felt more than a brother's love—and yet he was my brother ; his name was Frederick, but I shall have much to say of him shortly.

It was strange that, at the early age I then was—that age when youth invariably makes a confidant of some one of his own standing in years, to whom he may tell his tale of love—that I kept my secret so closely. My brother Frederick was nevertheless excessively beloved by me, and being my senior by only eighteen months, I necessarily saw more of him than I did of my older brothers.

He was exceedingly handsome, and his talents were by no means ordinary ; he died, poor fellow ! at the early age of four-and-twenty, beloved and regretted by all to whom he was known, leaving a young widow who had not attained her eighteenth year, and who only survived him four years : not that grief hurried her so prematurely to the grave, for she married a second time : consumption in both instances did its work.

It was intended that I should sleep at my mother's house the night of my arrival in town, and proceed on the following day to Bullingham ; but I had made my own arrangements ; for determined was I to return to Ashwell. So, hurrying to Bond Street, I ordered the neatest mail phaeton, and the best pair of horses that

Rimell, the celebrated stable-keeper, could produce; and desiring him to have all ready, with one of his tidiest men, by seven o'clock in the morning, I made my way home.

At that hour the following morning I made my appearance, ready for a start, with portmanteau, et cetera; in fact, with all things requisite for a few months' state of pupilage.

I had made up my mind to do the fifty-two miles in one day, as time to me was an object; although I was not then aware that letters had been despatched to my new tutor, informing him that I might be expected on a certain day.

With what delight did I bowl along the Old Kent Road! with each mile did my spirits seem to rise. Eltham was passed, and, by mid-day, I had reached Maidstone, where I remained two hours: on again, through Wrotham and Chart, and before the clock of the fine old church at Ashwell had struck five, I drove into the yard of the "Saracen's Head."

Barely allowing myself time to give the necessary orders relative to my stay at the hotel, I made my way to the residence of Emily. Again I found her alone. How happy she appeared

to meet me! She had apprized her father of my intended visit, and was most anxious to know what was to be the duration of my stay. I told her the truth; how I had quitted Southampton ostensibly with the intention of proceeding to Bullingham; how I had hired my carriage and horses of Rimell, and that I intended remaining in Ashwell for four days. Slightly did she chide me for the deception I had practised towards my mother; but her very gentle reproaches were soon dispelled, when I told her that it was my devoted affection that prompted to the act.

How happily the moments flew by! Yes, in truth, I became so intoxicated by my love for that beautiful girl, that all thoughts of my tutor were driven from my mind.

It was then the month of October, and the weather was beautiful; and daily did I drive Emily out. (Let it be remembered I was her acknowledged lover.) Nothing could exceed our happiness; but soon it was to cease.

I had driven her out one day, on the road to Rochester, when, on passing the inn I have before alluded to as rejoicing in a sign on which

an earl's armorial bearings were in the brightest colours depicted—the same inn at which I had been seen in company with Tom Fleming, some few weeks previously—I remarked how different was the position in which I then stood, with regard to her, than when last I had seen her on the same spot, in Mr. Arlington's carriage, when the inmates made me their butt for ridicule.

Exquisitely beautiful did she look, as she fixed her deep blue eyes upon my face, and, placing her little hand upon the back of mine, which held the reins, said, “Charles! oh, that this state of things could last! but it cannot; I know it cannot. Something tells me that unutterable sorrow is in store for me. I know not whence proceeds this dreadful foreboding; but I cannot shake it off. Our love too is known to all, and papa and mamma like you so much; and with what pleasure do they look forward to our union! Surely it cannot be that the time of our marriage is so distant; or is it that I dread you may see another, whom you would prefer to me? But I will not believe that. No, Charles; you will not—you cannot forget me!”

She could say no more, and I saw the tears trickling down her cheeks.

“Emily, calm yourself,” I said, “and listen to me; be calm, I implore of you; there is nothing to dread. Why should you have these ill forebodings? I am my own master, as you are aware, when I attain my majority. Surely, you do not fear that another may occupy the place you now hold in my heart: believe me, however great the distance that may separate us, your loved form will be ever present to my imagination. My letters will be regular; in fact, we shall hear from each other every week. Now cheer up, dearest girl, and let me see no more tears; they spoil that sweet face.”

She only replied by a faint smile.

However, before we reached home, Emily had pretty well recovered her accustomed cheerfulness, but which was not destined to be of very long duration.

On driving up to the door of her father's house, I observed her eyes intently fixed on the drawing-room windows; and, upon my asking what it was that attracted her attention, she said that there was a strange gentleman up-stairs.

“Well, what of that?” I replied, as I handed her out of the carriage.

Desiring the servant to take the carriage to the hotel, we entered the house; and, upon our going into the drawing-room, who should I see but my brother Frederick! I was thunder-struck. In a moment I knew all; but the look of consternation in Emily's face was really most distressing. She took no notice of my brother, upon my introducing him to her. She stood with her eyes fixed on me, as if asking for an explanation, but which was perfectly unnecessary; the real truth must have flashed upon her mind, as it had done on me. There she stood, as pale as marble. How long she would have remained in that state of partial stupor, I know not, had not her mother entered the room and led her away. I followed her with my eyes until she reached the door; no movement was there on her part, to give me one last look. The door closed on her, and she was gone!

As soon as we were alone, my brother commenced the conversation; his manner was most kind; and I could see that he evidently felt for me. It was as I conjectured; he had been

despatched in search of me. My tutor had, as I rightly guessed, been written to, and informed that I might be expected on a certain day; it was then the sixth day from my quitting Southampton, and Mr. Welford had naturally intimated to my friends that his charge had not made his appearance.

My brother gave me to understand that we must quit immediately, and that as soon as the horses were baited, we should start, and get as far as we could on the road that evening, so as to be in time to catch the coach, which was to leave the "Saracen's Head," Snow Hill, at nine o'clock on the following morning. There appeared to be a fatality attending hostelries which rejoiced under that sign; for within twenty-four hours, I was an inmate of three of them. I listened patiently to all that my brother had to say; I felt hurt when he told me of the pain that I had caused my mother by the slight deception I had practised.

Answer him, I did not, could not, for my heart was too full for utterance. I was indeed miserable, for I loved Emily intensely. We had been sitting together for about half an hour—

no one had entered the room during that time—when I rose, telling him that I required but five minutes to say farewell to all, and that at the expiration of that time, I was prepared to accompany him. I left the room in search of Miss Kennett, and found her in the drawing-room; her father and mother were with her. It will spare me much pain (although so many years have elapsed since the events which I now relate took place) if I hurry over the scene of our parting—a parting which will never be obliterated from my memory.

I found all sad enough; but I told the whole truth to the parents. It was with some difficulty that I obtained permission to continue our correspondence, as they appeared strenuous in enforcing upon me the necessity of our engagement being broken off, on account of my youth; but I gained my ends. I believe it was the sight of their beloved daughter, crushed as she was by the turn events had taken, that effected it. We were left alone. Speak for some time, I could not: at last, mustering resolution, I took her hand; it was as cold as death. “Emily,” I said, “I go from you, but only for a short

time: soon, very soon, I will be again with you: nothing on earth shall keep me from you: I have but a few moments to be with you. Oh! listen to me—in pity hear me. I know that you love me. You know my undying love for you (the very words I had made use of, some few weeks previously, to Betsy Jolly.) Will you, Emily, by one act, seal my happiness, and your own for life?" At this she raised her head, which had been lying buried in the cushions of the sofa: the tears were streaming down her pale, sweet face.

"What do you mean, Charles?" she replied, in a thick and husky voice, at the same time grasping both my hands, and fixing her eyes upon mine. I stammered out, "Run away with me; I can find the means, and will. Say but that you will go with me, and in two months all my arrangements are made. Will you—will you, Emily? Say that you will, and I go happy."

"Never!" was her reply; "I will never do that which will cause the forfeiture of the love and good opinion of my parents. No, Charles! with all my love for you, I could not do that.

Go! you had better go: my love, to my dying day, will remain the same: claim me when you are in a position to do so, with honour, and before the world. When you arrive at man's estate, if alive, you will find my heart the same, my hand free."

I had nothing to say in answer to this. I was sitting by her side, her head resting upon my shoulder, when a tap at the door warned me that my time was up. I rose, and flinging my arms around her neck, I imprinted one long kiss upon her lips, and rushed from the house; and thirteen years elapsed before we met again!

CHAPTER VI.

Return to London.—Merry Coachmen of the Olden Time.—Sir R. Sutton's Hounds.—Arrive at my New Tutor's.—Catalogue of Divertissements.—Young Sportsmen.—Commencement of my Sporting Life.—The Burton Hounds.—A Letter from Emily.—Propose to Her to Elope.—She Consents to Elope.—Out with the Hounds.—Arrival in London.—At Home.—Important Discussion with my Guardian.—My Sporting Establishment.—Duped by Scoundrels.—Establishment Broken Up.—Break my Engagement with Miss Kennett.—A Fresh Passion.—A Steeplechase and its Consequences.—My New Passion and its success.—My Marriage.—Arrive at Calais.—My Courier.—Brussels.—The Jura.—Geneva.—Turin.—Victor Emmanuel.—Snowed Up in the Mountains.—Deliverance.—Passing the Ecclesiastical States.—Fleeced by Rogues.—Mr. Freeborn.—Liberality of Torlonia the Banker.—Advice of Signor Torlonia.—Fioppi, the Mosaichista.—Generosity of Duc de Torlonia.—Signor Torlonia.

I MADE my way as fast as I could, nearly blinded by my tears, to the hotel; where, flinging myself down on the sofa, I tried to compose myself before my brother should join me, which he very shortly did. At five o'clock that evening we started for London, slept at Maidstone, and were at the "Saracen's Head," Snow Hill, by half-past eight o'clock the next

morning. I had wonderfully recovered my spirits, and my brother was all kindness. He took especial care ~~of~~ my luggage being taken out of the phaeton, to see it stowed well down at the bottom of the fore boot; and I am not certain that he did not tell the guard to have an eye on me; and not until we were fairly under weigh did he leave me; when, jumping into the phaeton, he drove off, to restore to Mr. Rimell, his carriage, man, and horses.

I trust that my readers will bear with the egotism that I necessarily adopted in writing a work, which is nothing more or less than a recapitulation of my life; but when I arrive at that part of my narrative in which the events to be related are confined to another hemisphere, I hope in a great measure to avoid it. Egotism is as disagreeable to the writer, as it is to the reader.

The suburbs of London were soon lost sight of, and we were galloping along the great North road. My spirits had perfectly regained their wonted elasticity; both the coachmen (for we had two to work the distance between London and Newark) were merry fellows, and full of

chat. All the different houses of note we passed on the way were pointed out ; and, indeed, in many instances, the characters of the owners, and the interior economy of their respective establishments, were made known to me. It is wonderful how soon one's affairs become known ; but, in justice, I must say that, in most cases, great respect was shown by both my "Jehu's" in the handling of the names of the multitudinous gentry they descanted on.

At half-past nine, or thereabouts, we were safely deposited at the "Saracen's Head," Newark, *chez* Patterson, in whom I found a remarkably civil landlord. He informed me, upon discovering my name, that the inquiries after me had been singularly numerous. I told him that I should want a post-chaise in the morning, to take me to Bullingham, which he said was nine miles distant. I had a capital supper ; and Mr. Patterson assisted to drive off all *ennui* by sitting with me until I retired to bed ; and over some brandy-and-water and cigars I learnt all about Newark and its neighbourhood. I soon found out that he was a sportsman ; he informed me that Sir R. Sutton's hounds would meet at

Bullingham on the following Friday week ; and after questioning me as to my being fond of hunting, told me that there were no better hacks (hunters) to be hired in England than from his friend Mr. Beckett, the dealer.

This was decidedly very satisfactory, and the following morning, prior to my departure, accompanied by Mr. Patterson, I inspected that gentleman's establishment. The stables were in every respect as good as represented, and I promised Mr. Beckett to give him a turn, which promise I certainly fulfilled, as his bill will show.

Returning to the hotel, I ordered the chaise, and in an hour's time I found myself at the gates of the rectory at Bullingham. My tutor came out to meet me ; but I thought his cordiality somewhat equivocal ; and decidedly the first impressions were not in his favour. He was not ill-looking : he was every inch a clergyman, and a gentleman ; but there was something singularly disagreeable in his countenance. I was soon ushered into the drawing-room, where sat the wife, with a bevy of little ladies. If the father had a disagreeable look, the reader may fancy my horror upon finding the wife

to squint, which blemish had been handed down to all her little ones. The children were all very young, and would really have been good-looking, but for that frightful blemish. However, I soon made myself at home, and after stammering out unheard-of excuses for my delay in coming, sought Vernon, the nephew of my mother's friend.

My meeting with Vernon, whom I found in the grounds of the rectory with the other pupil, was of the most pleasurable description. He was but one year my senior in age, and a more gentlemanly young fellow there could not well exist.

I was told that Mr. Welford was a very good sort of a fellow; that he was strict; but that they could do pretty well as much as they liked, provided they kept hours.

"Undeniable good shooting here, Stretton, my boy," said Vernon. "We are in the midst of the fens, and have duck, snipes, and typhus, *ad libitum*; and then we have the Burton and the Grafton within reach. Gadzooks!—you can get out six days a week, if you had but the nags. You'll soon get accustomed to the drains, although, confound them! they *are* yawners."

My eyes dilated, and I listened with intense interest to the catalogue of the *divertissements* that were within my reach.

Beckett, the horse-dealer of Newark, I had already made sure of; and Rimell, of Bond Street, I was fully aware, would not hesitate to send me the best horse he had in his stables.

“Vernon,” I said, “do you keep a horse here?”

“Certainly I do,” was the reply, “and get out with the hounds as often as I can; but I have to dodge it.—Listen: I often walk into Newark early in the morning—of course asking leave, *intending* to be back to dinner at four o’clock. Well, I keep, in a cottage one mile from this, my pink, my boots, and two pairs of leathers. As you will see, I always wear shorts and high-lows, for I shoot. Bagwell! confound him, is too fond of his books, and he neither shoots nor hunts; but he is a capital fellow in his way, and a very d—l at ‘Æschylus;’—yet we are great friends. By-the-by, I beg your pardon; let me introduce you to Bagwell: now we are ‘*Tria juncta in uno.*’ But Stretton, old fellow, you must be also introduced to our joint friend Pegsworth. We have two hours before dinner

to ourselves; and without the intimacy of 'Pigskin,' as I call him, your time would, I fear, hang heavy on your hands: he is, in his way, *nulli secundus*, and voted so, *nem. con.*, by all that know him."

"Confound it, Vernon," said Bagwell, "speak English; sick to death am I with Latin and Greek. It is all very well for you, with your two thousand a-year to laugh at me; I have to make my living in the world; nature and fortuitous circumstances have made you what you are; not that I covet money; and my birth is as good as yours: my poor father fell at Leipzig."

"Humbug!" said Vernon; "do not be so grumpy: we have Stretton with us now."

Bagwell, I must state, was as good a specimen of the rising generation of the time as chance has ever thrown in my way; but he was in person plain, and of ungainly manners; nevertheless, he was a gentleman; and at this moment holds a position in society far, far above that in which I am. But Vernon was the man. His age was at that time nineteen years, he shot excessively well, and in the saddle he was perfectly at home. All that money and good

looks could do, had been done for Vernon ; he still lives, and should these pages fall into his hands, he cannot but feel that I have brought to his remembrance moments of bygone days. May we meet again.

At Vernon's request, I accompanied him and Bagwell to the residence of Mr. Pegsworth. The cottage he occupied was by no means despicable, and certainly whitewash had done its utmost to render it visible, far and wide. I found him a good-natured, and apparently an honest man ; he had but one child, a son of fourteen years, a nice-looking lad ; and having had the advantage of Sunday-school teaching, which in those days was something—he was considered, in his sphere, poor boy ! to be above his companions.

Pegsworth's house was the regular place for our reunion. No sooner was our daily study over than we three adjourned to his residence ; and many a good dinner have I had there, as we were accustomed to deal liberally with the game we killed.

Finding that Vernon kept a groom, I considered it absolutely necessary that I should do

the same ; and therefore I took into my service Pegsworth's hopeful son ; and that night's post took the order to Mr. Hudson, of Bond Street, for a suit of livery, with instructions to put the requisite crest buttons on. I had taken the precaution to have my tiger—by name Edward—measured by the village “snip,” so that my London tailor might have some idea of the calibre of my new attendant. The next thing that I had to do, was to order a horse to be sent down, with all the requisites for stable keeping, which Mr. Rimell duly sent ; and in ten days' time I was complete, as far as horse and groom went.

I have said that the Burton hounds were to meet on the Friday week following my arrival at Bullingham ; they did so, at eleven o'clock, the very hour when we were sure to be in the midst of our dry studious labours.

Vernon, that day, made no attempt to get out, the meet being so near, but I shall not forget how uneasily we both occupied our seats, as we saw each scarlet coat arrive on the “Tump,” which was opposite the rectory windows. The Burton had invariably large fields,

and the field that morning was a brilliant one. Old Shirley was in his glory ; and he, I must state, was a man who rode fifteen stone.

Who could study, that morning? So, our tutor, seeing that hopeless was his task, told us to go and see the meet, and to return when they moved off to draw. Away we rushed, and in five minutes were mixing in the crowd.

There was my friend Mr. Patterson, the hotel keeper, and near to him was my other new acquaintance, Mr. Beckett, the horse-dealer, beautifully mounted—evidently on a horse for sale. Our pleasure was of short duration, for Sir Richard Sutton, accompanied by his brother-in-law, rode up, and the word was given to move on. We returned to our pupil room ; but very little in the reading way did we do that day.

I made up my mind to have a day with those hounds, when chance should bring them within my reach, and not many days elapsed before my intentions were fulfilled.

I had kept the promise made on parting from Emily, of writing frequently, but only one letter had I received in reply, when one day a large missive was put into my hands. It was from that

dear girl, and as kind as ever—still breathing the strongest expressions of unalterable affection ; but telling me plainly why her letters had been so unfrequent, and giving me, at the same time, the disagreeable intelligence that she feared it would be compulsory on her to have recourse to deceit in writing to me for the future, as her father wished the correspondence dropped, at least for a time ; that something, she knew not what, had occurred, and that she knew not whence the change. My name, she told me, was, when made use of, referred to in the same kind and affectionate manner as formerly ; but that there *was* something, and that she was miserable. She concluded by begging that all my letters might be sent under cover to the wife of the postmaster.

In an instant I saw that troubles awaited me ; and poor dear Emily's foreboding words struck on my heart—"unutterable sorrow is in store for me." How sadly verified have those words been ! Oh, how often did I read that long letter over ; that letter, the expositor of her love—her hopes—her sorrows !

I saw, although no allusion was made to any

of my relatives in the letter, that communications had taken place between the families; and that on both sides there was a disposition, if not an actual determination, to separate us. I was equally determined, let come what would, to run away with her, and to trust to chance, when once married, for everything coming eventually round.

That night I wrote at great length to Emily, and in terms which admitted of no hesitation in either acquiescing in an elopement, or of giving me up altogether. I felt easier after the letter was written; I was confident in her unbounded love; and vanity prompted me to believe success as certain.

I determined to await patiently the result of my letter, before I made any preparations for so momentous an event as a runaway marriage, where the united ages of the couple amounted to thirty-six years. I thoroughly weighed all the difficulties to be overcome, from parental anger to the raising of the necessary supplies in the shape of money: the latter I knew would be easily effected, as coach-builders, tailors, boot-makers, et cetera, would, I knew, all be easily

bled upon such an occasion ; more especially where the borrower happened to be heir to a large sum of ready money on reaching his twenty-first year ; and he the youngest of four, whose elder brothers had all done the same thing.

In a few days the reply so anxiously expected, and which was to be such an epoch in my life, arrived.

I shall not bore my readers by dwelling on all the terms of endearment in which the letter was couched. The pith of the document I received was, that she consented to run away with me, but, that it could not take place for two months ; and that at that time she would have her clothes, and all things requisite for flight, at the house of my friend, Mrs. Truebridge.

I was in ecstasy. Not only was I carried away by the love I felt for that beautiful girl, but there was the excitement of a trip from Ashwell to Gretna with four posters, and of course with lady's maid and valet in rumble behind ; then again there was the *éclat* that would necessarily attend the whole affair.

I now considered myself as good as a married man ; and I felt ten years older. I have before

said that I was a decade in advance of my years. There was, however, a period of two months to elapse before the grand event could come off, and that I considered ample time in which to make all my arrangements: of course I despatched a letter to Emily, in which I rapturously entered into all her views as regarded making Mrs. Truebridge her *confidante* in everything.

I had now nothing to do for a month at least, but to amuse myself in the best way I could. In six weeks I should, I was well aware, be in London for my holidays; and during that time I had firmly decided that the trip "over the border" should take place.

