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# RANK AND BEAUTY;

OR,

## THE YOUNG BARONESS.

*'She was in birth and parentage so high,  
As in her fortune great; or beauty, rare.'*

COWLEY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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# RANK AND BEAUTY.

## CHAPTER I.

PRIOR VERNON formally renewed his addresses, and was formally rejected: he was not only very much mortified himself, but his father and mother thought it incumbent on them to press his suit in a way that was as tiresome as it was useless.

The tournament was a subject, which, contrary to the use and wont of all London subjects, seemed really inexhaustible. It had been so new, the whole had been on so superb a scale, and the performances had been so spirited, that everybody had something to say,

to ask, or to wonder at, about it. At a party at Lady Louisa Darrell's, Evelyn and her father met the Princess of Rheinfels and her brother:—The Duke of Plessingham was warmly expressing his regret that “family affairs” had so unfortunately kept them on the Continent just too long to be present at it.

“You will see us all, however,” said Mr. Poynings, “for———was present, and took the whole scene; and all the performers are portraits, and it is to be dedicated, ‘with permission,’ I assure you,” continued he, with a smile at Lady Umfraville, “‘with permission,’ most readily and gladly granted, —to the Queen of Love and Beauty; so you will see it all, Princess.”

“Yes, we are all to go down to posterity,” said the duke.

“All the performers,” said Mr. Poynings; “but, alas! I am afraid I shall appear among the spectators with only a half face—one ear and a bit of a nose, perhaps, to mark me as one among the mass of gazing men and women.”

“There shall be a key — an outline-

engraving with the prints," said the duke; "and you shall be especially marked, Poynings, — "this nose and coat-collar mean John Poynings, Esq.!" "

"And how is Sir Luttrell Wycherley to be represented?" pursued Mr. Poynings. "Is he to be in both characters, on both sides at once?—These double-part heroes become very puzzling to the painter."

"He can give but one moment of the scene," said Evelyn; "which has he chosen?"

"I have not an idea," said the duke. "He asked my leave to come and do us, and I was so flattered—I only begged he would make us all look our best, but, above all, take care he did Lady Barnstaple rightly."

"He has not chosen the captive scene in the third act," said Mr. Poynings, "I hope, for his own sake; as Wycherley would be sure to avenge it on him."

"What has he done about our unknown, I wonder?" said Colonel Darrell;—"By the bye, prince, perhaps it was you!" continued the Colonel, turning suddenly to Prince Alfred of Rheinfels,— "perhaps you are our unknown

Knight of the Lily—Lady Umfraville's bravest—the victor?"

Prince Alfred, not quite understanding, and being, by the way, an admirer of Lady Umfraville, coloured very much, and looked so confused, that the duke exclaimed——

"I declare I believe you are!—And after all our boast of our English glory, you, a German, have beat us all!"

The prince, the ambassador, began gravely to protest against the assertion, and would have proved an *alibi* for his brother, but the duke rattled on:—

"It was capitally done! I wondered, after your famous practice in the tilt-ground, that you could bear to give up appearing. It must be you. I need not spare your blushes, you are ——"

The young prince endeavoured to assert his innocence; though, as soon as he comprehended the accusation, he was sorry it could not be true. Evelyn was diverted at the duke's pertinacity, and amazed how the secret could have been so admirably kept.

"Quite romantic!" continued the duke,

“running over and conquering us all. Had you an idea, Lady Umfraville? Upon my life, I believe you had ——” said he, as he observed the crimson of her cheek when he so abruptly turned to her with his direct question, but he saved her the trouble of an answer.

“Running over and running back undiscovered. Even you, prince—you see, with all your diplomatic skill, you were completely deceived by Alfred! I thought it a gallant action of Philip coming from Gibraltar, but you beat him hollow. You shall have the charger and the caparisons the instant you claim them. There he stands, ‘alone in his glory,’ at Plessy Canons, waiting for you. I wonder you can have so long borne to be without him.”

“The first prize was a superb charger,” said Mr. Windham to the princess, “a compatriot, too, of the prince’s. And, in my character of Earl Marshal, I think I shall decree that, on his producing the laurel crown, he shall—and only on that condition—he shall claim the horse.”

It amused Evelyn, in spite of the confusion,

she could not help feeling at this public discussion of a secret so sacred to her ; it amused her to see Prince Alfred half inclined to allow himself to be considered as the Unknown Knight : and she could have almost supposed he might, in his folly, be persuaded out of his own identity, and actually believe he was—in spite of the ambassador's grave asseverations and the princess's laughing assurances, that he had not been three hours out of their sight all the time they were in Transylvania.

“Wycherley will feel himself so doubly outdone—unhorsed, and captive, and unhelmeted, and known, and everything, and Alfred successful, and keeping the secret so capitally. How the Knight of the Scorpion would sting you if he could !”