What with the horse I had hired from Rimell, of Bond Street, and an occasional one from Mr. Beckett, of Newark, I managed to get out with the hounds about three times a fortnight. There were few better-appointed packs in the kingdom than the Burton, then the property of the late lamented Sir R. Sutton; they are still in their splendour, under their present noble owner.

Our time passed very agreeably, the shooting in the fens being so diversified, more especially

as regarded wild fowl; and every species of aquatic bird I believe I have there seen, which visits our islands.

The time for our departure at last arrived, when, from six to seven weeks, it was expected our tutor would be gratified by our absence.

Winter had then set in; so, bidding adieu to Mr. Welford and family, Vernon, Bagwell, and I, started in a post-chaise for Newark, where we were to take the mail *en route* for the great metropolis. Our horses had gone on two days previously, and the lads, our grooms, had orders from their young masters to make the journey up to town in four days.

Some little difficulty at the time we certainly found, in the arrangement of the ways and means, as regarded the travelling expenses of nags and boys.

We arranged to get into Newark by mid-day, and so had a jovial time of it until the departure of the mail at five o'clock. The usual preliminaries towards settling certain *little debts* were made; and thus we mounted the roof of the old "North Mail," and arrived safely at six o'clock the following morning in London.

Once more did I find myself at a "Saracen's Head," which sign, as I have before said, appeared to be invariably my terminus, whatever might be the direction in which I travelled.

Here we all parted ; then hiring a cab, I was, in course of time, once more dropped in Gloucester Place, Portman Square, the residence of my mother.

Many will think perhaps that I have hitherto dwelt far too long on the early portion of my life. I could not do otherwise, so interwoven are my younger days with those of matured life, and in which there has been so much happiness and so much sorrow. And, in truth, I have seen both in extremes.

Events of larger import will more frequently take place, as I merge from boyhood into man's estate.

My narrative now enters upon that period of my existence when it was easy to discern whether I would turn towards steadiness or to the total disregard of that most desirable quality. Unfortunately, the writer of this work chose the latter.

All, as usual, were glad to see me, from my

mother down to the kitchen-maid; and I tendered to my guardian a letter which my tutor had put into my hands upon our leave-taking. What the contents of that letter were, I have never known, but certainly there was something in it which militated against my return to his custody: that I did not in the least care for, as my projected matrimonial expectation had settled that matter in every way.

About the third evening after my return home, I was informed that I was not to return to Bullingham. I feigned great surprise, although I had expected as much.

I remember, my guardian and I were sitting over our wine. Nothing ever appeared to put him out of the even tenour of his way; he was an exceedingly clever man, and vastly eccentric, but blessed with as good a heart as ever beat in man's breast.

"Charles, help yourself," he said; at the same time pushing the decanter over to me. This was the commencement of the *tête-à-tête* I was doomed to endure. "I know all, and so does your mother. I have much to say to you, and I beg that you will listen to me. In the

first place, suffer me to put a home-question to you : Are you in your senses ?”

“ Sir,” I said, looking up into his face, where I could read nothing but kindness ; but was immediately stopped by his continuing—

“ I wish to extract from you a pledge that you will never, during the time that you are under my guardianship, attempt to see or write to that young lady, with whom you have made yourself so ridiculous whilst at Ashwell. Unless that promise is given, I shall be under the painful necessity of resigning my charge over you and of transferring you to the hands of the Lord Chancellor ; and, mark me, he can keep you out of your property until you are five-and-twenty years of age—as, from your acts, I deem you more fit for a lunatic asylum than to be at large.”

Here, again, I made another attempt to speak, but I was immediately checked ; and perhaps it was as well, for I was so taken by surprise at his apparent knowledge of all my misdoings, and so utterly crushed in spirit at the thought of losing Emily, I could have nothing to say in extenuation of my conduct.

I therefore thought it best to rise and quit the room.

I must confess that at that time I had commenced another establishment, in the shape of a very neat and sporting tandem-cart, three really very fine horses, and two servants. Edward Pegsworth, the Lincolnshire boy, I had sent back ; not that I had any fault to find with him, but the poor boy found London too much for him—it was too fast.

Well, the two liveried rascals that I had hired, one of whom rejoiced in the name of Webb, were without exception the greatest scoundrels that I ever met with ; and my Australian life, in after years, gave me ample scope to judge of character ; the other, by name Eames, was, without Webb's cleverness, as great a rogue ; yet these two men had been in first-rate situations, and were most excellent stablemen. The fact was, the trial on their virtue was too great for them ; they could not resist the temptation to pluck one so young and verdant as I then was.

At the instigation of these two worthies, I took a four-stall stable, coach-house, saddle-

room, et cetera, in Crawford Street, Portman Square, and about a stone's throw from my guardian's residence.

The first thing that these two "leeches" did, was to impress upon my mind the necessity of the saddle-room being made fit for a gentleman to pass his time in.

The stables were remarkably good, and the saddle-room was very capacious.

I gave my consent, and desired Mr. Webb, (as he was called) to have it done, and forthwith, in a very short time, the white-washed walls were beautifully covered from ceiling to floor with green baize, and which was fastened with bright brass nails; a large sofa and neat chairs were introduced; matting of an Indian pattern covered the stone floor; and the cupboards, of which there were three, were filled with—what do you think, gentle reader?—rum, gin, and brandy!

For a space of two months did I continue my wild career in London; every day was I to be seen on the Harrow Road driving tandem, when one morning (on which I suppose I had been more liberal than usual in treating the two

villains who accompanied me), I remarked that they both appeared to be excessively elevated; and such being the case, I returned home early, and safely drove into the mews, in Crawford Street, believing that all would be correct. I had not left the stables ten minutes, when the two drunken varlets took it into their heads to take a drive on their own account; which they did, much to my cost, and slightly to their own: they were run away with down Oxford Street, both turned out, and the cart smashed to atoms. It was, however, strange, that little or no damage was done to the horses.

In the morning, as usual, at eleven o'clock, I was at my stables, and suffered myself to be duped into the belief that there was something in the harness which had required alteration, and that therefore they had driven down to Richardson's, the saddler; that something had frightened the horses, and thus the bolt and consequent smash. Webb's face was cut, and the other showed unmistakeable symptoms of having seriously hurt one of his legs. The two worthies had nevertheless taken the broken carriage to Beaumont and Taylor's

establishment, and another vehicle had been sent up to replace the damaged one.

However, it was decreed that the whole establishment was shortly afterwards to be broken up, which indeed was a fortunate thing for me, for the heartless villains I had taken into my service were running me fearfully into debt.

I had gone on a visit for a few days, some ten miles from London, when one evening my eldest brother, accompanied by my brother Frederick (before alluded to), suddenly arrived, and took me back with him to town. During the drive I was told that my two domestics had been sent about their business, that the horses once again occupied their own stalls in Bond Street, and that the tandem cart had returned to its owners. I also learnt that the discovery of my having that establishment was owing to a woman who resided in the mews, who had been insulted by one of my men, at the time in a state of intoxication ; that she in revenge, knowing how shamefully I was being robbed, had called on my mother and told her all. I did not then feel grateful for her officiousness ; I do so now.

Seeing the absolute necessity of getting me

from London, it was agreed that I should go under the espionage of my eldest brother, who was then in the army and quartered in Wales; and a very few days after the little event narrated we started for the Principality. I forgot to mention that I had at last fixed upon the army as the profession I intended to follow; and that my name had been put down at the Horse Guards for a commission.

I now come to a period of my past life, in which the incidents I shall have to dwell on do not show me forth in a bright light. I allude more especially to actions in which kindness of heart is concerned. I had not forgotten Miss Kennett—far from it, and I believed, at the time, that I loved her as much as ever. I have before said that my guardian had such power over me, that he obtained from me the promise that I would not write or visit that young lady whilst I remained his ward: that promise was, by me, faithfully kept—yes, too faithfully kept, for that poor young girl's happiness.

It is painful to me, even after so many years, to have to revert to events in which she was connected. I did not then know that her parents

had been written to, and in such a strain as to leave no hope of my ever fulfilling my youthful engagement. It was not until after the expiration of thirteen years that I was made acquainted with that fact; and that I was fully made aware of all the unhappiness I had unwillingly been the cause. But I shall have to return to Miss Kennett—for again we met; and under most painful circumstances.

Let me proceed. I was at this time settled in the town of B——, the chief town of a shire of the same name, and had become an honorary member of the mess of the regiment to which my brother was attached; and indeed he has proved himself a brother to me: in fact, I have not words to express the affectionate gratitude I entertain towards him; for in every transaction that I have had with him, and they are numberless, that brother has proved himself, by his generosity and his untiring attention to my welfare, the best of brothers, the best of friends. His popularity is unbounded, and by high and low is he equally respected.

It will be surmised that I became acquainted with the different county families far and wide;

and there were few counties which could boast of better families residing within their limits than the county of B—— and, I may add, that none can exceed it in beauty of scenery.

In a short time, through my brother, I became on intimate terms with a family who held by birth and fortune a very high position in that county: they resided near the town of C——, situated on the river ——; a stream, indeed, justly celebrated for its trout and salmon. I know no region more lovely than the vale in which the town I have alluded to is situated, which is distant fourteen miles from where I then resided. With that family, which consisted of a mother and three daughters, I became very intimate, and my visits were very frequent: my brother had, for a length of time, been on the most friendly terms with them.

Months passed on, and if Emily Kennett was not forgotten altogether, she was but tenderly remembered.

The winter of the succeeding year had arrived, and I had gone on a visit to my brother Frederick, who was at that time at Cambridge; he was a member of Trinity College, and had

a good many horses up there. The stables of Jordan and Friend were celebrated for hacks, and thus we hunted, I may say, regularly enough. My brother did not live in college, but had rooms over the shop kept by one Phillips (the best of boot makers), in Bridge Street.

About a month after the commencement of my visit to Cambridge, engagements were made for an University steeplechase; yet not confined to members of the University: the stakes were tolerably good, but the entries were few.

I must here state that this race took place prior to the days, or just about the time, that the courses to be run over were flagged out. The distance was four miles; the locale, some five miles on the Huntingdon road; and no one was expected to know the ground before starting: all the other regulations were the same as are to this day acted up to. The entries, which closed the night previous to the race, showed thirteen horses as starters, two of which belonged to my brother; he was to ride the one, and I the other. At the hour appointed, the day following, my brother and myself repaired to the spot selected for the start: of course there

were numberless University men present. The referee (we had no stewards) was a Northamptonshire gentleman, of sporting celebrity, besides, he was one of those who had selected the ground, and tolerably stiff it proved to be. I must not forget here to state that the riders had been warned not to leap the gate, which was tolerably low, into the winning field, as a quarry had been opened, but to take the stone wall instead. As I was settling myself into the saddle, before starting, a member of Trinity, who afterwards became my brother-in-law, rode up, and informed me that the first fence was a "ripper," being an ox fence, with sunken quick, and a small brook on the landing side: at the same time I was told to bear well to the left at starting, 'as I should find a rail broken down.

I had but time to tell my brother, when the word "Off!" was given. Bearing in mind what I had been told, I kept well to the left, and there I found the one rail down, as stated: putting "Guy Fawkes" (for that was the name of the horse I that day rode to his full speed), he cleared all beautifully, landing me safely. On looking round I saw that every horse had

either fallen, or was in the brook ; and that one alone had his rider on his back ; that rider was my brother, whose horse, or rather mare, had leapt short, thereby leaving her hind legs in the water. The bank was tolerably firm, and thus to my delight, I soon saw my brother nearing me fast, and wishing at the same time most fervently that all the others might remain as they were for the next few minutes.

The mare my brother rode had twice the speed of the horse that I was on ; but that lack of pace was made up by the splendour of his jumping ; and I believe I may say with truth, that I never saw “ Guy Fawkes ” swerve. It was in a large ploughed field that my brother rode up, and passed me, saying, “ One of us will have it, you will see.”

Any one who has hunted in Cambridgeshire, knows the quantity of ploughed land that is to be met with in that county, and a vast deal that day we had to cross.

My brother was now gaining on me fast ; three of the other riders were again in their saddles, but they had much ground to make up ; the rest were not visible. Chance brought the

“fraternity” into another large fallow field, which had been lately turned over, when, to my great distress, I saw my brother’s mare make a perfect summersault, evidently giving her rider a severe fall. I galloped up to my brother, who, however, was again on his legs before I reached him ; he was bleeding profusely at the mouth, and I could see that he was much shaken. Upon my asking him if he was seriously hurt, he said, “No—get on, and win if you can ; one of us must win it.” He had recovered his horse ; for in fact he was on his legs sooner than the mare was on hers and who must necessarily have suffered much by such a fall, for I believe that in pitching over, the cantle of the saddle was the first thing that touched the ground. I had now the lead ; “Guy Fawkes” was taking his fences in the most brilliant style, and as I said before, he never swerved once with me that day.

Again, my brother was by my side ; the chances of the other three were but slight ; the remaining riders were nowhere to be seen.

Three more large fields were all that we had to get over, when the white flag was reached. My brother was about fifty strides before me, when

I saw his mare again fall with him at a low fence ; again I was by his side ; he was still bleeding from his mouth. He denied, nevertheless, that he was hurt, and told me to get on, and win if I could : on I went, and on looking back I saw that he was again mounted, and coming up with me ; it was then, for the first time—after that I knew the chances of the other riders were gone—I felt a desire to win. We were both now in the last field : there was the wall ; and to the right stood the gate, which we were warned to avoid. I remembered that warning ; and ramming the spurs into my horse, the dreaded wall was cleared, and I was in the winning field. A few more strides brought me beside the flag, and I was declared the winner. But how fared my brother ? Forgetting the warning that he had received ; not remembering, from his excitement, that a stone quarry had been opened the other side of the gate—he leapt it ; and horse and rider fell. Never shall I forget my horror, and I may say, the consternation of all, on witnessing that gate jumped. The quarry was not deep, but sufficiently so as to give a frightful fall, to

say nothing of such a landing as the bottom of a stone quarry would afford.

Upon reaching the spot, we found both rider and mare down, and strange to say both alive. We got my brother up, and found him bleeding from the mouth. He was perfectly sensible ; and a post-chaise which was on the ground conveyed him and myself back to Cambridge, where everything was done that was necessary for him. My brother was sufficiently sensible to give his own orders to his groom, and that evening his favourite mare (her name I cannot remember) was brought back to her own stables, and "Guy Fawkes" became my property, which horse I eventually sold to my eldest brother's wife, whose husband had also been once owner of him. The mare, although frightfully cut and knocked about, eventually recovered.

Three days after this event, I was taken very ill, and finding myself getting daily worse, I determined to go to London ; and the same carriage conveyed the two brothers, both equally sick, to town. I shall not forget the face of my poor mother, when she saw her two young sons. I was obliged to be carried into the house, being

unable to walk, for I was suffering from a disease called "anasarca;" which, I was informed, upon inquiry, meant the possession of too much fluid; and whether I imbibed it at Cambridge, I know not. My brother Frederick recovered, to all appearance, soon, but the day of the steeple-chase I have alluded to set the seal to his early death. He had some few years previously broken a blood vessel, from a recurrence of which he believed himself to be safe, but to that day I impute our family loss, although he survived the falls he received four years—and had married. As I have before stated, he died at Ridgway Castle, the residence of his father-in-law (who is also dead), and lies buried within the church, at Pear Tree Green, near Southampton. May my end be like unto his!

I must now return to my narrative.

For some weeks I was laid up under the tender care of the best of mothers; and daily was I visited by the talented physician, Sir Charles C——, who at that time had not received the reward he did subsequently, at the hands of royalty, in acknowledgment of his services.

At last I was again well, and I quitted Lon-

dion for the Principality, where I was most warmly welcomed by my friends at C——. It was then spring-time, and the fishing-season was well in. My time was delightfully passed. The three young ladies were admirable horsemen; and, indeed, so was their mother: pic-nic party succeeded pic-nic party; and the other days were devoted to the gentle art.

It will be surmised that there was danger in a young fellow of eighteen passing the whole of his time in the society of three young and pretty women.

Month after month passed, when the anniversary of the birthday of the youngest came round and was to be celebrated by a grand pic-nic. The place chosen was a lovely spot; the beautiful ruin of —— Castle, rendered famous as the birthplace of Edward the Fourth, and his brother Richard the Third. Never was there a more exquisitely lovely day; and that day is lastingly imprinted on my memory.

Would I might be allowed to pass over the eight succeeding years of my life! but as I have said that the truth should be spoken, I will tell all; let it redound as it will to my disgrace;

which will, I fear, put me out of favour with the reader.

The day passed over delightfully, and it was late in the evening when we returned home, when I again found myself riding by the side of the youngest daughter, in whose honour the party was given. I confess that I had become attached to her; we were nearly of the same age, for I was but two years her senior.

That evening I made her an offer of marriage, which was accepted.

Upon her mother being made acquainted with the fact, she expressed her entire willingness, and it was agreed that we were to wait until I had reached my twenty-first year. Of course I was now considered as one of the family.

I shall pass over the two years succeeding the eventful day, when one evening I urged my intended wife to waive the ceremony as regarded waiting the attainment of my majority before the completion of our marriage. She consented, on the promise that my guardian would sanction it. To him I wrote; and his reply was somewhat Jesuitical—"that he would do nothing to militate against my happiness." No word said about

actual consent; or even a hint upon that most necessary thing, money.

With my guardian's letter in my hand I went to the curate of G——at once he consented to perform the ceremony.

That evening I wrote to Peters, the coach-builder of Park Street, ordering a travelling-carriage (should he have one by him) to be posted down to the neighbouring town, and telling him to meet me at Bailey and Thomas's Hotel, on the Thursday following, with six hundred pounds, relying on the generosity of my guardian for a suitable allowance being given me until I was of age, which was eventually done.

It was at the hour of one, post meridian, of the ninth of December, eighteen hundred and thirty odd, that my wife and I, accompanied by two servants (my own man, Allen, and a lady's-maid, by name Lucy Mathews), left W——*en route* for the Continent. We travelled very rapidly. Passing but one day in London, we hurried on to Dover; and strange, however, as it may appear, such was still the infatuation that hovered over me for the girl that I had once so much loved, I actually diverged from the direct

route, so that I might be enabled to pass through the town of Ashwell, where I was in hopes of hearing something of Miss Kennett. I say this to my shame; but such was the case.

The following day we reached Calais, that dullest of all French towns, and which is proverbial.

It was at the Hotel de Bourbon Condé that I took into my service a courier, who proved himself the prince of scoundrels. This man's name was Larchet, by birth a Prussian; he was a man who had reached the age of fifty, at least. This villain in man's form managed, by his specious manners and his outward show of religious feeling, in which he took immense pains to prove to me that he was a strict Lutheran, to gain my confidence, and thus to rob me to a very considerable amount; added to which he was guilty, on leaving my service, of a most abominable breach of trust. Of this, however, I shall have again to speak; for it was an act so damning to the character of man, that I really think all those who are about to hire foreign servants should be made cognizant of the fact; that a warning, moreover, might be taken

not to put implicit trust in all those vouchers for good conduct which are so frequently sealed with armorial bearings, from the ducal coronet downwards. This man's testimonials were of the highest description. As a linguist he was second to none; and his knowledge of the tariffs of the different States we were about to pass through was perfect. This creature was, to the exclusion of all others, the most heartless villain that I have ever come in contact with; he verified the old saying, "That which is gained over the d—l's back is spent under his belly." But more of him anon.

We were not long reaching Paris; for, in truth, there is little to attract attention in the Pas de Calais, or in the Department d'Oise. In that beautiful city our stay was but short; nevertheless, we managed to see all the notable sights of that gay capital.

In ten days we were back again at Calais, intending to run over to London, prior to our "grande tour;" but the letters which I found awaiting me at that town altered our movements, for my guardian had informed me that

I should find letters of credit (Drummond's) at all the chief towns on my way south. At Calais I dismissed my servant, Allen, as he and Larchet were continually quarrelling; and, in verity, an English servant who cannot speak any other language than his own, is perfectly useless.

On quitting Calais we took the road for Brussels, where we remained three weeks, at the expiration of which time we started for Geneva.

It was a lovely day, although in the month of February, that we made the ascent of the Jura, and few more splendid sights have I witnessed in all my travels than the first view of the Alps, on reaching the summit of that mountain.

Arrived at Geneva, we took up our quarters at the "Hotel de l'Ecu de Genève," kept by one of the most obliging of landlords, by name Kohler, and from thence did we visit every place worthy of notice, not forgetting the abodes of those two celebrities, Voltaire and Byron.

Six weeks were delightfully passed on the shores of Lake Lemman; and, as the weather was becoming warm, we wished to reach the

“Eternal City” before the malaria had set in; so we quitted Geneva with a determination of remaining but for short periods at all those cities usually stopped at on our route.

How great are the changes which have taken place throughout those old Italian states, where misgovernment had held its sway for centuries! Look at Parma, Modena, Lucca, whose “Dogana’s” were more intolerable from their exactions and their espionage than is to be met with on entrance into the largest of European kingdoms.

It was the middle of the month of March that we quitted Turin, the capital of Piedmont; and quiet and dull as it then was I was loth to leave it. There is really much to be seen in that little city: it assuredly possesses great attractions to a military eye; for the citadel, which is a perfect pentagon, is said to be the strongest in Europe. And who that has seen it, will forget the Castle of Valentin, situated on the banks of the Po?

It was then that I first saw that fire-eating king, Victor Emmanuel, then a boy of some twelve years of age, walking hand-in-hand with

his no less heroic father, Charles Albert. How sad, that fate should decree that the noble deeds of the son should be unknown to the father! How sad that that father should die of a broken heart!—Novara killed him!

It was evening when we quitted Turin. The weather was beautiful and warm; and little did I think of the folly which I was about to be guilty of, when I determined to travel all night, without giving one thought to the mountain route we had to take.

But my courier was most to blame: however, once started, on was I determined to go, when, to my unutterable disgust, at about the hour of ten, I found my carriage, attached to which were six horses, firmly imbedded in a snow drift. What to do, neither postilions nor courier appeared to know: all that I could extract from the drivers, upon their unharnessing their horses, was a promise that they would send assistance in the morning: there were, it is true, refuges for the destitute all along the road, but none were within our reach—*miserabile dictu*.

I told my wife that she must make the best

of it; upbraided the courier for his intense stupidity in suffering me to travel by night; and as it was becoming intensely cold, and the snow was beginning to fall fast, ordered my wife's maid inside the carriage, whilst I took her place in the rumble, by the side of Larchet.

To crown all our miseries, we had nothing with us but a bottle of English pickles, and the maid-servant was screaming from toothache. Luckily for myself and the courier, I had plenty of cigars. Having seen mistress and maid safely stowed for the night, with no very pleasant anticipations, I jumped up behind.

The cold of that night was intense, and we suffered much from thirst; but who shall describe my feelings when I found that the snow was falling to such an extent as promised to bury us all alive!

I had myself taken the precaution to see that the carriage-lamps were newly trimmed: it was a pity that I had not used the same forethought as regarded our more personal comforts. There we were—four persons—two women and two men—benighted in the Apennines, without the

slightest chance of assistance before daybreak ! At four o'clock in the morning I descended from the rumble and found myself up to my middle in snow. I was fearful that I should find my wife and her servant smothered ; for the snow had drifted on one side of the carriage to such an extent as to have reached the roof, and on the other side the glass was covered half way up to the top. With fear I tapped loudly at the window, and it was some minutes before I could make either of them hear. They were both asleep, and as I watched them with the lamp in my hand they appeared to sleep the sleep of death ! After repeated knocking, Mathews, the maid, awoke ; and bewildered indeed she appeared to be. What with the reflection of the light thrown upon her eyes, and the half-suffocating sensation she must at the time have been labouring under, she seemed totally incapable of any exertion whatever : at last, my wife also awoke.

I firmly believe that had I left them until morning, hermetically sealed as they nearly were, I should have found both dead : nothing less could be compared to the atmosphere of the

interior of the carriage, upon opening the window, than a heated oven.

At six o'clock we were delighted by the loud cracking of whips and blowing of horns; and shortly afterwards, seven men, armed with spades and other implements, made their appearance, leading six horses and two bullocks. Two out of the seven men were postilions; we at once all set heartily to work, and it was incredible in how short a space of time, a road was cut through the drift, and we were enabled to proceed. Nevertheless, it was but slow work, as we had some miles to go before we reached the spot, from whence we commenced our descent; and the six horses, and two bullocks by way of leaders, by no means constituted a good team.

I shall never forget the delight with which, on reaching the summit, we hailed the wretched *auberge*, which was also the *poste aux chevaux*. There we managed to make a sort of toilette, during which time was provided for us the best breakfast that was in the power of the host—who was also postmaster—to put on the table. Homely as our meal was, justice was done unto

it. My wife had quite recovered her good spirits, and I heard no complaints from the maid as regarded her aching tooth ; so she took her seat as usual by the side of Larchet, and thus we commenced our descent. I must here mention that my courier was by no means callous to the good looks of the girl who sat by his side ; but all his repeated attentions gained him no advance in her good graces : and, at last, I found out that the rascal had actually become jealous of his master.

It certainly appears part of the duties of that genus to make love to every female domestic, whether young or old, married or single, fair or otherwise : and take them as a body, they are certainly great rogues, but of course there are many exceptions.

I shall hurry over the rest of our route—neither shall I dwell on the annoyances that all must suffer on passing the frontiers of the Ecclesiastical States, where they seal down with lead all your baggage, with the exception of a few articles you are allowed for present use ; and the abominable nuisance of having your carriage taken possession of by the *douaniers*, on enter-

ing the gates of the Eternal City—which, in my case, was not returned until the following day.

I took up my quarters at that fine hotel situated at the corner of the beautiful Piazza del Popolo, in the Via Babuino, where I fell into the hands of one Signor Martignoni, who was the counterpart, as far as roguery was concerned, of my most delectable servant.

Never did two rogues work better together. Never did two men more systematically fledge a youngster than the two I have mentioned; and not satisfied with that alone, they took a third into partnership in their villany, in the shape of a commissionaire, by name Carigi, who was in no way behind his colleagues in wickedness. The last-named rascal spoke English remarkably well, with one exception,—he could not pronounce the names of English families, or that of towns. It will not be out of place if I here give a little episode, as a specimen.

There was a certain very wealthy, and very eccentric English marquis residing at Rome when I arrived; and in course of conversation

one day I asked this *laquais de place* if there were many of my own countrymen in the city at that moment. He told me that there were not—for the cholera had driven all away. “But,” said he, “the great Lord H—f—d is here, and he cares neither for the cholera, or the d—l;” and he then voluntarily commenced a long history of the eccentricities of that celebrated peer. Now there are three peers whose names foreigners invariably pronounce alike, namely, He—t—rd, Headfort, and Hereford; and thus it was M. Carigi took it into his head to impute to Lord Hereford the deeds of the first-named nobleman. And surely there never was so great a contrast as did then exist between the marquis of that period and the then premier viscount of England. They are both gone to their last resting-places—*Requiescant in pace*.

I forgot to mention that we were visited, a few hours after our arrival in Rome, by that most exemplary official of our government—Mr. Freeborn, the consul; and there never was a man who did more to uphold the dignity of his country; never was there a man, who

with greater zeal watched over the interests of his fellow-countrymen. Alas ! he too is gone.

True to his word, my guardian had sent letters of credit to the various towns I had indicated as places in which I should stop for a short time, and of which I was regularly advised ; when one day I received a packet of letters ; in one of which I was informed that a fortnight previously, an order on Torlonia's bank had been sent through Drummond's. I therefore despatched my courier to the post-office to claim the much wished for document, when he was told that there was no letter in the name which coincided with my passport. Feeling well assured that there was a letter awaiting me at the office, I went myself, when the same denial was reiterated. I certainly was annoyed at this, but there was nothing for me to do but to write back to England, stating the non-arrival of the letter of credit.

Two days after this, I was astonished at receiving an invitation from Signor Torlonia (now a duke) to a grand *fête* at his palace. There were very few English visitors at the time in the city — and the banker-prince

that day paid us marked attention. He gave us a *carte blanche* for every Thursday evening, "for" as he said, "on that day we receive company."

In the course of conversation he expressed his astonishment that I had never been to draw my money: it then became apparent to me that he had received his instructions to honour my draught. But I could not help smiling, whilst telling him of the non-arrival of my credentials, at the wide difference in the way of doing business that existed, between a member of one of our large London banking establishments, and a Roman banker albeit he was a duke. Would any member of a London banking establishment have introduced monetary topics on such an occasion?

Pardon me, reader, for one instant. I do remember a country banker, a man of family too, being guilty of that enormity: it was thus—

I was at the county town of B—— during the races; on the second day of which, there was a hurdle race. In this race I rode, and hardly had I finished my little preparatory

canter before starting, before the banker was by my side : shaking hands with me, he wished me success, and then concluded by jogging my memory that my account was *slightly overdrawn* !

Torlonia spoke our language well, and certainly no foreigner could be more rapturous than that gentleman was in his praise of England and of Englishmen. He told me that his immense fortune was raised through my countrymen, and then informed me that the hotel in which I was staying was his property, and to use his own words, "was built with English sovereigns."

I forgot to mention that my kind friend, the banker, told me to go again to the post-office, and to insist on seeing the letters that had come from England by a certain mail, and which were addressed "Poste restante." Thanking him for his advice we parted.

Accompanied by Larchet, the next morning I called again at the post-office, and after a lengthy and fiery dispute I succeeded in getting a peep at all those letters which had not been claimed, and very few there were. There was one apparently without any address, and the

envelope, besides, was much discoloured, occasioned, I believe, by a certain process to which all letters at that time, in Rome, were subjected, to avoid infection; and, as I have before stated, the cholera was very prevalent at that time.

Every one who has banked with Messrs. Drummond's, of Charing Cross, is cognizant of their seal; and upon the strength of that old and well-known stamp, I tore open the letter alluded to, much to the dismay of the postmaster and his *employés*.

I was right; the letter was mine; the writing inside was perfectly legible. The postmaster was satisfied, so was I; and thus we hurried off to the banking-house of Torlonia and secured the money. The millionaire was all kindness, and he told me to come to him, if I required assistance. I must now confess that I had, during my residence in Rome, been rather extravagant, more especially as regarded mosaics and other articles of questionable vertu.

I was a daily visitor at the residence of Fioppi, the celebrated mosaichista, in the Via Condotti. I also lived remarkably well at

Martignoni's, and especially well did I pay for my living at his establishment. How foolish I must have been, when I flattered myself that the act of my landlord invariably accompanying me when I went on distant trips, sprang from a desire of affording me protection from the thousand cheats who infested that country. Certain it is, that he was always with me, and true it is that through his instrumentality, and that of Carigi, I saw more of the lions of the Eternal City and neighbourhood than most people, and dearly did I pay for my sight-seeing.

Another post arrived from England, which brought me another letter on Torlonia, the banker; and no sooner had I perused my kind guardian's letter, than I ordered Larchet to accompany me to the bureau of that gentleman.

I had by this time become seriously in debt; there was a very large score owing at my hotel, and the amount due to Fioppi was also very great. I must say that it is quite a misfortune that, at Rome, an Englishman has unlimited credit; and thus so many young men are there who for years rue their trip to that classic soil.

Arriving at the banker's place of business,

I was immediately ushered into the sanctum of the now great man. He handed over to me the letter of credit, and then, to my astonishment, asked me if that was all I required. I was astonished, and I must confess that his kindness of manner quite overpowered me. However, I made him acquainted with the exact state of my liabilities, and I gave him a true statement of my expectations on coming of age, and which I told him I should attain on the following June.

This generous man at once told me to collect all my debts, and that he would pay them ; and added, that if the three hundred pounds which he had that day paid me, was insufficient to carry me to Geneva—where I gave him to understand I should find another letter of credit awaiting me, at the bank of Mr. Heynshe—he would advance me more : upon that we parted.

A few weeks after this, I was again at the bureau of the millionaire, when he advanced me two hundred pounds more, thus giving me in excess over the amount of the value of my letters of credit, five hundred pounds (he having paid my debts at Rome), and for which I signed bills payable at four months' date.

Few bankers are there like Signor Torlonia ; and yet he has not lost much, either by his boundless hospitality, or by the ultra liberal manner in which, it must be confessed, he has transacted business. Honour to him ! say I.

We had now been some time in Rome, and my wife appeared anxious to return to England ; added to which, the time for my attaining my majority was drawing nigh ; so packing up all our motley collection of valuables, we bade adieu to the city of the Cæsars.

CHAPTER VII.

Dismiss my Courier.—An Escort of Carbineers.—Restore my Courier.—Murder of Two Americans.—The Santa Casa.—Ancona.—Robbed by my Courier.—Treachery of our Courier.—I Forswear Smuggling.—My Property Restored.—Arrive in the Principality.—Settle Down on the Wye.—Salmon Fishing.—Establish a Pack of Harriers.—My Farming Speculation.—Change my Residence.—Fly-Fishing in Wales.—A New Friend.—A Fashionable Bill-Discounter.—An Extraordinary Visitor, and the Result.

I HAVE little or nothing to relate as taking place, out of the common way, during our route to Geneva, but that I had a serious quarrel with my man Larchet.

It was late in the evening when we arrived at Tolentino, and on my retiring to my dressing-room, preparatory to going to bed, my courier did not, as was his custom, come to me. I took no notice of it at the time; but when I found that the following morning he was guilty of the same want of respect, I sent for him. Upon asking him his reasons for absenting himself, he answered me surlily. I at once demanded from him my passport. He hesitated.

I then placed my back against the door. Seeing that I was determined, he told me that my papers were lodged at the police office, with the authorities. I was satisfied. His manner, however was so insolent, that I told him I should pay him off at once, and proceed on to Milan without a courier, and when there provide myself with another. "Very well," said the impertinent scoundrel; "you will never live to reach that city." I ordered him out of the room, and he obeyed me.

I had not been five minutes seated at the breakfast-table, when I was waited on by the "commandant" of the town, who politely gave me to understand that I was compelled by a government order to take an escort of carbineers, as the "briganti" were out between that town and Ancona. Upon my demurring, on account of the expense, I was told that my passport would be denied me in event of my refusal to obey the Papal orders. At the same time the government official informed me that two American gentlemen had been murdered three days previously, between that town and Osimo.

To yield, I was compelled. He left me; but

shortly afterwards he returned, bringing me my passport.

In another hour I descended the stairs leading to the *porte-cochère* of the hotel with my wife leaning on my arm, closely followed by Lucy Mathews ; and there I found my carriage ready packed, and Larchet standing by the door. Having seen my wife seated, and the maid-servant in her accustomed place in the rumble, and in which she looked vastly forlorn, being alone, I was about to enter the carriage myself, when I was stopped by Larchet, who in mild accents asked me if he was to accompany me. My reply was "No." At this he flung himself on the ground, and in the most piteous, I may say servile accents, besought me to allow him to occupy his old place as far as Milan.

At length I yielded to his entreaties, and ordered him into his seat. It was not solely from a feeling of pity that for a time I delayed the punishment I intended to inflict upon that false servant. No—I was well aware that I should require his services, as my knowledge of the Italian language was very limited, and the country through which I had to pass was

greatly disturbed. In fact, the French and the Austrians were both, at that time, on the Adriatic, watching one another.

It poured torrents of rain as I quitted that old Papal town Tolentino, escorted by an officer and eight carbineers. We had not travelled upwards of nine miles, when the post-boys pulled up, and the officer riding to the window of the carriage asked me if I would like to descend and see the spot where the two Americans had been put to death. Raining as it was I assented.

It was through a deep cutting that we were making our way at the time, and there was a shelving bank to the right of the road. Down that bank I was led; it was well wooded; and had it been fine weather, I should have considered it a place much more fit for a party of pleasure than a deed of blood.

My journey, however, was not enlivened by a sight of those justly-dreaded villains who were, and now are, the curse of Italy; added to which, I was perfectly aware, that had our party been attacked, my escort would have been the first to have shown their heels.

It was three P.M. when we reached Loretto,

when of course we visited the great church, in which they pretend to show the "Santa Casa," the actual residence of the Virgin Mary at Nazareth, in which the early days of our blessed Lord were passed, and where we were made acquainted with the history of the miraculous conveyance of that sacred edifice from its original site, to the spot on which it at present stands. If the jewels with which the figure of the Virgin is covered, are real, she is indeed rich in *bijouterie*. The show of gold and silver lamps, and the presents from crowned heads, constituted a very beautiful sight; but this is well known to all.

We reached Ancona late in the evening, when the lieutenant commanding our little escort informed me that his services, as well as those of his men, had ceased: I therefore paid him the sum demanded, and was glad to see his back turned.

Nothing occurred worthy of remark during our journey from Ancona to Milan, except that our wheels were on fire three times in one day, from the rapid pace at which we travelled along that beautiful road. Resting but one day in Milan, we made our way for Geneva; entering

Switzerland by the magnificent pass of the Simplon. A fortnight only did we remain at that delightful place.

I must, however, mention an event that occurred during our short stay. I had made purchases to a considerable amount at the shop of Mr. Freundler, the well-known jeweller; and amongst other things was a very valuable watch, attached to which was a chain; I placed it, on retiring to bed, on the table of the room in which I slept; when I rose in the morning, both were gone. I spoke to Mr. Kohler about my loss, and he very handsomely offered to pay the value of it, but which I refused. Some years afterwards, on visiting Calais, I met by accident the courier Roche, who succeeded Larchet after his dismissal, who informed me that the lost watch was seen in the possession of Larchet, a few days after my return to England.

Leaving Geneva, I made my way, as fast I could, back to Brussels; even the tomb of St. Ursula, and the bones of her eleven thousand virgins, did not tempt me to remain in that dirty town, Cologne. In fact we were tired of sight-seeing, although we did manage to visit the tomb

of Charlemagne, at Aix la Chapelle ; at last Brussels was reached.

It had not escaped my observation, that Larchet's attentions were forced : it was evident, from the demoniacal expression of the man's countenance, that he brooded over the quarrel at Tolentino.

One morning he entered my dressing-room, and with cool effrontery asked me if I intended to take him with me to England. I told him I had no intention of doing so : he made no reply, and quitted the room ; but the scowl on the man's face was awful ; I felt that he meditated some act of villany, and thought to be prepared for all emergencies.

It had been our habit to collect something, either in the shape of jewellery, cameos, or mosaics, at every place celebrated for the manufacture of such articles ; consequently, we had, as I have said, a motley collection. I had been foolish enough to trust Larchet with a knowledge of all that I possessed ; and many articles he had assisted me in stowing away—some in a muff—some in fur tippets ; in point of fact, every available spot was brought into requisition, even

to the lining of the carriage, and the padding of the maid-servant's dress.

The weather was excessively boisterous when we reached Calais ; notwithstanding, we were determined to cross over to Dover. I paid off Larchet the evening of my arrival ; he made another trial to induce me to take him with me, but to no purpose, and I at the same time told him that another servant had been engaged.

I thought it odd that Larchet should take it so easily, and be so vastly attentive, and really almost repented having quarrelled with him. To the last moment he never relaxed in those attentions : even when the vessel was getting under weigh did he linger near us on board.

Little did I think to what amount of villany that man would go.

The morning was wet and cold ; had it not been so, the act of my wife wearing a large sable tippet, and using a muff, would have appeared ridiculous in the first week in June ; my wife sat in the carriage the three and a-half hours that it took us to reach Dover.

The packet had hardly been made fast to the pier at that watering-place, when half a dozen

Custom-house officers rushed on deck and surrounded my carriage : I was in the act of handing my wife out, and her foot had hardly touched the deck, when she was politely requested to deliver over her muff and tippet to the authorities ; at the same time they took the tippet from the shoulders of the maid-servant. The reader may judge of our astonishment and indignation. The truth flashed instantaneously across my mind, that it was Larchet who had brought this trouble upon us.

Some officers of the Rifles, who at that time were quartered at Dover, happened to be on the pier, and seeing a disturbance, came on deck ; when, to my astonishment, I recognized the late Lord H——t of L——a : he knew me immediately, although we had not met since we were boys at Harrow school ; he rendered me on this occasion all the assistance in his power. Nearly at the same moment Mr. Payne of the York Hotel came up ; to him I also was well known : he was accompanied by his commissioners ; he begged me to get my wife and servants away as fast as I could to his hotel ; he told me that he would see my carriage cleared

through the Custom-house ; at the same time he asked me for my keys, which I handed to him. I got my wife safe on land, but I had unfortunately a *fracas* with two of the officials, who, contrary to law, dared to put their hands on the person of the maid-servant, but I was ably supported by the gentlemen on board.

We reached in safety the York Hotel, although it was with difficulty I could support my wife, who was frightened nearly out of her senses. Giving Mrs. Payne all the articles that were about our persons, and which were contraband, I waited with a feeling of nervousness the arrival of my carriage. What my new foreign servant thought of an Englishman's reception in his own country, or the liberty of the subject here, I know not ; as I had not informed him that I possessed any articles upon which duty ought to be paid. From that moment I forswore smuggling.

In three hours' time my unfortunate carriage was drawn to the door by some six or eight men, and in twenty minutes afterwards we were on the road to London, as fast as four horses would take us. This rapid flight was at the suggestion

of Mr. Payne, who dreaded my being exchequered, if caught. But they never followed me up. The interior of the carriage presented a very pretty spectacle; the lining being cut and slashed in all manner of forms and places. Verily, the Custom-house officers made a good haul that day.

Yet, in six months' time, all the articles seized were back in my wife's possession; to effect which, I had to pay an exorbitant sum. When I say all, I am wrong, for a dozen pairs of ladies' Milanese boots and the before-mentioned sables were never returned. I cannot refrain from mentioning one little part connected with the restoration of my seized property, which I consider by no means as redounding to the credit of one, or more, tradesmen at Dover. It was this: that I was obliged to pay them the sum of forty pounds as a *douceur*, not to bid against Mr. Payne's commissioner, at the public sale of my articles.