Poor Alfred got away, utterly confounded, between his wish to have an honour he did not deserve, and his fear of his brother, and the impossibility of claiming what he had no right to, and the confusion of French, English, and German in his own small brains, and in the conversation ; for the princess talked French, his brother and the duke sometimes German,

and sometimes English; and Alfred's small stock of English had been nearly obliterated during his stay in his fatherland; so he did the best thing he could—he retrcated; and, favoured by the general movement occasioned at the entrance of the American lion of the day, poor Alfred got off for the present. And he was forgotten by the duke, as he watched the performance of the transatlantic animal.

“It would puzzle even Sir Luttrell, who is so scientific,” said Mr. Poynings to Evelyn; “it would puzzle even him to invent scales nice enough to weigh the balance between the degrees of contempt in the lion of the New and the lion-lookers of the Old World.”

“Fine scales would be so thrown away in weighing the thoughts of an American,” said Evelyn, smiling.

Mr. Poynings looked round in feigned alarm. “No, Lady Pouncefort is out of hearing; she would give you such a lecture for your illiberality.”

“She is too busy acting *proneuse* to her statesman.”

“As who should say, ‘here is a statesman;’



‘this is what a minister should be,’” said Mr. Poynings.

“Nobody will adopt her real ideal, I fancy—The amount of contempt may be the same, perhaps, between the two nations, but there is a dignity in that of the old that newness can never come up to.”

“It becomes the Heroine of the Middle Ages to say so—I wonder what this sturdy personage would have thought of the tournament!”

“He would have been so out of place, the Seneschal could never have known how to set in due degree such an anomalous personage.”

“It would have shocked the Earl Marshal to have had such an incongruity.”

“The Duke is quite capable of it,” said Evelyn, carelessly.

Mr. Poynings was not surprised, for though as all the world gave Lady Umfraville to him—he supposed with all the world, that she would be Duchess of Plessingham; he was too acute an observer to suppose that she cared in the least for him. He only smiled and went on—

“We were all so much pleased at seeing ourselves and our aristocratic excellencies

bepraised, by Washington Irving—I wonder we did not encourage our United States friend to keep on in that line.”

“It might please us, but could it please them? They must feel it so out of character to admire anything but themselves! and it must be so hard to keep up a fictitious character.”

“That was the reason you would not undertake that of Love and Beauty—so unnatural to you!” said Mr. Poynings, laughing.

“Hush! here she is.”

And Lady Barnstaple came sweeping by—very ready to be, and she was, the lioness of the evening, and the lion was presented to her.

“He does stare pretty well,” said Colonel Darrell to Evelyn.

“Not a bit too much,” said Mr. Poynings.

“It does not seem at all distressing,” said Mr. Windham.

“She is used to it,” said the colonel.

“That is what surprises the Yankee,” said Mr. Poynings; “he is looking at her as such a well-preserved specimen. A physical phe-

nomenon that—mature beauty to an American,” said Mr. Poynings; “with them the moral of beauty, a fading flower, should be a fading bud; it is gone, they say, as soon as blown.”

“A pity!” said the colonel, looking at Evelyn.

“A trial of constancy,” said Lady Louisa, confident in her colonel and her own pretty little face, as pretty as ever.

“Constancy is not expected, I suppose,” said Evelyn.

“On the contrary,” said Mr. Poynings, “where it is a ruled case that the beauty is to go, there is no trial of the constancy—no one is tried by what is common to all.”

“What can they know about constancy or inconstancy in America,” said the colonel looking round to be sure of the lion’s being out of seeing. He was safely entangled in the toils of Lady Pouncefort.—

“What can a Yankee know about inconstancy,” said he.

“You think it too refined for them,” said Evelyn; “the vulgar virtue of constancy, you think they might aspire to; but to be incon-

stant, demands, you think, to be some ages older—as old as we are in the refinement of civilization ! ”

“ To be inconstant in a polite way, is what the French, who are so superior in all civilization, pique themselves upon being,” said the colonel.

“ We make too much fuss about it *de part et d'autre*, you think,” said Mr. Poynings.

“ Yes ; we very seldom can avoid an *esclandre* about everything,” said the colonel.

“ Because we have so much more real feeling,” said Evelyn.

“ Because we have worse tempers, I believe,” said Mr. Poynings.

“ Because we have worse manners, I think,” said Lady Louisa.

“ Showing one's feelings upon every occasion is, certainly, very ill-bred,” said the colonel.

“ Never showing them at all is, certainly, very ill-born,” said Evelyn ; “ for it must mean that you are born without any.”

“ Other people should always make allowance for another's feelings,” said Mr. Poynings.

“ That is just what prevents any real feeling

from ever appearing," said Lady Umfraville ;  
"one is always afraid of other people."

"And feels too much for them," said Lady Louisa, sentimentally.