It was very early in the morning when I drove up to Thomas's Hotel, in Berkeley Square, having travelled all night. My wife was quite knocked up, and so retired to rest.

No sooner was I left alone, than I sat down and wrote a note to Mr. Peters, the coachbuilder of Park Street, requesting him to come to Berkeley Square at ten o'clock; and giving the porter the requisite instructions for the delivery of the missive, I threw myself down on the sofa, in my dressing-room, with the hope of getting two or three hours' sleep.

True to his time in the morning came Mr. Peters; and before my wife made her appearance at the breakfast-table, I had arranged for another carriage to be at the door of the hotel by two o'clock P.M., and had borrowed another two hundred pounds of the coach-builder.

At three o'clock we were again on the road towards Wales, and the afternoon of the third day found us once again at W——, on the banks of the far-famed W——, the residence of my brother-in-law.

Our arrival was a surprise to Miss Rosalind Wilmot, the only one of the family at that time (with the exception of servants) at home. Walter, her brother, and his newly-married wife, were at the sea-side, but hearing of our arrival they soon returned to welcome us back, when,

for the first time, I had the pleasure of seeing that lady ; and I must say, that she was in every respect equal to all that rumour with its hundred tongues had proclaimed.

One fortnight only did we remain in that most delightful neighbourhood : and on the 28th of June, 183— (the day after attaining my majority), accompanied by my wife, and her sister, I returned to London, to wind up affairs with my guardian.

In a few days all was settled. I paid off all my debts, which were very heavy ; handed over to the trustees the sum that I had settled on my wife, and then quitted the metropolis to return to W——.

I now commenced negotiations for renting a fine old place, situated on the W—, some six miles distant from the seat of my brother-in-law, which was the most foolish thing, perhaps (and I have done many), that I ever attempted.

This old place rejoiced in the name of Llan—— Castle, the grounds of which were beautiful and extensive ; but, in truth, the house was but a great shambling building, of no order of architecture, and with passages enough to fur-

nish practice ground for a company of our volunteers. This dear old place, dear in more ways than one to me, had also a porch (I am fond of porches—alas! poor Betsy Jolly!), which was covered with the most luxuriant ivy; and had its date, too, as the one at Ruckford had—which simply said, “Repayred 1642.”

The walks by the river-side were exquisite. The W—, which from its source on Plyn—never, until it reaches the city of Hereford, loses its real character, meandered through those grounds in a succession of falls; yes, through those beautiful grounds did that lovely stream boil and bubble for two miles.

Every head and tail of each pool was a salmon-catch; and hundreds of that tribe have fallen victims to my rod alone, within those grounds; but the right of water belonging to that estate extended for three miles higher up the river; where, in fact, the angling was infinitely superior. But that which rendered this old, and rumour said haunted, house so desirable in my eyes, was the proximity to W—the residence of my brother-in-law; added to which, all the land, with but slight exception,

on the opposite side of the river to the fishery I was about to take, was the property of Walter Wilmot, over which I had unlimited permission. I rented Llan——, and thus I constituted a salmon fishery second to none in England.

I may as well mention that the coverts on the property were admirably stocked with game, and that there were two manors as appendages to the estate.

I had not been long settled in my new, although antiquated habitation, when I established a pack of really very good and neat harriers, which were turned out, they told me, to perfection. After that folly, I must needs turn farmer, by renting some two hundred and forty-four acres of land, which surrounded my house. Added to these amusements, I preserved extensively—not fruits, but pheasants. And let me be believed, when I say that I succeeded well, as far as the interest of other people was concerned; and failed singularly, as far as my own profits were affected.

Three years only did I reside at Llan——. Let the truth be told—I had not the means. I was over-housed, eaten up by too many ser-

vants, and, alas! too proud to pull in when I might have saved myself. Thus ultimately it came to a sort of compulsory sale; which the bills of the day described as, "Giving up Farming." All went to the hammer, as regards farming-stock, and the crops were sold standing; and thus I gave up all the land, calculating that I had lost at least two pounds per acre upon every one that I had rented, from the commencement of my turning tenant farmer.

As a slight specimen of my *successful* attempt at making money as an agriculturist, I must state that I had, as a bailiff, a fat, good-looking fellow, who had once been a small landed proprietor himself. His looks were all, I fear, with the exception of his honesty—and that I never doubted—which he had to recommend him.

Well, at this man's instigation, I took to stall-feeding; and very proud indeed I was of my fat stock. To a certain fair in our county I despatched this good-looking man of mine, with instructions to purchase one hundred ewes, and to sell six as really good and fat bullocks as any butcher's eyes would wish to rest on.

I must confess that I was immediately taken

up with the animals that I had with so much interest watched over; and it was with a feeling of pride that I awaited the return of my factotum.

The day of the fair I had been out hunting, accompanied by my wife, who was invariably my companion in that sport, unless I went too far from home. Our late dinner being over, and feeling anxious to know the result of the fair, I rang the bell. On the entrance of the servant, I asked if the bailiff had returned. In reply I was told that he was not. Being late, I went to bed, and thought no more of it for the night.

The next day was Sunday, and therefore a *dies non*. But I was astonished beyond measure, on my return from shooting on the Monday, to find that my model bailiff had never shown himself.

Williams was a married man, whose wife lived at a village two miles distant from Llan —. He, however, lived altogether at my house.

Wearied with waiting, I sent for him. About ten o'clock that night, whilst sitting with my

wife in the dining-room, Mrs. Williams was ushered in. She was a tall, gaunt woman, of most forbidding aspect, and an inveterate snuff-taker; she had also contracted a habit of almost kneeling when she curtseyed.

“Well, Mrs. Williams,” said I, “where’s Jem, that he has not been to me since the fair?”

“Oh, sir! oh, sir!” was the only reply to my repeated question; and “Oh, sir! oh, sir!” was all that I was likely to get, until I, by threats, wormed from her that her husband had really purchased the ewes I required; had sold the bullocks; had got drunk (which he, to his last day, denied); and that he had lost all the proceeds of the sale. That was my first start, as a farmer, in sending stock to a fair.

On the following morning James Williams mustered up courage to meet me. He told me his own tale; I believed him—as I do to this moment—and I forgave him. He lived for years afterwards in my employ, and was ultimately unfortunately killed by being run over by a cart.

I had almost forgotten to mention that poor Jem felt deeply grieved at his misadventure;

and I verily believe tried to replace the money in my pocket by inducing me to take out a license for making malt. I had, but distant some way from the house, very large premises for that purpose. I did as he advised me; made large purchases of barley, and really *wetted* (that is the term, I remember,) great quantities of that grain.

I had no sooner succeeded in having a very respectable show of malt in my loft, when the buildings took fire (they were not burnt down), and I lost considerably by my second attempt to make money. I did not sell malt as a maltster, but only gave it to my servants, suffering them to have it at the price it cost me, being satisfied with the overplus gained by the action of malting. Poor Jem, however, swore it was not his fault, and there was no cat about the premises at the time to lay the blame to. I gave up the trade after this.

I had originally taken Llan—— for a term of fourteen years; but fortunately managed to break that term, and thus three years and a half was the exact period that I inhabited the old place.

On the opposite side of that beautiful river, and in view of Llan——, was a very pretty villa residence—a house which had been built by my wife's father, and situated in the county of R——. That house I rented: it was a sweet place, from whence one of the finest views in the Principality was to be had. It likewise was situated near the river, and for the succeeding five years Llanstephan was my nominal home.

I now come to that part of my narrative which brings so many painful incidents to my remembrance that I am almost doubtful which to do: whether to consign all that I have already written to the flames, or to leave as a blank in my story the next few years of my existence. Yes, of that life, which from my childhood has never been really happy. By change of houses I got rid of many draughts upon my purse, which indeed were never those to which my means were adequate. I still retained my little pack of harriers, a few horses, and, thanks to my generous brother-in-law, Walter Wilmot, I had shooting and salmon-fishing *ad libitum*. Yet I was not happy. Outwardly there was everything, it is true, to make me so; and although

my means were limited, I had those amusements for nothing, which to another would have been costly: of course I allude to those pleasures attendant upon the rod and gun.

My brother-in-law being in Parliament, he was necessarily much away. I had from him unlimited permission over the entire water attached to his estate; the extent of that water was very great. I have fished every good stream in the north of Scotland, from the Connon, Blackwater, and Findhorn, down to the Tay; and the same I have done in the north of Ireland, but I maintain that I have had better sport on the River Wye, from the town of Builth, down to the town of Hay, a distance (taking the meandering nature of that stream) of some thirty miles, than I have had in any other stream in the United Kingdom; and although not a Welshman by birth, I believe the system of fly-fishing, as pursued in the Principality, to be the best.

I have said that I was not happy; and yet this will appear strange when I state that my wife was my constant companion in the hunting field and in the more contemplative recreation of fishing; and numberless times did she join

me when out shooting, herself riding the pony which bore the panniers that contained my luncheon.

I must here bring the reader back to the days when I resided at Llan——. During the first twelve months of my tenancy of that place I had become very intimate with a young officer, the depôt of whose regiment was quartered in the town of B——; he was a patrician in every way, and had held a commission, I was led to believe, in the Guards. This young man's pursuits were the same as my own, and consequently we became great friends. My house was always open to him, and a frequent visitor he was; he would come, whenever he could get leave, and stay with me; he would knock down my pheasants, drink my wine, and ride my horses—not that he shone in the pigskin.

In the course of time his regiment quitted the county; but nevertheless our correspondence was kept up, and on one unfortunate day we met at Ibbotson's Hotel, in Vere Street, London. That day I shall, to my dying moments, have cause to remember, for on that day *my friend* introduced me to a certain celebrated bill-dis-

counter, then resident in St. James's, to whom, in a great measure, I attribute the one half of the miseries that have been since attendant upon my steps. I shall, however, have much to say of that gentleman hereafter.

But to revert to my friend, Mr. Gilbert Gosling. His friendship, which at one time I so much valued, I have found to my cost to have been valueless as dross. But I do not wish to hurt his feelings. May the remembrance of the letter which he wrote to me from Como, and which letter is still in existence, sometimes bring to his recollection the friend of former days, and let his own heart say whether that friend has been well used or not by him.

For five years I resided at Llanstephan: they were by no means years of happiness; the truth is I was unsettled. I still followed my old pursuits, hunting, shooting, and fishing, as the seasons came round. There was something that continually urged me on towards change of scene, and now that years have passed, I could return once more to that loved spot, Llanstephan, and feel, that for the remainder of my days, a circuit of forty miles was all that

was required to render my latter days thoroughly peaceable, if not completely happy. Is there a rock in beautiful Wye, from Builth to Hay, that is unknown to me? There is a reminiscence attached to every bubbling stream which brings me back to my younger days—of sport unequalled; and there are associations connected with that river which can end only with the grave.

To return to my *other friend*, the fashionable bill-discounter, and who has had so much to do with my present worldly position. That gentleman (?) kept a very expensive, if not very large establishment; his withdrawing-room was replete with articles in gilt and ormolu; his carriages and horses were remarkably well turned out; his servants were brilliant in liveries of green and gold; and his dinners and wines were undeniable, and many a dinner have I had in C—— Row, St. James's. It will be perhaps ungrateful on my part to pass remarks on a man whose table had been free to me. Mark me, reader! I paid, and dearly too, for the *hospitality* shown to me, as will be proved: this man succeeded in getting me into his power.

Mr. Gilbert Gosling and I were in London; we were at the same hotel together in Vere Street. That gentleman asked me to accompany him to Mr. Keogh's residence, as he said, "I am going to raise the wind." I accompanied him; the money required was handed over to my friend, and I put my name to the bill.

Mr. Keogh, who was all smiles, was a big, stout, well-looking, but over-dressed man. After the common topics of the day had been discussed, he asked me if I did not want money? and in truth I did at the time; but up to that period I had never borrowed any at the hands of a bill discounter. One hundred pounds he gave me on a bill at three months' date, for which I was to pay something approaching to sixty per cent., and to which Mr. Gosling put *his* name. Month after month, year after year, did I get more deeply entangled in the meshes of the net which Mr. Keogh so cleverly had laid, and at last he had my name to paper for a sum almost fabulous.

Some months after the first transaction with Mr. Keogh, I was in London. I was at breakfast in my rooms in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall

East, when a very handsomely-appointed travelling chariot with four horses drove up to the door, out of which came my sleek friend, the would-be millionaire. Asking me if I had anything to detain me in town that day, I said, "No."

"Come, then," said Keogh, "with me to Hastings; I will bring you back to-morrow."

Having nothing to do, I accompanied him. This, reader, remember, was in the year 1838, prior to the railway being opened.

We started, and arrived late in the afternoon at an hotel at that watering-place: I remember well that it was an excellent house, and faced the sea. Strolling out for an hour by the water-side, never having been at Hastings before, I was astonished on my return to find that the table was laid out for three persons, and great was my astonishment shortly afterwards to see a very gentlemanly old man enter the room. In a moment I saw that he was a clergyman. He bowed—I did the same: at that moment Keogh entered the room, when I was introduced to the Reverend Mr. S——. The dinner passed off excellently, and certainly my

friend Keogh spared no expense in catering for his guests.

. We had been sitting, perhaps, a longer time than usual over our wine, when fancying that I was somewhat *de trop*, I left them together, saying that I was going to have a smoke.

In an hour I returned; the tables which I had left covered with decanters and fruit dishes was now bestrewn with papers. Apologising for intruding, I was requested to remain, and the evening's amusement ended by Keogh getting considerably over a thousand pounds from the Church of England minister, one who held good preferment, and for which I, like a simpleton, put my name as security, pretty security indeed it was! and realizing as my profits—a dinner!

We lunched the following day with the divine, and in the afternoon returned to London in the same way in which we had come down.

But it was the same with Mr. Keogh, whether the cloth was black or red, as long as money was to be had. I remember once making a visit with that gentleman to a certain house in Cavendish Square, where dwelt a general,

whose purse, I fancy, was still more easy of access; anyhow, neither one nor the other could resist the temptation of ten or twelve per cent.

Mr. Keogh had a large family, and I will give him credit for the exemplary way in which he brought his children up. He was a Roman Catholic, as were all the family; and, indeed, the two eldest daughters were not only very nice girls, but highly educated, excessively well-looking, and of very good manners; they had been educated on the Continent.

I have frequently met a strange medley of celebrities at that gentleman's house: sons of peers and Catholic priests; members of Parliament and theatrical singers; Portuguese Jews and bright specimens of fast young English commoners; one and all of them out at elbows, as respected money, and all seeking temporary relief and ultimate ruin at the hands of the money-lender.

Keogh was, however, far above the generality of that despicable class; for that which he gave his clients *was money*: he never palmed off daubs of pictures, questionable jewellery, or still more doubtful wine upon his victims. No, he

gave them cash ; and with their eyes open they signed bills at sixty per cent. !

However degrading a money-lender's business may be, I have known Keogh to perform acts of generosity that would confer lustre upon a C—— or a S—— ; and it was with a feeling of regret that I heard of his change of circumstances.

I have dwelt somewhat long upon one who, in truth, brought those disagreeables upon me, which, like burrs, have remained fast, from the moment that I became acquainted with a bill-discounter.

I will now draw my reader's attention to the wretchedness which accrued to me from the wiles of one of the softer sex, who succeeded in completing that which the other had left undone—my ruin.

I was in town for a few days, during the summer of 1836, and whilst there dined with an old friend ; he was a married man, with three children, the youngest of whom fell gloriously at Inkermann, literally covered with wounds, and whose name is most honourably mentioned amongst the list of the Crimean heroes. At that house after

dinner was a small gathering of the gentler sex, and that evening I was introduced to a young lady, to whom I verily believe I did not speak ten words. Two evenings subsequently, I was at the mail-office in the Regent Circus, from which spot the conveyances for the Principality started. To my astonishment the lady was there, in company with another, seated in a clarence. I spoke to them, and at eight o'clock left by mail for my own home.

For some weeks after my return to Llanstephan, I was *en garçon*, my wife having joined some of her family at the sea-side.

It was midnight of the 31st of August: I was sitting with two friends (one of whom has since made his name celebrated in the literary world), when my servant entered the room and informed me, to my great astonishment, that a lady wished to see me. Great, indeed, was the surprise my friends evinced that any one coming under that category should call upon a man whose wife was from home, at that hour of the night. On demanding where she was, I was told in the breakfast-room. I immediately went to that room; and there, to my astonishment,

stood the young lady whom, some six weeks previously, I had casually met at a dinner party, and who upon inquiring whether I was single or married, had been told, "not only married, but the father of two children." Upon entering the room I did not recognize her; she rose from the chair on which she was seated, and advanced to meet me, at the same time tendering me her hand.

"Do you not know me?" she exclaimed in a theatrical tone, looking me full in the face with a pair of large dark eyes. I did then recognize her, and to my cost. Begging her to reseate herself, I demanded the purport of her visit. Drawing a letter from her pocket, she handed it to me. It was addressed to Mrs. Martin, my house-keeper, and the hand-writing was no other than that of my own wife. How she got possessed of it, I know not. I was thunderstruck. With the letter in my hand I rang the bell. My man entering the room, I asked him if Mrs. Martin had gone to bed, and if so, to order her to rise immediately, telling him, at the same time, to apprise her of there being a letter from her mistress in my possession. There we sat, the lady with the black eyes, and I, the victim of cool and

calculating villany. Little was said ere the entrance of the housekeeper, and astonishment indeed was depicted on the face of that somewhat stout and honest personage on seeing her young master closeted with a lady at midnight.

“Mrs. Martin,” I said, “read that letter, and if there is nothing in it I may not see perhaps you will allow me to read it.” Taking the letter from my hand, she read it, and immediately afterwards delivered it over to me. It was concise, I may say crude, for the few words were merely these:—

“Mrs. Martin,—A young lady, evidently mad, may call at my house; you will on no account admit her.

“Yours, &c.,

“G. F. S.”

What was to be done? I looked at my housekeeper, and she regarded me with a stare of bewilderment. At last, woman-like, a thought seemed to strike her, and she requested to speak to me alone for a few moments. We adjourned to another room, and I then entered fully into

the history of the whole proceeding, as to my first acquaintance with my unexpected visitor. There was no hotel or inn of any description within three miles of my house, added to which, the young lady would have had to recross that river which she had so thoughtlessly ventured over, in coming, in my boat at midnight.

I must here state that an old fisherman, who had once been in my service, had a cottage on the opposite side of the river to my residence; and being an excellent boatman, he always ferried those across who had business at my house. Astonished indeed was the old man at having to rise from his bed to paddle a stranger, and that a young lady, over the rapid current which divided the two counties. Indeed all his troubles were not then over, for the night was dark, and the approach to my house from the water-side was up a hill, over broken ground covered with fern, nearly equal in height to that which I have seen in the Antipodes.

“What is to be done, sir? Oh! what shall we do?” said Mrs. Martin. “There is no

house near us to which we could send the poor young lady, and you know we cannot turn her out."

"Mrs. Martin," I replied, "I wash my hands of the whole affair; I leave the lady to you; and I will to-night write to your mistress, acquainting her of everything; and I will send to H— for post-horses, in order that she may be away from this by ten o'clock." (Remember, reader, it was then past midnight.)"

Matters were thus arranged, and Mrs. Martin and I rejoined the lady in the breakfast-room; and she was at the same time given to understand that in every way she would be taken care of. All refreshment she refused; she however expressed a wish to see me before I went out shooting.

It was nearly two o'clock A.M. when I rejoined my friends; and I had much to suffer at their hands in the way of joking. At last we all retired to bed.

Few were the hours that I slept. I had written to my wife, telling her all, and had despatched a servant to the post-town for horses to convey my visitor away. It was my inten-

tion to have slipped away with my friends ere the lady would be on the stir; but no such fortune favoured me, for on rising I saw her wandering about the garden. Two of my men, to my infinite disgust, were mowing the lawn that morning; and I fancied I saw queer looks pass between them, and half persuaded myself that I heard the words, "That's not our missus!" I was literally miserable. It appeared that she was determined to keep me from my friends. Mrs. Martin had told her that her breakfast would be ready for her at nine o'clock, and that the horses were ordered; but that I, having friends, was obliged to accompany them shooting. "No," she said, "I wish him to breakfast with me." And, like a madman, I did so—and justly punished have I been. She never quitted my house until four o'clock that afternoon. I lost my day's shooting, and through her some thousands of pounds.

At four o'clock she left, and the degree of relief I felt cannot be described.

Of course there were many remarks, and strong, made upon the advent of the *inconnue*;

but, like a nine day's wonder, it passed away. I had thus done that which was right, in informing my wife of all that had taken place, and with an emphatic, and yet perhaps foolish exclamation, I ended by saying, "They may think as they like, for I don't care."

Shortly after this my wife returned home, and my midnight visitor's intrusion was satisfactorily accounted for.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Praises of Glamorganshire.—A Hospitable Host.—A Present with a Condition.—My Departure with my Present.—My Journey with my Present.—My Arrival.—Davie Evans.—A Bed-Room with Numerous Occupants.—Salmon Fishing.—The Bets Won. Winning of the Bets.—The Swansea Valley.—Separate from my Wife.—Dissipated Life.—The Gaming-Table.—Loss at Gaming-Table.—The Last Shilling.—Again at the Gaming-Table.—Hazard.—Gain at the Gaming-Table.

IN a few weeks I was again on the move, having received an invitation from a friend in the county of Glamorgan; that county which Sir John Stradling so praises in his ballad, written in the sixteenth century; and from which I quote the following lines—

“And in Glamorgan’s hillie parts,
Cole greatly doth abound;
For goodness, and for plenty too,
Its equal never was founde.

“With wood and iren, ledde and salt,
And lime aboundaintlie,
And every thing that mankind want,
This land doth well supplie.”

Well done, Sir John ! for in verity thou wast but just emerging from the dark ages, ere England's greatness began to dawn.

For some weeks did I enjoy myself (perhaps I am wrong in making use of a word of exultation, when it was excitement that alone bore me up against the inward sorrow which has ever been my companion) in the hospitable abode of the well-known black diamond, Mr. Charles Henry S——.

His wife was nearly connected with my sister : and, *certainly*, never did any mistress of an establishment uphold its credit more than did that much-beloved and respected lady.

I was a frequent visitor there.

My friend was a character, and he knew it ; and with truth I may aver that there are few who are more highly respected.

Amongst other curiosities at Gwern—th, were a bull, cow, and calf of the Brahmin breed : they had been sent from India. Hearing one day the wife of my friend say that she was rather frightened or tired—I know not which—of the animals, I expressed a wish to purchase the calf. We were at dinner at the time, and some ten

or twelve persons were present. Our host, hearing of my wish, said, that he would give them all to me, on condition of my driving them myself, from his house to my own home.

I assented. The distance was fifty-three miles, and the greater part of the route was mountain ground, without any beaten track. Numerous bets were made, for and against; and one or two, I myself took.

No specified time was then named for my undertaking, therefore I chose my own day.

There was, and I trust still lives, a wealthy, and very worthy man, by name Jenkins, at Swansea: he was a butcher; to that man I went. I told him all about the task I had undertaken, and of my bets. I then asked his advice as to the driving of the animals. I also made him acquainted with my wish for my reality being undiscovered.

He at once warned me of the indispensable-ness of my having the bull and the cow tipped, "for," said he, "the calf will stick to the mother, and, being light, will travel well."

After my interview with the butcher I felt comparatively easy as to the result.

Never did a more lovely morning (although late in the season) dawn upon a less lovely object than on that which witnessed my departure from Gwern—th. The hour was six; my costume consisted of an old flannel shirt, a still older blue frock smock, and I may put my slouched hat in the superlative degree, for nothing could be worse—highlow boots, and knee-breeches. Thus attired, I started as drover to those animals so sacred to the Hindoos.

For the first four or five miles I found the work I had entailed upon myself excessively arduous. The bull would insist upon taking a line of his own, whilst the cow and her progeny, who kept together, invariably turned into every field where there was a gate open, or indeed into every outlet from the main road. At last, wearied, the beasts were obliged to yield to man's superiority; and at six o'clock that evening, I arrived at the village of Devynnock, a distance of twenty-five miles, where I was believed to be the attendant of a showman about to produce a novelty at the forthcoming fair at the county town.

After some difficulty I succeeded in safely

housing my animals. I fed them, watered them, and gave them plenty of clean litter; and putting the key of the cow-house, or rather stable, into my pocket, I strolled into the tap of the humble inn.

To my great annoyance, I found five or six persons already there; some had the appearance of drovers, the others were either farmers, or farm labourers, and numberless were the questions put to me as to whence the "rum uns" were going, as they designated my remarkable cattle: they were also very inquisitive as to who was the fortunate master of such a servant as I was.

I had taken the precaution to pull my broad-brimmed wide-awake over my face; not that there was much fear of any recognition, for my disguise was complete; for what with my attire, the perspiration from which I had suffered, and the dust which had so begrimed my face, all identity was lost.

I managed to eat with good appetite the bread and cheese which was set before me; and then wandered about until dark, in order to avoid all further questioning. At nine o'clock

after paying my bill, which altogether amounted to one shilling and two-pence, inclusive of beer and bed, I retired for the night, giving my hostess (a widow) and her good-looking daughter to understand that I should be off by six o'clock in the morning.

I fancied, however, that the daughter seemed to scan me very much, and at the same time, that she paid me more attention than I had any right to expect, considering my costume, for in truth there was nought very attractive in my exterior.

By sunrise the following morning, having fed and watered my beauties, I was off; and my second day was destined to be one of greater trial. I had some few miles of turnpike road to travel; that done, nothing but one wild mountain range, without any beaten track, was before me. My animals towards evening were fagged out; the bull, which I was afraid to approach at starting, now suffered me to thrash him as much as I pleased, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I could urge him on; the cow and calf, however, travelled better. Twenty miles had I done, when cresting a point of the Eppyat

Hills, from whence my descent took place, I viewed the River Wye; that once crossed, my bet was won.

Far down the river could I see my home; the evening sun was setting upon that loved spot, and I said to myself, "There is but one thing wanting to make me very happy." I had now but two miles of descent before I should reach that ford so celebrated as being the one by which the gallant Llewellyn, the last of the Princes of Wales, passed to meet his death; which took place a few miles higher up the river: that ford still bears the same name—"Cavan Twm Bach."

I had by this time accumulated a certain number of stragglers, drawn together by curiosity; and before I reached the water-side, every farm, as I passed by, had turned out its quota of sight-seers, to my annoyance. Troubles upon troubles seemed to assail me: arrived at the water-side, I found the river in a flood. I hailed the boats, which were kept on the opposite side of the water: there were ferry-boats for stock as well as for passengers. Dauntless Davie Evans, the ferry-man, knew my holloa,

and at once, bank high as the river was, launched forth in the big boat, determined to stem the current to assist the man who had so often assisted him, but in a different way. Oh! how we watched him as, with his enormous pole, he, single-handed, stemmed his huge ferry-boat against the stream. With cheers from all, he reached the shore. He stared at me; he scanned the animals, yet was he incredulous, until one word of mine, which, by the way, was whispered in his ear, dispelled all his misgivings. How heartily did that jolly fellow shake me by the hand, when he found it was Stretton of Llanstephan, and, indeed, how many are the happy moments I have passed in that man's humble house!

To drive the beasts into the boat was utterly impossible; at last the crowd, seeing how futile were all our attempts, forming a half-circle, they rushed on the animals, and drove them, *volens*, into the stream. Down they went: once fairly swimming, I knew that they would make to the land, so thanking my kind friends for their assistance and good wishes, I jumped into the ferry-boat with Davie, and safely reached

the Radnorshire side of the water. The beasts swam across—doubtless they were carried down the stream—but the hearty cheers before we had touched the land, told me that my bet was won.

In justice, I am bound to speak somewhat of my ferry-man, Davie Evans. To all those who have fished the Wye he must be well known; his hostelrie, which was of the most, primitive description, was situated close to the water. The ferry is the oldest on the records of Wales, and above his house is, I consider, the finest piece of water for salmon-fishing in the kingdom. I have known Davie for many years; he is honest, but uncouth. Often and often, when living at Llanstephan would I go up, when the water was in order, and sleep at Davie's house. One evening, I well remember, I arrived there with my man Griffiths,—wishing to be on the water early in the morning,—and I said, “I want two beds, Davie, for to-night,—one for myself, and one for Jem.”

“Certainly, sir,” said Davie; and at eleven o'clock I was ushered, accompanied by my man, into a huge loft which spanned the entire length of the house. There were numerous beds, and

apparently numerous occupants. I hesitated in undressing, but was overruled by my servant, and after a time I jumped into as good a bed as the most fastidious would require. James Griffiths, my man, did the same ; he slept opposite to me : it was a case of double file.

“Jem,” I cried out, at five o’clock on the following morning, “get up !” Jem Griffiths rose from his pillow, and in a sitting position commenced a series of signs, pointing at the bed, the head of which was at my foot-board. Half asleep, half awake, I had been watching that which I considered to be a remarkably good “monkey muff.”

“Get up, Jem, will you ?” said I ; “it is near five o’clock.”

“Master ! master !” (pointing with his finger to the bed in advance of mine). I rose, and to my horror found that the bed in advance of mine was occupied by the female servant of the establishment ; and that which I had judged to be a “monkey muff” was nothing else than fine long hair ; which, by-the-by, had it been taken care of, would have shamed many an aristocratic belle of the present day.

What was I to do?

“Holloa!” said I, kicking the foot-board of my couch; “get up, will you? for I want to be off fishing.”

“I can’t, sir,—indeed I can’t, when all on you are in the room.”

A pretty fix this, thought I to myself; but determined not to lose my morning’s salmon-fishing, I desired Jem Griffith to dress himself immediately. With extreme reluctance did my man obey my orders. Now Jem was an exceedingly shy specimen of the genus homo, and ludicrous to a degree was it to witness the poor fellow’s attempts to dress without violating any of the conventional rules of society. He succeeded, and downstairs he went.

Now came my turn.

“Betsy, get up,” said I.

“Oh! please, sir, get up first. I thought I should get down before any of you were awake. Oh! please, sir, do get up.”

“Not I, by Jove!” said I; “I want my breakfast before I start, and you must make it.”

“Sir,” she softly lisped forth, “will you cover your face?”

“Certainly,” I replied; and forthwith the clothes were pulled over my head.

Betsy’s toilette was soon made, despite that outrageous head of hair; and when once I heard her foot descending the staircase, I sprang from my bed, and was soon seated at my breakfast table. My first meal did not take me long.

The river was in splendid order, and I have prolonged this little episode for this reason only: on that day, the 8th of April, 1838, I hooked eleven salmon, and killed nine—a fact which I believe has not been done since, in five hours—at least on the Wye.

To return once more to the history of my wanderings.

I and my queer animals were safe over the water, and in the county of Radnor. I had but two miles more to drive them, and then they were in my own homestead.

No refreshment of any kind had I tasted since I quitted the humble inn at Devynnock, and in truth I enjoyed the excellent fare that Davie put before me.

After one hour’s rest, I resumed my labours, and at six o’clock that evening I drove the

Brahmins into my own yard, when lo ! to my astonishment, who should I meet but my wife, in conversation with two ladies.

Greatly indeed did my wife show her surprise, when she saw the queer-looking animals enter her husband's premises, and wonderfully astonished was she when that husband advanced to greet her. With the greatest disdain she drew back as I tendered her my hand ; and not until I addressed her by her Christian name, and to which I added the prefix of " dearest," did she know that the drover was her own husband. It is true, I was one cake of mud, as far as my face was concerned ; my attire was most outrageous, and altogether I was, in appearance, anything but like a gentleman.

Nevertheless, the bets were won, and the animals were my own. But that which I chiefly gloried in was, that I had succeeded in doing that which so many had declared I should fail in accomplishing.

The day succeeding my return home, being Sunday, was passed in perfect quietude, in spite of the numerous visitors I had to inspect the new breed of stock that I had introduced into the

county. Amongst those visitors was a friend whose residence was two miles from me: he was really a friend, an excellent companion, and a scholar of no mean order. Well, I, knowing the hospitable character of the gentleman from whom I had won the Brahmins, took the liberty to invite him to return with me to Gwern—th; in order that he might testify to the fair winning of my bets.

He readily assented; and although it was the Sabbath day, I ordered my servant to take Mr. Fox's horse and one of my own on to the village of Devynnock; and to await our coming at the "Llewellyn Arms," the same house at which I had slept two nights previously.

We left Llanstephan early, and arrived at Devynnock about one o'clock. It is needless to say that I was dressed in rather different attire to that which I had last been seen in at that secluded village.

Riding up to the door, my friend called loudly for some one to take our horses; when, who should appear, but the daughter of the landlady; who, giving one long vacant stare,

rushed into the house screaming out, "Mother, mother! here's the chap what drove the bullocks!"

In two minutes my man was ready to take the quadrupeds, and we entered the house. Seldom have I been more amused than I was that day, whilst partaking of luncheon. Our Abigail's attentions were most assiduous; and it was ludicrous to a degree to watch the sly, arch, but yet not unmaidenly glances that she from time to time cast upon the "chap what drove the bullocks." Short time did we spend in that humble house of entertainment; for, mounting our fresh horses, it was not long before we entered the Swansea valley. At half-past six we reached the hospitable abode of the "black diamond" (I hope Mr. S—— will pardon the soubriquet that I have presumed to attach to his name), where our welcome was as might be expected; and my friend S—— was made acquainted with the success that had attended my labours, and of the loss of his animals.

Fox and I remained a fortnight at that most friendly house, when we once more returned to the banks of the Wye. For three

months only did I remain at home after the event I have just related; but in those three months were made arrangements, which, indeed, were to me most momentous. Nothing less than a final separation from my wife!

I am not going to enter into detail: there was, in a worldly point of view, no blame whatever to be attached to the lady—the fault was mine; and I take all the odium upon myself. The casual reader has nothing to do with the why or the wherefore of our estrangement, and thus I drop the subject.

On the last day of December, 1839, I quitted Llanstephan, never again to return to it as a place of residence, accompanied by James Griffiths, the servant, whose fidelity I have before spoken of. We rode to the town of B——, a distance of thirteen miles. Perfectly unconscious was my man at the time, that he had ceased to be my servant; and it was with feelings I could scarcely control, that I ordered him to return with the horses to his mistress. The day following I left for London, when I took up my quarters in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall; but no rest, no hap-

piness, did I by that change find. I was miserable : I am not bad-hearted ; oh !—let me drop the subject.

In London, I launched into endless extravagances ; anything to drive care away. I was acquainted with many men about town, who were unfortunately *habitués* of the “Strangers,” of the “Berkeley,” and of the “Cottage ;” and nightly did I attend one of those accursed Pandemonii, and with variable success. My mother was at that time in the metropolis, and I occasionally dined at her house, situated close to Cavendish Square. Many will think that it was strange, my mother having a large house of her own, in the best part of London, that I should prefer lodgings to the elegant comforts to be had in a loving mother’s residence. The truth is, my hours were not those of a well-conducted establishment. I must here confess that at this time I was embarrassed—nay, deeply in debt ; and what with the liabilities I had incurred (but without consideration) through putting my name to papers for Mr. Keogh, I was literally in a web, from which I knew not how to extricate myself

.

I had not been many days in town, when Miss B——, the lady that paid me the midnight visit in Wales, discovered my retreat. She called upon me, and asked me to dinner : she then resided in —— Place, Euston Square. Ass, madman, fool that I was!—I went. That dinner sealed my fate—I may say my ruin !

I forgot to allude to it ; but, prior to my leaving home, I received a letter from that young lady, in which she requested that I would become her trustee, as she had become possessed of a certain amount of property. My reply was laconic.

“MADAM,

“The man who never could take care of his own property, would make a very inefficient protector to yours. I beg to decline.

“Yours, very obediently,

“CHS. STRETTON.”

One night—I shall long remember it—I was playing at the “Berkeley.” Up to a certain time I was a considerable winner—I had won nine hundred and fifty pounds. Not content, trying

to make up the clear thousand, I lost all that I had been a winner of, and my own forty pounds with which I had entered the house. The night, or rather morning, was bitterly cold; the snow was falling fast. With a mind half distracted I made my way to Suffolk Street. How I got there I know not; but I found myself at the foot of the column raised to the memory of the late Duke of York. Seeing something, as I thought human, lying on the steps, I stopped, and to my sorrow I found a little boy fast asleep; he was about nine years of age; there he slept, the snow in large flakes falling thick and fast upon him. I shook him, and with the greatest difficulty succeeded in arousing the little fellow from the torpid state in which he was. Asking him where he lived, he said he had no home. I then asked him if he could find a bed at that hour of the morning, if he had the means? the little fellow told me that he could do so. Oh! how the little fellow's eyes brightened up as I drew my purse from my pocket; and, reader, what think you was in that purse? *one solitary shilling!* How debased I felt! I cursed the house that I had but just left, and thanked my

God, in the same breath, that he had left that small coin in my pocket. Yes, that shilling was left for one good purpose. That morning, before I threw myself on my bed, I thanked my Maker that he had enabled me to do that which would confer some comfort to a fellow-creature.

The next evening I dined at my mother's house. How calmly, and with what peace was that evening passed ! That evening I quitted the house with a mother's blessing, and a mother's kiss,—exactng only one promise from me, that I would not go to “one of those horrible places.”

Slowly and thoughtfully that night I walked from the neighbourhood of Cavendish Square to my lodgings in Suffolk Street, contrasting the real pleasures to be found in a life of steadiness, and those to which I, at that time, had so recklessly given myself up. That night I inwardly determined to avoid all play ; and the arch fiend himself must have been at my elbow, when I found myself at the steps of that ac——d house in Albemarle Street. There, in conversation, I saw B—r—t, Sir V. C——, S——n, and others, all well known to me. I

was asked whether I was going to try my luck that night. I said, "No, I have promised my mother not to do so, and this night I will not enter that house." I shall long remember the sarcastic laugh with which my wise determination was quoted; first one and then another endeavoured to force me in, but they failed, for my mother's face was before me, and that mother's blessing, was ringing in my ears.

Sweet indeed was the sleep that I had that night: for once I had done that which was right.

The following day I again dined at my mother's house, and I quitted without any promise being extracted from me as to my movements.

I must here mention, that I had drawn a bill for a large amount, which I had given to my tailor, and that bill was upon the eve of becoming due. I knew that I could not meet it. Distracted, and wretched, I determined that night to risk all that remained in my pocket; and to the Berkeley I went. Around the table I could see many a face well known to me. There was, as usual, S—d—n, B——t, Sir V. C——, and a score of others, whose names I might mention,

of the same class. I do not mean, reader, that term as disrespectfully applied—far from it, for they were men gifted with those blessings which, had they been properly used, would have rendered them fit ornaments of that society in which Providence had placed them.

The bank that night contained seven thousand pounds only, play had commenced, and the champagne circulated freely. The dice-box passed rapidly from hand to hand. Sitting next to me was Sir V. C——, and no one was then to be found better acquainted with the odds upon “hazard.” At last the box was mine : backing myself in (I use technical terms), I threw down a twenty-pound note and called seven ; up seven came ; and for eight successive throws did that number, or the “nick ” (eleven), turn up to my advantage. The box was in my hand, and I was about to stake again, when I was accosted by a friend (who was indeed my bane, in everything as regarded gambling), and who had then just entered the room. He, seeing that the heap of counters by my side was large, asked me to lend him a red one : to get rid of him I did so. I fancied that my luck was changed, so

changing my main, I called fives : for the ninth time did seven turn up. I lost the box, and I lost seven hundred and twenty five pounds.

Sir V. C——, who was sitting by my side, had won immensely : the run of luck that I had had was surprising, and that luck he had backed to a very large amount. I had no courage—I was no professional gambler ; in fact, I knew not the odds upon any throws. Sir V. C——'s disgust at my changing the main was apparent, for my last throw considerably reduced his winnings. Oh ! how he bit his lips, as I passed the dice-box over to my neighbour. He was a gambler ; I was not. Throwing my counters to the croupier, I asked for cash ; he handed me two hundred and seventy-eight pounds. I rose and went to the supper-table, and, with no very amiable feelings, demolished a cold partridge.

As I quitted that well-known house of evil fame, I put a sovereign into the hand of the porter, and then swore that I never would again enter its doors. I never did.

CHAPTER IX.

Feverish.—Discharge the Tailor's Bill.—Unpleasant Lawyer's Visit.—Ben Wyvis.—Shooting.—Inquire after Miss Kennett.—Visit Miss Kennett.—Visit the Mother and Daughter.—Death of Miss Kennett.—Revisit France.—Arrangements for a Duel.—Strange Proceeding of a Second, and Consequences.—A Challenge and its Consequences.—Arrangements for a Duel.—A Duel and its Consequences.

It was three o'clock in the morning when I reached my lodgings in Suffolk Street; and miserable indeed I was. I felt disgusted with myself for not leaving when a winner to a large amount, and endeavoured to find consolation in the knowledge that my bill due to my tailor would be honoured.

Upon my knocking at the door, my servant appeared, who informed me that there were some letters upon my table. "Confound the letters!" said I, and seizing a flat candlestick, I went to bed. My night's rest was a feverish one. The bill due that day continually haunted me. Frantic I rose from my bed: I scarcely

knew where I was, or where I had been : all recollection seemed lost to me, but the memory of that bill. Yet I fancied that I had won money, and groped my way to the dressing-table. It was dark, very dark : cautiously did I pass my hand over that table, which was covered with all the fooleries that young men are given to ; and amidst scent-bottles, and pomades (none of which did I knock down), did I grasp that paper the crispness of which is not to be imitated. Yes, they were notes of the Bank of England. I returned to my bed, and slept soundly.

It was late when my servant awoke me. Dressing myself with all the despatch possible, I hastened to Conduit Street, the place of business of my tailor ; and with a feeling which only those can know who have been in pecuniary difficulties, handed over the amount of the bill, requesting him to take it up. For once my credit was saved, and I gave an order for two more suits of clothes.

That morning I breakfasted at my club, in St. James's Square ; the name that club bore was the Erectheum : I unfortunately was one

of its original members; and no wonder that the establishment did not last long.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, whilst sitting with two or three friends over luncheon, in my rooms in Suffolk Street, a young man entered, whose garb and address at once bespoke him as a lawyer's clerk (a genus for whom I entertain a singular aversion). Advancing towards me, he drew forth two long slips of paper, which he put into my hand, at the same time intimating that the two papers, which were the copies of the two bills I had signed for Mr. Gosling, would become due in three days. I was perfectly aware that my quondam friend was at Como, in Italy; and I must confess I did not expect that the bills would be taken up: however, I gave the limb of the law to understand that I had not the means of meeting those bills, and so incautiously signed by me, and that I had no hesitation in saying that I believed that they would be dishonoured.

The lawyer's "sub" seemed excessively uneasy in the society of the occupants of my room; and I believe that by my interference he escaped the infliction of swallowing the papers, as well as of being

summarily ejected over the banisters. I was indeed glad, for his sake, when he quitted the house.

I at once told my friends the position I was in, and we all argued that the best thing I could do was to quit London, and either go abroad, or to Scotland. That evening I paid a farewell visit to my mother, having previously ordered my servant to have all things packed, and to take two berths by the Edinburgh steamer, which left St. Catherine's docks at eleven o'clock that night. On arriving at the modern Athens, I found that the Inverness mail would start in two hours, and by that did I at once proceed to the county Ross.

I had for some time been in communication with a gentleman, relative to a joint taking in a moor for the ensuing season ; and it was to this gentleman's house that I made my way. Nothing could be much more wild than the district in which I found him located, which was under Ben Wyvis. Of course the grouse was over ; but seldom have I found any locality where woodcock and snipe were more plentiful ; and the winter season, hard as it was, passed over most agreeably. However, my sojourn

with my northern friend was not destined to be of any long duration ; for I was informed that my retreat was by no means safe ; and that the best place for me to go to was the Continent, until some arrangements could be made, relative to Mr. Gosling's bills.

Again did I return to Edinburgh ; and, without any delay in that beautiful city, put myself and servant on board the first steamer bound for London. As the vessel neared Gravesend, a sudden thought took possession of me, that I would at that town land, and, if possible, learn something of Miss Kennett. I did so. On reaching the inn, I ordered a post-chaise, and in three hours I was at the door of my old friend Truebridge, at Ashwell. Great was the astonishment of the postmaster and his wife, when I stated who I was ; for ten years had greatly altered me ; and time had changed my friends in the same ratio, as far as appearances went. I learnt from them, however, that the young lady was in the north of England, and married ; and that her mother was still residing at Stamford, although Mr. Kennett had been dead upwards of a twelvemonth.

To Stamfield I immediately posted. The meeting between the old lady and myself was of a painful nature. From her I gathered all that I wished to know ; and my mind was made up again to see her who had once been so fondly loved.

Two short hours only did I remain with Emily's mother. I frankly told her that I was determined to have one interview with her daughter, cost what it might ; observing that I was most anxious to remove, as much as possible, from Emily's mind, the apparent heartlessness of my conduct.

Mrs. Kennett was averse to our meeting ; and I promised not to make any attempt until I should hear from her ; and the old lady gave me her word she would let me know when that much-desired meeting could take place. As far as hearing regularly from Mrs. Kennett, Emily's mother kept her word ; but it was not until the expiration of the third year after our meeting at Stamfield, that I received a letter inviting me to the northern side of the Tweed. I was in London at that time ; but that night I started for the North ; and the following evening

I again saw Emily, after a separation of thirteen years. I passed the evening with mother and daughter. Little was said on either side; my heart was too full for utterance; and I have no doubt the remembrance of our early affection caused much of her taciturnity.

The following morning I returned to London. I felt satisfied: I had seen Emily; and her beauty was as remarkable as a matron as it had been when I loved her as a girl of sixteen.

Two years again passed away, and I was in the metropolis. Mrs. Kennett was in town at the time, and had invited me to spend a certain evening with her. I promised to be with her at eight o'clock. Mrs. Kennett had told me that her daughter knew that I was in London, and that she was also aware that it was her intention to ask me to pass the evening with her. She also told me that she should be with her daughter until she quitted her child's residence, to receive me.

"Tell her," said I, "to be at the middle window of the drawing-room, at one o'clock, on Thursday next, for I will drive by precisely at that hour."

It was agreed to. Punctually at that hour I was before the house, and there I saw her who had never been totally forgotten by me. She saw me, she waved her handkerchief, and I passed on.

True to my time, I ascended the stairs of Mrs. Kennett's residence, making my way towards the drawing-room. It was dark, for it was the winter season, and I thought it strange that no lamp should be lighted in the hall. However, upstairs I went, with a feeling of more than usual cheerfulness, when suddenly a hand grasped my arm. Surprised, I stepped back a pace or two, when a voice, which I did not recognize, from its hollow and broken accents, said, "Emily is dead—is dead!"

Yes; at one o'clock in the afternoon of that day was that daughter seen by me, in health and beauty; at eight o'clock of the same day was Emily Kennett a corpse!

I shall pass over the next three weeks of sorrow, which were passed in London. Suffice it to say, that I accompanied the mother to her daughter's grave; and that night hurried down to Dover, and on the following morning crossed over to Calais.

Again did I find myself sitting in the same room at the Hotel Bourbon Condé, which I had occupied ten years before ; but how differently situated ! On my first visit I was accompanied by my wife. I had then been married six days. This time I was alone. But I must not dwell on those days.

I was sitting, ruminating whither to bend my steps, when by chance I heard that a very old friend of mine was at St. Omer. Thither I went. My friend Scovell had gone to that dull old fortified town, on account of the good and cheap education that was there to be had.

Reader, it was at Scovell's house that I first met that lady who has had such a baneful influence upon my life. -

I had not been above a fortnight in the town, when, to my horror, she again made her appearance, taking up her quarters in the same hotel in which I was located.

Ultimately, she proceeded to Paris, and I to Belgium, where I had a sister-in-law, who had taken up her residence at Bruges. At Bruges I met another old friend, and one whom I had not seen for many years ; he was the eldest son

of a baronet, and, through our meeting, another scrape was added to that list, which, before I finish my narrative, the reader will, I have no doubt, consider as tolerably long.

My friend M——e had at that time a serious disagreement with a gentleman of the name of Telvin, relative to money matters, and certainly right was on the side of my friend. Matters at last came to such a crisis, that M——e appealed to me, and begged that I would be the bearer of a challenge. Disliking, singularly, anything in the shape of duelling, I declined, but at the same time recommended M——e to apply to a mutual friend of ours, and one who had seen much service in the Peninsula. Captain McJames had served in the Highlanders with great credit, and was also present at Waterloo : he undertook the disagreeable office. Now, unfortunately, our friend was excessively fond of “mountain dew,” and which was well known to the gentleman who was to be the recipient of the *cartel*.

Arriving at Ostend, he called upon Mr. Telvin, whom he found surrounded with friends : wines of all kinds, and spirits were on the table. Captain McJames was asked to help himself,

which he did to so great an extent that he signally failed in the purport of his visit; for instead of making arrangements for a meeting, he returned to Bruges excessively merry, bringing with him a certain paper signed by the offending party and five others who were present at the afternoon's enjoyment.

Great was my friend's astonishment at meeting Captain McJames at the station at Bruges, where he was anxiously awaiting him, to have the paper I have alluded to put into his hands; it was worded as follows:—

“ We, the undersigned, state that Mr. Telvin cannot meet Mr. M——e, as we consider his claim to be extortionate. (Here follow the signatures):—

Lord Harland,
George Hanvers,
Henry Hall,
Henry Smallwood,
Charles Polworth,
— O'Dyer, Colonel.”

In the whole course of my existence I have never seen anything to equal the passion of M——e on perusing that paper. It was with the greatest difficulty that I quieted him. At last I succeeded, and got him into my own rooms, promising him, when cool, to talk the matter

over ; and, indeed, the position that he was then in, through McJames's mismanagement, was by no means to be envied, for he had *six* to fight instead of *one*.

The conversation over my friend's troubles was long; and it ended by my agreeing, at his urgent request, to take the matter in hand. I at once gave him to understand that the clique must be broken, and that one of the six who had signed the paper *must* be made to fight ; and thus at last was it effected.

In the first place I drew out a document, as a reply to the insulting paper which had been given to McJames, and which I begged M——e to sign, telling him that I should place *my* signature under his. It was to this effect :—

“ We, the undersigned, state that

Lord Harland,
George Hanvers,
Henry Hall,
Henry Smallwood,
Charles Polworth,
—— O'Dyer, Colonel,

are cowards, l——rs, and base calumniators.

(Signed) CHARLES M——E.
CHARLES STRETTON.”

I felt convinced that this ruse would succeed ;

yet perfectly aware was I that Mr. Telvin, and indeed all the others, would bring me to an account ; still I had the means left me of avoiding a hostile meeting, at least for a time.

In Bruges, at that period, resided one Baron G—— de N——, a man of very old family ; he was a Dutchman, and was aide-de-camp to the late king of Holland when Prince of Orange, at the battle of Waterloo. To that gentleman's house I requested M——e to accompany me ; he was personally acquainted with him. I unfolded to the baron the whole mystery attached to that most disagreeable affair, telling the old man what I intended to do, and at once asking him to stand my friend in any emergency.

He told me that he would do so, but at the same time most emphatically stated that he would not allow me to meet any one of the opposite party, unless upon the same ground on which M——e received the satisfaction that was so justly due to him. Upon that we parted ; and I assured my friend that I would on the following morning bring the matter to a crisis, by going myself to Ostend, and visiting

one and all of those who had blackened his character.

True to my promise did I the following day go to Belgium's only watering-place. I had the paper in my pocket, which, if unsuccessful in drawing one man out, I was determined to use to the discomfiture of the whole party who had in such a cowardly way denounced a man of honour and a gentleman.

The first upon whom I called was a man that I well knew ; he was a married man, and had held a commission in a Lancer regiment. After the usual salutations, I commenced upon the subject of the quarrel at that time existing, which indeed then caused great scandal. I asked him if he would erase his name from the paper which he had signed, to my friend's great injury ; he refused to do so.

Drawing the document from my pocket, which, as I said before, bore the signatures of both M——e and myself, I placed it in his hand, assuring him that that night I would publish it in every café and hotel in the town of Ostend : and that the morrow should see it posted in Bruges, Brussels and Antwerp. Re-

turning the paper to me, he, with great violence, demanded why my name was affixed. I calmly told him, it was to cause justice to be done to an injured man. There was silence for some minutes, when he suddenly exclaimed, "Give me two hours," and rushed from the room. I left the house.

The two hours had barely elapsed, before I was again at Mr. Smallwood's residence; he had in that time seen all the endorsers of the document which accused my friend. I asked him again whether he would withdraw his name. "No," said he. I then told him that, painful as was the course which I had to pursue, that course would be taken, and that each and every one of those who had dared to put their hands to paper, designating my friend as an "extortioner, and no gentleman," would be denounced as "liars, cowards, and base calumniators." I then quitted the house, and returned to Bruges; and that evening the precious document was affixed to the walls of sundry public places: the first of which was the "Café Suisse."

The following morning I was walking on the Grande Place with my friend the old Baron de

G——, when I was stopped by Colonel O'Dyer, who informed me that he came on the part of his friend Mr. Smallwood, to make arrangements for a meeting. I at once told the fire-eating Irishman (who, I must say, was a very good fellow) that my honour was in the hands of Baron G——, and whatever my friend told me to do, I should studiously obey his injunctions. Leaving them together, I went to my own home.

Baron G——, in a few words gave Colonel O'Dyer to understand that until our friend M——e's honour was satisfied, Mr. Smallwood would not succeed in getting me on the ground; but that a double meeting might be arranged by Mr. Smallwood first exchanging shots with M——e, and that over, having his amusement with myself. This arrangement, however, did not appear to suit Colonel O'Dyer's views, and the baron left him, telling him that he might take his own course as regarded gaining satisfaction from me.

The following week there appeared a small pamphlet, entitled, "A Statement of Facts, emanating from the clique: in which every-

thing was done to prove that their cause was just. I replied to that pamphlet, and the majority of the readers were in our favour. Still, the party who signed the "document" held together, and we determined to break it, and at last we succeeded.

My friend, by some indirect means, got possession of certain facts connected with one of the gentlemen who had so incautiously put their hands to the paper which so severely reflected on him. He told me of it, and at the same time gave me to understand that it was in writing, and that he would make use of it.

However unfair it may appear to have been, I saw at once that it was the only chance by which the banded party could be broken. Of course we had no intention of publishing anything which would prove detrimental to the gentleman in question, but simply to use the power which was really ours, as a threat. Demanding the letter from my friend, which he immediately surrendered, I exacted a sacred promise from him, that he would never make any human being acquainted with the contents : that promise was given. I then told him that

he must accompany me to Ostend. I also told him to go to Dr. McFarlan, and get him to go with us, for that afternoon I felt confident a meeting would be arranged. In an hour's time M——e, accompanied by the doctor, entered my apartments; in another hour we were in the train on our way to Ostend. Arrived, we went immediately to the “Cour Imperiale” Hotel. Leaving my friends there, I hastened to the residence of Mr. Hall. He was from home; however, I left a note; and I had not returned to the hotel ten minutes before the *garçon* entered, and said that there were two gentlemen desirous of seeing me. Requesting my two friends to quit the room, I told the waiter to introduce them. To my astonishment, Hall, accompanied by Colonel O'Dyer, entered. It is true I knew that the former would come, but I little expected to see the Irishman again accepting the disagreeable office of second in a duel. I at once told Mr. Hall that my business was with him, and begged for five minutes' conversation, and that to be between ourselves. The colonel bowed and went out, but was by Mr. Hall requested to be within call, if required.

I will make the matter as short as I can, by saying that I immediately demanded from Mr. Hall the withdrawal of his name from the offensive paper. He refused, as the other had done.

“Mr. Hall,” said I, “I hold in my hand a letter; that letter has been read but by M——e and myself. I will now read it to you; if, after that, you refuse to withdraw your name from the document you so foolishly signed, I shall make whatever use of it I choose.

The letter was read, and replaced in my pocket. The astonishment, and I may say horror, depicted in the face of that fine young man, I cannot describe. I left him undisturbed for some minutes, when I said, “Will you withdraw your name, or meet him? On your promise to do either one or the other, this letter is instantly destroyed.”

“I will not withdraw my name,” he replied, —“I will meet him, when and where he likes. Send for O’Dyer.”

I rang the bell and desired the waiter, who entered, to request Colonel O’Dyer to come to us. On the entrance of that gentleman, Mr. Hall immediately stated his determination to

give the meeting required by my friend, and he begged the colonel to act for him. The Irishman appeared delighted, and with great gusto entered on that office, which to me was anything but a pleasant one.

I left them together for a few minutes, and went to gladden my friend M——e's heart with the information that he was to fight a duel; that perhaps in less than an hour's time he would be gone to his account, or perhaps that, in the sight of God, he would be a murderer.

I returned to the room in which I had left our opponents. At once I told Colonel O'Dyer that Mr. M——e was at Ostend, that he expected Mr. Hall would act as a gentleman, and that we had come down from Bruges, accompanied by a surgeon, to have the affair off that very evening on the sands. Mr. Hall's second was quite agreeable.

I had forgotten to state that at the time I thought it very odd that one of the principals should have been present at the arrangements, which are always at that time so singularly perplexing; but such was the case.

"Mr. Stretton," said Mr. Hall, addressing

me, "it is my earnest wish to have this business over as soon as possible. It is true, I am now in the hands of my friend, and I am well aware that I must abide by his decision in everything connected with this affair; but Monday would suit me better. I will tell you why:—To-night the king gives a ball, to which I am invited. I am attached to a young lady who will be there; she comes from Brussels, and I should much like to see her—(not that I am going to allude to the intended meeting)—but there are chances, you know—"

Stopping him in the middle of his speech, I said, "Be it so; where a lady is in the case, everything else must give place. On Monday morning, then, at eleven o'clock, if it will suit you, we will meet at Sluys: it is equidistant for both parties, and it is in Holland.

"Thank you, Stretton, for your kindness," he excitedly exclaimed, when he was again stopped in that which he was about to say, by his own second, who advancing close up to us, said, in the broadest Limerick dialect, "My boys, that arrangement does not suit me: to-morrow at eleven by the clock, on the sands, say I."

I immediately gave the colonel to understand that the morrow would be Sunday, and that I decidedly would have nothing to do with fighting on the Sabbath.

Nothing would or could alter the determination of the Irishman to have the meeting on the following day. I protested, I argued, but to no purpose. At last I went out, and had a consultation with M——e and Dr. McFarlan. Will it be believed that I was overruled by them? I returned to Hall, determined still to try one more chance of avoiding the committal of a crime so great, as being present at a hostile meeting, and that in a Protestant country, on a Sunday—and perhaps at the very time when the members of the Dutch church were at prayers.

“Colonel O’Dyer,” said I, “I shall not altogether give way to you, or to my friends in the other room: suppose we toss up for it.” He at last agreed; and will it be credited that we did toss up a five-franc piece; which piece of money was to decide whether the crime we were about to commit was to be done on the day set apart for rest, or on the Monday? I lost the toss, therefore I had nothing more

to say: O'Dyer, however, acceded to our united wishes of going to Holland, in preference to having the affair finished in Belgium, as the new law for the suppression of duelling had just been enacted in that kingdom. All was at length arranged, and they left the hotel.

On their departure M——e and McFarlan rejoined me; they were made acquainted with all the arrangements I had been compelled to accede to: a good dinner was discussed, an invariable thing amongst our countrymen, and we returned as speedily as possible to the town of Bruges.

The distance from the town in which we resided, to Sluys, was, I believe, about eighteen miles, and about six from the frontiers; it was a decayed town, and one of great antiquity.

To those who have not resided in Belgium it may not be uninteresting to be told that it is necessary (or, more properly speaking, it *was* necessary) that when an affair of honour was about to come off, that you had a witnesss (*temoins*) on each side besides the seconds.

We were not long in finding a friend to act as *temoin* on the part of my friend, M——e,

neither was any time lost in making every arrangement necessary to enable two human beings to destroy one another.

As there were five in our party, namely, M——e, Doctor McFarlan, Elwyn, our *temoin*, V——n, a friend desirous of seeing the sport (?), and myself, we hired a *char-à-blanc*, with orders that the horses were to be put to, *à l'Anglaise*. Of course we had four : who ever heard of going to a wedding or a duel with a pair ? The hour arranged for the meeting was, as I have stated, eleven o'clock. We quitted Bruges at seven in the morning, determined that no blame should be attached to us on the score of punctuality. I said that our party consisted of five persons ; I was wrong—it was six ; for one friend, who I have alluded to as anxious to see the sport, begged that his Irish servant might be allowed to go with us, for “he was so very handy.” And, indeed, Pat Molloy was as good a specimen of the county of Cork as I have ever fallen in with, but I shall have more to say of him hereafter.

The travelling by *voiturier* in Belgium is very slow, and we did not reach Sluys until ten

o'clock ; but we managed to arrange, on our way, one very essential point, namely, the ground where the deed of blood was to come off (of course, subject to the approval of the other second, Colonel O'Dyer).

Arrived at the inn, we momentarily awaited the coming of the hostile party. An hour elapsed, and no signs of Hall and his friend. One o'clock—two o'clock struck. We had witnessed the phlegmatic Dutch of both sexes going to and returning from their different places of public worship, and I confess that I inwardly rejoiced at the thought of the non-coming of our opponents. I had been frequently urged by all our party, with the exception of M——e, to return to Bruges, and at once “post” Mr. Hall as a coward, &c. M——e would not hear of it, neither did I wish to do anything of the kind ; and I determined to remain until six o'clock, and, after that hour, to make our way back to Bruges. Thinking all safe, as far as regarded any meeting taking place, I ordered dinner. Poor M——e had never touched anything in the shape of wine or spirits from the time we quitted Bruges ; he

was under my surveillance for the time, and I would not allow him. No sooner was the dinner ordered than I said, "Now, my boy, drink what you like."

Pipes and tobacco were brought up. Schiedam and brandy became the order of the day, and all seemed pleased, with the exception of M——e. That gentleman had hardly raised his first glass to his lips, when the rumbling of a heavy carriage betokened some one coming. We all listened. Nearer and nearer did the sound come to our ears, when in rushed Pat Molloy, the Irish servant, his face beaming with delight, who exclaimed, "Whist! here they are! here they are!"

Rising from the table, I begged that no one would move until I returned. I descended the stairs, and had hardly reached the bottom before the old lumbering vehicle stopped at the door of the hotel. Mr. Hall was the first to jump out; he held out his hand to me, saying at the same time, "Thanks, a thousand thanks, for the patience that you have this day shown." O'Dyer, in most voluble language, soon explained the cause of the lateness of their arrival—which, indeed,

was no fault of theirs—the affair had got wind, and they had been chased by gendarmes, had to go miles out of their way, and had had great difficulty as regarded obtaining horses.

“Colonel O’Dyer,” said I, “the sooner this business is over, the better. I have seen a spot about a mile from the town, with which I think you will be satisfied, and if you will accompany me, I will show it to you.”

“By no means, my boy,” replied the colonel; “let us but just wash our mouths out, and we will be off; only tell us which is the road, and I shall guess the spot.”

I then told them, that to avoid any mistake, I would send my friend’s servant with them, who knew the precise spot I had selected, subject to his approval. Asking me if I had brought the “marking-irons,” I told him I had, and, summoning Pat (who, by-the-by, did not seem to relish having anything to do with the opposite party), they both finished their tumblers of Hollands, and, escorted by Pat, walked slowly out of the little droll town, taking the road for Bruges.

I rejoined my friends upstairs, and told them

how Hall and the colonel had gone on, attended by Pat Molloy; and how we were to follow in twenty minutes. The driver of the *char-à-banc* had orders to put to immediately; the bill was paid; and in half-an-hour we were on our way back to Bruges.

The one mile was soon completed; and leaning against a dyke stood the three, Hall, O'Dyer, and Pat. Leaving M——e and his other friends in the carriage, I joined our opponents.

“An admirable place, indeed, I find that you have selected, Mr. Stretton,” commenced the colonel. “I presume you mean the precise spot to be measured from yonder white stick.”

I nodded assent. Leaving Hall in company with Pat, who, by-the-by, appeared now to wish equally well with both parties, I accompanied O'Dyer to the ground indicated.

“Of course, Mr. Stretton, we must toss up for choice of ground.”

I assented. Afterwards, for which second should give the word to fire. I agreed to tossing for who should give the word; but I stipulated

that the only words given should be, "Are you ready? Fire!" and a white handkerchief at the same moment to be thrown on the ground. The colonel, who appeared most desirous that the whole affair should go off as amicably as possible, readily assented; and the only thing remaining for us to do was to step the ground together. Twelve paces was the distance, and a good twelve paces his long legs made.

"Where are your 'irons'?" again asked O'Dyer. "Of course you will load the one, and I the other."

That was agreed to, and at once done. We then threw up a franc piece, for the choice of ground. I won the toss; and M——e being the smaller man of the two, I chose that part which was the lowest, although there was but little choice. Again we tossed up for who should give the word. Fortune again stood by me; and I told Col. O'Dyer that the words would be, "Are you ready? Fire!"

All was now arranged, and with a palpitating heart I returned to the carriage. Telling my friend that all was ready, he expressed a wish to

speak to me. We withdrew a few yards from the others; our conversation was very short; he merely, in the calmest manner, requested that, should he fall, I would give the letter that he handed to me, to his wife. That I assured him should be done.

“Now, what’s the word—and who gives it?”

“I do,” I replied.

“Then you must say, ‘Are you ready? One, two—,”

“That I will not do; you have promised to do all I wish, and you must, or I leave the ground,” were the words in which I answered his unreasonable request.

He at once gave in, and we rejoined the others at the carriage, when we all proceeded to the ground.

I must here inform the reader that neither of the principals in this affair had ever met; and, indeed, I believe that they had never seen one another. Mr. Hall had thoughtlessly, at the request of Mr. Telvin, put his name to the paper, which so vilified my friend, and had therefore rendered himself liable to chastisement.

Arrived at the ground, I at once placed M——e in position; when, for the first time, the two men stood looking at one another. Strange to say, Mr. Hall, fancying that we should fight on the sands, was dressed in the lightest-coloured clothes imaginable; whilst my friend was attired in black, with a dark forage cap on his head.

Leaving the two principals in position, I found that Colonel O'Dyer had no *temoin*—a thing formerly considered as indispensable. I walked over to the colonel and mentioned the fact to him. What was to be done? At last the thought struck me that my friend, who was desirous of seeing the fight, would stand as witness for our opponent; he consented to do so.

All was now arranged. I took the two pistols to Colonel O'Dyer, and told him to take his choice (they were an old pair of Joe Manton's, but percussioned, and had done work); he took one, which he handed to Mr. Hall. I gave the other to my friend, whom I shook by the hand, and then took my place at the side, where stood our *temoin*, Mr. Emlyn.

I was just upon the point of giving the

word, when, to my astonishment, I saw that Pat Molloy had taken up his position behind M——e (whom he much liked), exactly as if he was a long-stop at a game of cricket. Calling the simple fellow away to my side, I at once gave the word, "Are you ready? Fire!" and threw the handkerchief on the ground. So rapidly were the words given, neither had time to cover his man. One report only did I hear; Mr. Hall staggered a little, but it was for a moment, when O'Dyer went to him; and, after speaking a few words with him, advanced to the spot where I stood.

He at once begged me to accompany him to his friend, who, he said, wished to speak to me. I did so; and before I actually had reached the spot where Hall stood, I had the satisfaction to hear that gentleman exclaim, in a loud voice—

"Mr. M——e is a man of honour and a gentleman," at the same time firing his pistol in the air.

Rushing up to him, I tendered him my hand, which he readily grasped, remarking only that my friend had fired a little too low.

Of course, all was over. We had gained that

which we sought a—retractation. The clique was at length broken, and I now saw my way to obtain the money so justly due to my friend.

The words were barely out of Hall's mouth, when I rushed up to my friend M——e, whom I shook heartily by the hand.

“Did you hear what he said?” I exclaimed.

“I did, Stretton; but how the deuce I have missed him, I know not; it is true, I kept my promise to you, which was to fire low. I could have killed him—I dropped my pistol a little too much: you know that I could have killed him.”

“Thank God,” I said, “you have not done so! Your honour is saved, and now you shall have the money,—not that you care about the dross; but into your hands I will also put a written apology from every man that signed the infamous document which has rendered you more like a fiend than a human being. Come, with me, and let me introduce you to Hall. Come, come at once; he has done more than was required of him. He has proved himself no coward; he has stated publicly that there is no blemish on your character.”

He came with me, but not with the alacrity I wished. The words which Hall had uttered had, of course, made us all friends, and all were now gathered round him.

I introduced M——e to Hall; they did shake hands, yet there was a want of warmth in my friend's behaviour that I did not like. I could see through it—he felt hurt that he had not hit his mark, however, slightly; for, in truth, my friend was a dead shot.

Emlyn who, as I have before said, acted as one of the *temoins*, happened just then to turn round suddenly, when he saw two mounted gendarmes coming along the road, in which stood our *char-à-banc*.

“Look out for yourselves!” he exclaimed; and we were all on the move immediately. To attempt to reach the carriage in time to bolt, was useless; and if we had succeeded in doing so we should have been easily overtaken.

“Sit down, sit down all of you,” said O'Dyer. We did so, and we saw the gendarmes pass, and overheard the conversation with our drivers. I, for one, thought that indeed all was up, and so expressed myself to my friends; but to our

unspeakable delight, they rode on, when, with lightened hearts the whole party made their way to the carriage; Hall and Colonel O'Dyer accompanied us. At the side of the *char-à-banc* we bade adieu to them, and once more started *en route* for the fine old town of Bruges.

We were within six miles of our destination, when we were met by a numerous cavalcade; some on horseback, some in vigilantes, and some on foot; all hurrying out to know the issue of the meeting, and I believe that there was not one who was not delighted at finding our friend M——e, was untouched. He was very popular in Belgium. With what delight did I reach the house of my friend, the one who had so kindly assisted as *temoin* on the part of our adversary; and, reader, I must here mention, that he was my brother-in-law. We were, of course, received with unspeakable pleasure by my sister-in-law, and it had been previously arranged that we were to return there, should nothing untoward occur. My brother-in-law, V——n, had married my wife's eldest sister.

M——e and myself were sitting over the supper-table late at night, when Pat Molloy,

the servant, entered the room with a most lugubrious face. Advancing to his master, he whispered in his ear that there were two huissiers in the passage, who had come to take M——e and myself; both M——e and I overheard what was said.

“Send them in,” exclaimed M——e, and with a pitiful look poor Pat quitted the room to introduce the two government officials. It was plain enough that we were arrested *pour une affaire de duelle*.

I at once asked if bail would be taken? “Yes,” was the reply; but at the same time they informed us that the bail must be Belgian.

M——e, I was aware, had hosts of Belgian friends, having been abroad so long. I knew but one family intimately, therefore to Captain Walstad of the 6th regiment, which was then quartered at Bruges, I wrote. He came immediately. The required recognizances were entered into, and the huissiers left the house.

CHAPTER X.

A Duel and its Legal Consequences.—Punishment of the Misdemeanour.—The Digue at Ostend.—An Assault.—Another Assault, and Result.—Arbitration.—Settlement of the Quarrel.—Revisit the Principality.—A Duel.—Bruges.—Imprisonment.—Release of an Unfortunate Debtor.—The Unfortunate Debtor.—Interview with Debtor's Worse Half.—My Efforts in Favour of the Debtor.—My Efforts Successful.—Theatrical Performance.—A Strange Apparition.—A Heartless Creditor.—Release of the Prisoner.

M——E slept at my friend's house that night, and the following morning the same gentlemen who had disturbed us at supper introduced themselves at the breakfast table, leaving us notice to appear at the préfecture on the following Saturday at ten o'clock.

Breakfast over, we hurried out in search of an *avocat*, first calling on our friend Noble, the vice-consul. I forget the lawyer's name, but he was an excellent one that we chose; yet, like all lawyers, he knew well how to frame his charges. The vice-consul had kindly offered his services also, which we gratefully accepted,

and which, indeed, were to us most valuable. From eight to eleven that evening we were closeted with our counsel, and he was made, somehow or other, before we parted, master of his case. Strange, too, for neither M——e or myself were proficient in the French language. I told the lawyer to stick to the point of the duel being fought in Holland. He explained to me that we were to be tried for the challenge being given in Belgium; and that it would be the first case that had occurred under the new act for the suppression of that absurd old feudal practice.

I, for one, will never fight a duel, unless with sticks, or with my fists. Reader, I am no coward; but time, thank God, has taught me that “there is another and a better world.”

On the Saturday morning, punctually at ten o’clock, M——e and I made our appearance at the préfecture; the hall was crowded; our friend the vice-consul had already arrived.

On entering the Court of the First Instance (de la Première Instance), we were both much surprised to find that, instead of being placed in the dock, there were two handsome velvet-

covered arm-chairs, in which we were told to ensconce ourselves, which chairs were brought close up to the dais, where sat two judges, and the Procureur du Roi, besides another legal official, whose duties I did not comprehend.

Our friend Noble took his stand by us, and he narrowly watched the proceedings: his knowledge of the language was perfect.

For a long time did we listen to a voluminous oration from the Procureur du Roi, hardly a word of which (and I speak French) did I understand. He ceased, and our counsel got up for the defence: more than one hour was spent in a discussion relative to the literal meaning of the word *coward*, which in French is *lache*. One argued that the real meaning of our English word of opprobrium was poltroon; another, that it was a semi-assassin; but I will not linger over that which must necessarily be uninteresting to the reader. The difficulty, however, was got over, and at two o'clock all was finished. We were found guilty.

I have neglected to mention that Colonel O'Dyer and Mr. Hall had not then been served with notices of appearance; but they were

tried as we were, although absent. For a few minutes there was great talking among the high officials, when the chief (who, by-the-by, was a benignant-looking man) told us that we four Saxons had outraged the laws of the country. He also acquainted us with the fact that we were the first who had done so since the change in the Code Napoleon. Belgium acted entirely under that law.

He then went minutely into every point; he dwelt long upon the words in which we had posted the opposing party; he directed our attention also to the fact, that although the duel (bloodless as it was) was fought in Holland, the challenge had been given on Belgic soil, whose laws we were bound to obey. I own I did not think that was law.

Now for punishment. Rising from his seat, the good-looking old fellow gave forth in a somewhat loud voice, the following. I give it in French as well as English, as I consider much of the pith is lost if not given in the language in which I heard it:—"Le Sieur Hall (Mr. Hall), un an, mille francs d'amende (a year's imprisonment, one thousand francs fine)."

“Je proteste,” I exclaimed.

“Madman ! sit down,” said Noble, pushing me into my chair, from whence I turned my eyes on M——e’s face, which indeed looked vastly blue.

The judge continued. “Le Colonel O’Dyer, un an, mille francs d’amende.”

“Quiet, Stretton ; quiet, old fellow,” said the vice-consul, placing his friendly hand upon my shoulder. I looked up into his face ; he saw that I felt grateful for his kindness ; but he knew that the punishments which were then being given were contrary to justice.

Again did the judge go on dealing forth his awards for a misdemeanour committed in another country. “Le Chevalier M——e (Sir Charles M——e), six jours, seize francs d’amende (six days imprisonment, sixteen francs fine.)”

That was sufficient : cheers and clapping of hands proved the general feeling that existed. The noise suppressed, the judge continued :—

“Le Sieur Stretton (Mr. Stretton), six jours, seize francs d’amende.” Thus ended a trial for a farce.

To proceed. Noble, immediately that the court was quieted, asked if it was imperative that

we took our imprisonment at once. He was told that it was not necessary, but that bail must be given, that we would be forthcoming in three months. The same recognizances were again entered into, and we quitted the *préfecture* with the hearty congratulations of our friends. M——e's work was however by no means over. On the following Monday we went again to Ostend, with the intention of once more demanding the money that was owing to him.

Leaving my friend at the "*Cour Imperiale*," I called upon Mr. Telvin: he was from home. Ostend was full of visitors at the time, and the Digue, as every one who has visited that watering place knows, is the great lounge for all. Nothing would suit my friend but that we too must take a walk upon the Digue. I did all in my power to dissuade him from so foolish an act, but go he would, telling me that if I refused to accompany him, he would go alone. Knowing the hasty temper of M——e, I at last agreed to join him in a walk on the old dyke which faces the sea: the long walk was crowded. Twice had we made turns up and down (M——e, of course, was the observed of all observers), when

we thought of returning to the station to take the train back to Bruges; we had nearly reached the end, and were about entering the town, when misfortune threw Mr. Smallwood in our way. It may have slipped the remembrance of the reader, that the last-named gentleman was the one who came to call me out, for putting my name under my friend's, to the paper which was posted, designating him, with others, as a coward, a l—r, and a base calumniator; and which challenge was declined, until justice had been done to M——e.

Smallwood was leaning on the arm of a friend. M——e was shortsighted, and used a glass: Suddenly he stopped, seized from my hand a small malacca cane that I was playing with, rushed from my side, and ere I could stay his hand, inflicted the most summary punishment, and that well laid on, on the person of Mr. Smallwood.

My friend's passion was such, that had the gentleman who received the castigation, turned upon him he might have killed him. Never did I see a man rendered so thoroughly powerless by excessive passion. Mr. Smallwood's

friend attempted to interfere, but I told him that he had nothing to do with the then existing quarrel; and it ended by the pair leaving the Digue in a manner which did not give the bystanders any very exalted idea of the valour of our countrymen.

I lost no time in hurrying M——e to the hotel, where I candidly told him that if he intended to settle his own affairs, and in that summary manner, he must allow me to withdraw altogether.

“No sooner,” said I, “are we out on bail, but you bring yourself and friend into trouble again. One promise I must exact, and that is, that the completion of the business be left to me: will you give that promise?”

“I will, S——n, but I will have my revenge from one and all who signed that paper.”

“You shall,” I replied, “but in a very different way.” Here ended the colloquy.

We started for the station, where I certainly expected to find gendarmes ready to take my friend M——e, if not me also; but no,—Mr. Smallwood pocketed the affront, and we reached Bruges in safety.

The next day M——e left for Brussels to rejoin his wife, from whom he had been too long absent.

Unfortunately, there are too many people in the world who style themselves friends, but in truth are our worst enemies ; I mean those who invariably will tell you what another says behind your back. “Save me from my friends,” say I, if from such a class my circle is to be made.

Well, one of these pseudo friends told M——e that Mr. Hall, although he had met him, and had publicly stated that he, M——e, was a man of honour, and a gentleman, said that he had never withdrawn his name from the paper which was the cause of quarrel. The reader may well believe that a man like my friend M——e would not brook that. Mr. Hall was in Brussels at the time. I am grateful that I was at Bruges.

The truth is, M——e met Hall, the man whom he, fourteen days before, had fought, and struck him a violent blow in the face ; this took place opposite the Hotel de Belle Vue on the Place Royale. I must add that Mr. Hall was in company with two others. I certainly

was excessively annoyed when I heard what had taken place, and began to feel desirous of washing my hands of the whole affair, when by chance I met with a gentleman of high standing in Belgium, who, after talking over the great quarrel, as he called it, asked me if I did not think that it might be arranged by arbitration.

“Decidedly,” I said, “and if you, sir, will become the arbiter, much bitterness of feeling and perhaps much bloodshed will be avoided.”

“Too happy, Mr. S——n,” he replied, “shall I be to become that arbiter, if both parties will agree.”

“Done, sir,” said I,—“I will answer for both, if you are to be judge between M——e and Mr. Telvin, who not only is indebted to my friend in a pecuniary way, but has injured him far more deeply, by impugning his character.”

In what few words was settled that which eventually proved one of the greatest blessings to a community that can be conceived, namely, of doing away with the party feeling which had so long existed. Oh! how many lifelong hatreds do I know of, engendered by tittle tattle.

That night I wrote to Brussels, requesting M——e once more to return to Bruges ; I told him that I trusted that all differences would at last be settled by arbitration, and that if he could command his temper I had no fear of the issue. He came, and that quickly, and little time did I lose in taking advantage of the offer made by Mr. Allington to become arbitrator in our great faction fight.

I shall not state how I managed to get the parties all together—it would take too much space. I did so manage it ; and at the Hotel du Commerce, in the town of Bruges, the meeting which I am about to describe took place.

M——e had long before placed in my hands the vouchers for his claim—they were seven in number. I was perfectly acquainted with all the minutiae attached to that long-pending altercation.

It was with the greatest difficulty that I succeeded in making M——e yield to my wishes, that he should not be present during the arbitration ; he, however, insisted upon being allowed to remain in the hotel during the time ; and who could gainsay him ?

The Hotel du Commerce, where the meeting took place, is one of the oldest of the hotels at Bruges, and celebrated as the one in which George the Fourth, shortly after his accession to the throne of these realms, passed a night in company with the "Iron Duke" (both incog.), on their way to visit the field of Waterloo.

In the room which is to this day styled George the Fourth's room, the arbitration took place. It is a large and handsome room; attached to it (as is invariably to be found in all hotels on the Continent) was a bed-room.

M——e and I were the first to reach the hotel on that eventful morning; and we had time to talk much over before the arrival of our antagonists.

M——e knew that I was perfectly cognizant of everything, as regarded his money claim, and upon that point he was comparatively easy, but he fancied that I should fail in gaining for him that which he prized above everything — a humiliating apology for the gross slander that he had suffered under.

M——e also was well aware that the bed-room, which I have just alluded to, was to be his

prison, pending our arbitration—literally his prison; and that, when once his opponents arrived, the key would be turned upon him. Whilst chatting over commonplace subjects, we heard a loud clatter of voices in the *entrée*. Seizing M——e by the arms, I pushed him forcibly into the bed-room; and without the slightest hesitation I locked the door.

In a body the clique entered the room. (I shall continue to give them that term until after the decision of the arbitrator.)

I was perfectly ready to receive them, and they had not long to wait ere Mr. Allington entered, and by that gentleman's decision we were to abide. Should I prove my friend's claim as just, he held a proud position; if disallowed, the stigma of extortion still remained.

Rather a momentous question:—one voice to decide whether the eldest son and heir to one of our oldest baronetcies was a man of honour or not!

Well, all our opponents were present, with the exception of Mr. Smallwood, the gentleman who had received his quota at the hands of my friend on the "Digue," at Ostend. Nothing could be

more systematic than the way in which Mr. Allington proceeded to investigate the case left to his decision. I was asked if I had vouchers : I said I had, and at once I produced them. It would occupy too much time for me to enter into the somewhat wordy discussion that took place, and which detained us nearly two hours : let it suffice, when I say, that I had, on the part of M——e, seven separate claims on Mr. Telvin ; all of which, with the exception of one, I proved ; yes, one only was disallowed.

Let the reader's imagination conjure up the scene that in reality took place, when Mr. Allington gave his fiat. It will be long ere I forget the countenances of one and all.

The fiat given forth, the first words I spoke were addressed to Mr. Telvin, demanding a cheque for the money that was due to M——e. He drew forth his cheque-book, and handed the slip of paper to me—that little slip of paper which did more for M——e's honour than ten duels could have done.

Mr. Hanvers was the first to speak on the side of our opponents. He merely said, "Stretton, I will call on you presently, and give you a

written apology, which I beg you will place in Mr. M——e's hands."

Oh! how thankful I felt! yet I would not show my feelings.

"Where are you now, Mr. Telvin? where are all your friends who have denounced my friend? who, pray, now is the extortioner?" I exclaimed.

"Mr. Stretton, you shall hear from me," said Mr. Telvin. I bowed; he quitted the room. I cared not—I had his cheque!

Lord Harland was the next who essayed to speak. We had often met before, and were on tolerably good terms: holding out his hand, he told me that he would accompany his friend Hanvers, and that he would then give his written apology also, which he owned was justly due. We shook hands, and Lord Harland expressed his great delight that the "row," as he called it, was over. Every one volunteered the same apology, and from each of M——e's opponents, with the exception of one, did I receive the retraction which placed my friend in a far higher position than the one in which Mr. Telvin stood.

The last back was hardly turned, when I

unlocked the door of the bedroom in which poor M——e for two hours had been imprisoned.

Holding out the cheque to him, I said, “ Did I not tell you that I would break the clique ! Where are they now ? Did I not promise to put the apologies of those who had insulted you into your hands ? This evening you shall have them. And you may thank God that you have got out of the business in the way you have done.

M——e’s heart was too full to speak, so I ceased to talk to him, but walked him off to my brother-in-law’s house to dinner. That night’s letters, which he received whilst at dinner, informed him that he was Sir Charles M——e, by the sudden death of his father, which took place at Bath.

There were no reasons why Sir Charles should be heartbroken by the news which came so unexpectedly ; neither did he show, in the slightest degree, any feeling of exultation,—far from it.

The following morning he left for England, but not before he had received the written retractions which he required from those who had once been his enemies.

I can call to my remembrance no event in the whole course of my life which gave me such unmixed gratification^s as the issue of that long-pending quarrel; and numerous, indeed, were the congratulations we received.

A fortnight only was Sir Charles M——e absent from Belgium, when again he appeared in Bruges: he had not forgotten that there was a certain imprisonment to be undergone, and he returned to take it.

I must here state, that on our first meeting, he put into my hands a handsome *cadeau* (not money, reader), as a souvenir of his friendship.

Very shortly after the return of my friend I quitted for England. I had business with Mr. Keogh, which, by-the-by, I had better have left undone: from thence I proceeded into Wales on a visit to my sister, the lady to whom I dedicate this humble work.

I had not been six weeks in the Principality when I received a letter from M——e, urging the necessity of my speedy return to Bruges to take my quota of confinement, *i. e.* six days. The letter was long, and the latter part of Sir Charles's epistle did astonish me. He said, that

he hoped that our friendship would not be interrupted, but that a misunderstanding had taken place between V——n, my brother-in-law, and himself, and that they had met—yes, had actually fought! and a near finish it was for Sir Charles, for V——n's ball carried away part of his neck-cloth.

I was thunderstruck: without attempting to elucidate the mystery which appeared to me there must be attached to so strange a quarrel, I packed up my things and returned to Bruges.

It was twelve o'clock in the day when I reached the old town. Leaving my things at my lodgings, I hastened to the residence of Captain Walstad, who, as I before said, had kindly stood my bail. I told my friend that I came to surrender: he informed me that the court was then sitting, and to the *préfecture* he accompanied me.

In less than twenty minutes from the moment I informed Walstad of my arrival, I was locked up in the prison of Bruges. Never was there anything done so quickly; no sooner was information given to the authorities that I had surrendered, than I found myself in a *vigilante*, escorted by two *gensdarmes*, on my way to my

place of punishment (?)—the rascals not allowing me to return to my rooms for five minutes to fetch my clothes.

Little did that trouble me ; the governor of the prison was a gentleman, and, indeed, during my prolonged visit (six days), nothing could exceed his kindness : he sent for my necessities, and I was as comfortable as a man could be, deprived of his liberty.

How true is it, “that from small causes great events arise!” Now, my incarceration was fraught with great benefit to a fellow-christian. I trust the reader will not think the subject is mentioned under a vain-glorious feeling—far from it,—for it is to the then residents of Bruges, and, indeed, I must say to some of those also who were then residing in Ostend and Brussels, that all credit is due.

I had not been many hours in my barred apartments, when I discovered that there was an Englishman and a gentleman confined for debt. I was told that his liabilities were heavy ; I was also given to understand that the debts were not of his own contracting, but that they had been recklessly incurred by his wife, who had run

away with another man. I must here mention that the fortune which this poor fellow possessed was chiefly in right of his wife.

It was not long before Mr. O'Mahoney and I met. I found him to be a gentleman; he was a Roman Catholic, and perhaps somewhat too much bigotted; but he was a good man. From his lips I heard everything, and with those lips he told me where his wife was residing; it was in London, and with a certain Mr. G——s.

A more heartless case I never heard of; all his appeals to that wretched woman were unheeded; she knew that death was slowly, although surely, doing his work. When I first saw him he could hardly walk, from long confinement, and which had brought on varicose veins. He was, as I said, a gentleman and a scholar, and he messed with me each day that I was a prisoner; there were no bounds, reader, put upon my living.

The evening before I quitted that jolly place (for to me it was jolly), we had a long talk over his troubles. I think I see his face now, as I rose from the table at which we had been sitting,

with a cigar in my hand, which I was just about to light, and said, "O'Mahoney, you shall be out of this before three months are over your head."

Reader, the words I uttered were verified! Honour be to my countrymen, who so nobly came forward in the hour of need!

I must now return to my friends who so kindly, whilst in "durance vile," daily visited me: of course Sir Charles was with me every day; but the best proof that I can give that I was not forgotten, though confined, was, that the governor told me that fifty-six visits were paid me in the six days that I was under his charge.

It was a fine morning, towards the end of the month, that the governor of the Bruges gaol entered my room and told me that I was free. I asked him if it was necessary that I quitted the gaol immediately, only reversing the question that my friend Noble, the consul, had put to the judge, when he sentenced us. The governor told me to remain as long as I wished, and the few hours that I did remain were ultimately of great benefit to poor O'Mahoney. Oh! how much of villany I learnt in those few short hours.

Poor O'Mahoney did indeed open his heart to me that morning; and it was with some difficulty that I forced myself to believe all that he confided to me as regarded the treatment he had received at the hands of her who swore at the altar to "love, honour, and obey." I told him to keep his spirits up; I assured him that I would see his wife in a few days, and if there was one latent spark of kindly feeling left in her, I would endeavour to draw it forth. He then gave me her address, which was in the immediate neighbourhood of Russell Square. Promising to let him hear from me, if I did not return within a week, I left him. The expression of the poor prisoner's face on my quitting the gaol, will, by me, be long remembered: perhaps he thought that the old adage, "Out of sight out of mind," would again be realized, but such was not the case. No sooner was I free than I commenced the task that I had imposed upon myself.

To many in Bruges O'Mahoney was well known, and there were many in that town, as well as at Ostend, who had partaken of his hospitality in brighter days. To those men I first went. I stated the circumstances of the case merely, in

the first instance, to feel my way ; and I found at the onset of my attempt, despite the trouble I had imposed upon myself, that success would crown my efforts. On the third day after my release, I left for London, and on my arrival lost no time in seeking the residence of Mrs. O'Mahoney. She was at home ; I was ushered into the dining-room, where I was kept a good half hour before the lady deigned to make her appearance. On entering, I could see that she had been good-looking ; she was very tall, and very thin, but decidedly of forbidding aspect and address. Begging me to take a seat, she asked the purport of my visit.

“ Your husband, madam,—” I commenced. Those few words were enough ; she rose, and seizing the bell rope, began to tug at the indicator in no gentle manner, and which she continued doing until a man as ill-favoured as herself entered the room, and who it appeared was to be her protector.

“ Turn that man out of the house !” screamed my friend's worse half : “ send for the police ! am I to be insulted in my own house ?”

“ Mrs. O'Mahoney,” said I, “ hear me calmly

for one moment : I go ; but no man shall turn me out. I have seen your husband, and in less than three months he shall be in this house, and with you."

Her rage increased, and so great was the noise she made that I found it absolutely desirable to beat a retreat. With flushed cheeks I found myself in Russell Square, and I know not which feeling predominated, whether anger or laughter.

That night I left London for Dover, and in the morning crossed over in the Vivid, mail-steamer, commanded by that *protegé* of royalty, Captain Smithson.

I had not been an hour in Bruges when I sought my poor friend. And oh ! what doubts and fears could I see in that pallid and emaciated face !

Taking my hand, he whispered out in a half sepulchral voice, "Stretton have you seen her?"

"I have, O'Mahoney, my boy," said I ; "I have indeed seen your virago, who turned me out of her house ; and that before half my business was settled. But never mind, you have many

friends left; and I now promise you, my melancholy-looking friend, that you shall dine with your wife—and I have no doubt a most delightful *tête-à-tête* it will be—within three months from this time.”

Poor O'Mahoney shook his head; he evidently doubted the realization of that which I so strenuously maintained would be the case.

However, on leaving him (which I did in better spirits than I expected I should do) I told him of my mode of action; I acquainted him with the necessity of his suffering me to raise by subscription, the sum necessary for his release. The actual sum required was four hundred and twenty pounds.

I had seen all his creditors; and all but one had consented to take fifteen shillings in the pound; that one was the husband of the great *modiste* at Bruges. Strange as it may appear to Englishmen, that husband was the *Commandant du Place*, of the same city.

It is necessary that I should here state that there was an excellent *corps* of amateur theatrical performers at Bruges at that time, the head of which was a capital fellow named

A—d—n, formerly an officer in the Bays. I belonged to that dramatic troupe. Well, to A—d—n I went; I told him poor O'Mahoney's story, asked for his assistance in every way, and at last begged him to exert his influence with the entire company to give one performance for the benefit of my imprisoned friend.

In the kindest manner he entered into all my views; and it is to that gentleman I am indebted for much of the success that attended me. It was arranged that the performance should take place in six weeks from that time.

I will not weary the reader with a description of my begging tour, which commenced from the moment I quitted A—d—n's house.

The first person I visited was a Mr. Manfred; he was a Roman Catholic and a wealthy man; but unfortunately his heading to the list, although handsome, was not so bountiful as it might have been, and which would have been far greater had I gone to the head of a leading Protestant family, at that time resident in Bruges; but he, like others, did not wish his name to appear for a larger sum than that subscribed by the gentleman named.

Day after day did I visit some English resident family or another that I could hear of in Bruges ; and day by day did my success appear to become more certain. At last, through the instrumentality of the gentleman who headed the list, I succeeded in getting my petitioning paper into the hands of the confessor of the Queen of the Belgians. It was returned to me a few days subsequently, with the handsome donation of twenty pounds, "The gift of an illustrious lady ;" so said the paper.

I visited Ostend, Ghent, and Brussels, on my begging expedition, and frequently, indeed, have I turned from the doors of my own countrymen with a heart saddened to think that the milk of human kindness was in so many instances wanting.

Nevertheless, my list, like a snow-ball rolled down a hill, daily increased, and I found that at the end of five weeks I had raised a little above two hundred pounds, which I deposited in the hands of De Vos, the banker.

Thrice a week, if possible, I would visit the poor prisoner and report progress ; and, although he saw me elated at the prospect of

ultimate success, I never could bring him into a sanguine temperament.

The day of the theatrical performance was drawing nigh, and everything was in truth done to make it pass off with *éclat*. The theatre and the lighting was granted to us gratis, and the colonel and officers of the Sixth regiment lent their splendid band on the occasion; and to make doubly sure of all the proceeds falling into the right channel, Mr. Noble, the vice-consul, was to receive the money at the chief entrance, although the places had been chiefly taken by tickets; and fully conscious were we, that a bumping house would be assembled to pass judgment upon our histrionic powers.

The pieces that we played that night were three in number. The first was that awful old play by Monk Lewis, entitled "The Castle Spectre;" secondly, "Charles II., or the Merry Monarch;" winding up with the old stock piece of "High Life Below Stairs."

I should pass over our theatrical night, by merely alluding to its successful termination, were there not one or two little incidents that deserve notice.

Every one knows that Earl Manfred is the leading character—and a tearaway one it is with a vengeance—in the drama of the “Castle Spectre;” that part was played by Mr. Abbott; I played Earl Percy; Sir C. M——e enacted the part of Kenrick; Mrs. Bl——h played the part of Lady Angela; A——d——on took that of the Monk, and Henry C——f——n, the talented son of a highly talented father, and who was the officiating minister at Bruges, played the part of Motley the fool.

To do my part thoroughly well, as I thought, I had gone up to Brussels, and procured from an old curiosity shop, an entire suit of armour of the fifteenth century. The fact was, I had to play the part of a sham ghost for a few minutes. The Lady Angela in the play is supposed to be very fond indeed of Earl Percy: Earl Manfred is, on the other hand, very much in love with her, and, *ergo*, the two earls hate one another cordially.

Well, Earl Percy on returning from some expedition (the book does not tell us what that expedition was, unfortunately; but believed to be deer-stalking), found that Earl Manfred had

succeeded in running away with Earl Percy's affianced bride, contrary to her wishes; but in some way or another—I forget how exactly—Earl Percy managed to get into the castle where Lady Angela was confined, and where she was bored to death by the repeated declarations of Earl Manfred's love. That lord had a fool in his establishment (as all the nobles in the dark ages had), and that fool loved Percy. Well, through the assistance of Motley, the fool, the last-named earl succeeded in getting into the castle, and in that castle there was supposed to be an armoury on a large scale: by Motley's advice, Earl Percy dresses himself in one of the complete suits standing against the walls (the real one I brought down from Brussels).

Now comes the pith of my story. My friend C—f—n, who played the part of Motley, and who had, as far as the drama had progressed, played his difficult part admirably—had to assist in putting on my armour, and very quickly indeed he managed to do it; but by some mischance or another he failed to buckle my tunic (which was of chain mail): all was complete, as we thought,

and I ascended the pedestal on which I was to play the ghost, and where I was to witness a glorious love scene, then about to be enacted by the Earl Manfred and Lady Angela. My cue for descending from my elevated position was, "Wilt thou be mine?" and where the base Manfred seizes the Lady Angela.

On came Abbott, leading by the hand Mrs. B——gh, both of whom were no mean actors: there I stood on my pedestal, waiting for my cue, and little thinking of the *contretemps* in store for me, when, at last, I heard the words "Wilt thou be mine?" Slowly, and in a most ghost-like manner, I descended from my pedestal, truncheon in hand; but ere I had reached half way to the footlights, down came my tunic, leaving me a most extraordinary-looking spectre. What to do, I knew not: to advance and separate the loving pair, I was in duty bound; so kicking my mailed petticoat out of my way, I advanced down to the lights, and in a most sepulchral voice, cried "Hold!"

The screams of laughter with which the whole house was convulsed had no effect upon me. Luckily my vizor was down—but I really felt for

poor Mrs. Bl—gh, who was playing her part to admiration. I only know that had my vizor not been down, I should have bolted off the stage in a most unghostlike manner. Luckily the audience were in great good humour, and determined to be pleased, so my little mishap did not mar the piece.

In the third act occurred something which might really have been serious: a heavy iron bolt, used for fixing the slips, fell on the head of Sir C. M——e, cutting him severely; but he was not the man to shrink at trifles, and true to his cue he was. The curtain fell on the first piece amidst general applause.

I have said that the second piece played that night was “Charles the Second,” and the part of the king was assigned to me.

I had just come on the stage, and finished my opening speech to Rochester, when to my horror, from the centre of the third bench from the orchestra, in the pit, I saw two huge dark eyes glaring at me. Yes, reader, *she* was there —my bane—the author of all my misery.

Staggered, I confess, I was; but the audience

remarked nothing unusual, and the piece went off remarkably well.

“High Life Below Stairs” was equally successful; and before the curtain dropped, A—d—n advanced to the foot-lights, and, in a speech which did as much credit to his heart as it did his head, thanked the audience for rallying around us in the way they had done that night, and which had so materially assisted in relieving O’Mahoney.

The exact sum which I received towards the fund to assist my friend, I cannot remember; but I know that there was still a large amount wanting. There was nothing for me to do but to beg again. In many instances friends, who had put their names down for certain sums, had told me that, in case I fell short on the closing of the list, to come to them. In some instances I did so.

It wanted ten days of the expiration of the three months, that I made my last deposit in the banker’s hands. I then closed the list; and the first person I waited on was Monsieur D Pa—t—re, the only one of O’Mahoney’s creditors who refused to take the composition offered

The man still held out, maintaining that he would have all or none. After a long discussion he agreed to meet the other creditors in the *chambre de conseil*, in the prison, on the following noon.

Leaving the heartless dog, I sought my friend Noble, the consul. But why do I call him my friend? he was, indeed, every man's friend. Noble agreed to be present at our attempt to liberate O'Mahoney.

On the following morning I went to De Vos, the banker, and drew out the money, requesting him to let me have it in bags, each bag containing five hundred francs: being all in silver, it made a respectable show. Putting the bags into a vigilante, I drove off to the prison.

It is very certain that O'Mahoney, during his three years of imprisonment, had succeeded in making himself exceedingly popular amongst the employés. One and all were delighted in assisting me to convey the money-bags into the room where the meeting was to take place.

Noble, as usual, was the first to arrive.

Depositing my little treasure on the table, I sought my sick friend. I was afraid to say too

much as regarded the certainty of his release. I told him that De Pa—t—re still held out ; and that if nothing would soften the heart of the military draper, the whole amount of the subscription would be handed over to him, and that he must make himself as comfortable as circumstances would admit of.

I have seen nervousness in all its phases ; I have felt it myself in the superlative degree ; but never did I in my life see such utter prostration as I that morning witnessed, as I left my friend's little room in the prison of Bruges, to go and meet his creditors.

On my descending to the *chambre de conseil*, I found that all had come. Addressing them as a body, I reminded them of their signatures to the paper, which I produced, in which they had agreed to take fifteen shillings in the pound. All, with the exception of De Pa—t—re, said, "We will."

Turning to M. De Pa—t—re, I said, "Do you, sir, still stand out for the payment of your entire claim?"

"I do ; all or none," was his reply.

"Then, gentlemen," I said, "I have to

apologize for having brought you all here, on a fool's errand. It is needless my detaining you. M. De Pa—t—re is the one who militates against any arrangement being made. I have nothing now to do but to carry that money upstairs to Mr. O'Mahoney ; he, poor fellow, will now have the means of rendering the latter part of his short life comfortable—as comfortable as it can be, deprived of his liberty. But, mark me well, gentlemen, not one of you, if you refuse this offer, will ever receive a penny of your claims.”

Turning to the governor of the prison, I begged him to allow me two warders to be the bearers of the money up to O'Mahoney's room.

Noble all the time said nothing.

It was not until the warders had their hands upon the bags, that the hard-hearted De Pa—t—re showed the slightest inclination to give in. One and all of the other creditors were ready to tear him to pieces.

The money had actually left the room ; I had followed it. Noble was alone left with the clamorous set, who were all urging the draper to accept the terms ; which, I believe, he never

would have done, but for the consul's intercession. My foot was on the bottom step of the stairs which led to the corridor where O'Mahoney was confined, when I heard my name called, and a warder ran up to me and told me to return immediately, for that De Pa—t—re had accepted. With a lightened heart I rushed back to the council-room, telling the men who bore the money to follow me.

On entering the room, Noble shook me by the hand, and told me that all was settled.

The paying away the money occupied but a short space of time. The receipts were handed to me, and the creditors departed.

The last back was barely turned, when the governor said, "Send immediately for a vigilante; get him out of this; there will be detainers against him, if not to-day, to-morrow. You have no time to lose."

One of the warders was dispatched for a carriage; and Noble, the governor, and I, proceeded to O'Mahoney's room. I will candidly confess that I had not the heart to tell the poor sufferer of his freedom; Noble, good, kind Noble, did it for me.

It was, as I expected, too much for him. He burst into tears, and threw himself on his bed, where we suffered him to remain for about ten minutes, when the governor urged upon him the necessity of his immediate departure. It was evidently some time before he appeared to consider all that had befallen him as a reality.

At last, with our assistance, his clothes were packed ; and, leaning on my arm, he passed through those courts which had witnessed so much of his misery, and was safely seated by my side in the vigilante, the driver of which I desired to hasten to the residence of Mr. A—d—n. It had been previously arranged between that gentleman and myself, that if I was successful in getting O'Mahoney out that day, I was to bring him to his house, and that there he was to dine ; and that I was to take him to Ostend, in time to leave by the night steam-boat direct for London.

Nothing could exceed the kindness shown by all to the poor sufferer ; but his heart was too full for utterance ; and great must have been the relief he experienced when he found himself alone.

I went with O'Mahoney down to Ostend, and saw him on board the packet. I need not say that our parting was painful. Still, I could not resist, even at the last moment, giving vent to a little bit of ill-nature, by sending my compliments to Mrs. O'Mahoney, and reminding her that I had fulfilled my promise, in sending back her husband within three months.

END OF VOL. I.