"That does not seem to be the misfortune of you Yankee," said the colonel : "he not only seems to have no feeling—bodily at least—but to count upon everybody else having none. Look how he is forcing the mass of his ponderous person through that knot of ladies by sheer pushing."

"You should look after him, Charles, really," said Lady Louisa. "You should attend to him."

"He will show you up, if you do not, Darrell," cried Mr. Poynings. "You will come out at full length—'total neglect of my host'—with animadversions, general and particular, on the military men of England, with episodes of how they were always conquered in the United States ; concluding with the just and sensible remark, that if you had been at the taking of Washington, you were just the man to have burnt the library !"

"Do go to him, Charles," cried Lady Louisa, quite alarmed.

"And you must mind, when he is going, Louisa, to say something immensely civil," said the colonel, as he hastened to deprecate the Yankee's wrath.

"Yes, that is the worst of these lions," said Lady Louisa, reflectively, "one must pay them in civility."

"Nothing is cheaper," said Mr. Poynings.

"These republicans require so much, I assure you, it is not so very easy to satisfy them; and they have such queer notions, one never knows at what they may not take affront."

"I should be afraid to ask," said Evelyn.

"You can, fortunately, do as you like," said Lady Louisa; "but mamma is so particular, and makes such a fuss; and Charles is so dutiful, he will have me do what she wishes, and she says so much about liberality."

"It is very true, indeed," said Mr. Poynings.

"I repent me of any disrespect towards this personage—we should all be friends. Pray tell Lady Pouncefort I said so. Good night," said Mr. Poynings, hurrying off as he saw Lady Pouncefort and her lion approaching, with the

colonel caressing the animal very successfully. Mr. Windham followed Mr. Poynings' example, and took his daughter off.

"You look jaded, Lady Umfraville," said Mr. Mortlake, when he called on her the next morning.

"I am rather tired."

"No wonder! How ladies do go through all the fatigues of pleasure, and live to please another day, is marvellous to me."

"We have too much sensibility and sympathy for others—a fine lady told us last night," said Evelyn, smiling.

"Us—and we—indeed!" cried he; "do you put yourself on a par with all the fine ladies? That cant of sensibility is the most nauseous to me of all the affectations there are."

"You prefer unaffected heartlessness?"

"That is only one evil, instead of two."

"May not the affectation of feeling stand in the place of the reality sometimes, and do as well?"

"Sometimes! you may as well say always at once. There is no such thing as real feeling in the world—that is the reason I live out of

it; I never could find one single human being who really sympathized with me. If I were to tell you my story, you would not be surprised that I was early convinced there was no such thing as real feeling."

"Too early, perhaps; if you had waited and tried longer, you would have met some, I am sure."

"Tried! I have been always trying, and I have come to the deliberate, unalterable conviction that there is no sympathy to be had from human creatures—I expect none."

"It seems to me to be very selfish, to expect sympathy for what concerns only oneself. I suppose you will be very angry with me, and leave me for ever, saying, 'I have no heart,' " said she, expecting to see him jump up as usual, and storm about the room; but, on the contrary, he sat still, and seemed to consider what she said.

"That is quite a new idea to me! How do you mean?"

"I mean that it seems to me selfish, to wish to make others unhappy because one is so oneself."



“There is no danger, believe me,” said he. “You will never find any human being who will make him or herself unhappy for your unhappiness. A dog will—my dog looks in my face, and, if I look sad, looks sad too.”

“And then you try to be cheerful, not to vex him. But to a human creature—to a friend—you would tell all about it, and vex him or her only to relieve yourself.”

“If I could find the person who would care to hear it.”

“The more the friend cared, the less I should like to tell him. It seems so very selfish.”

“So you think that all this time—these forty years that I have been looking for sympathy, I have only been showing my own selfishness.”

“No; because you would have given ten times the sympathy you would have asked; but, to expect it, is selfish, is it not? To want to get rid of one’s own sorrow, at the expense of another, is asking too much of a friend.”

“What in the world do you ask of a friend, if you do not ask for sympathy?” said Mr. Mortlake.

“Oh! I would ask a service of you instantly, without hesitation. That would be to treat you as a friend. If you could help me, if I was in a difficulty, I should ask a friend to help me out of it directly; because that would be to treat him as a friend: that would not be selfish, because he could do something; he would only feel my vexation as a reason for fulfilling my wishes. I do not think there is the least selfishness in asking you to take all sorts of trouble for me,” said she, smiling: “that would be true friendship, pure and unselfish!”

“But if I were to expect you to feel for me, though you could do nothing more, you would only say, ‘how selfish you are!’”

“No, no! I should consider your asking for my sympathy such a compliment: I should be flattered that you thought you had at last found a person who had a heart.”

“You would give sympathy, then, though you would not ask it?”

“Because, very likely, it might be the only thing I could give to you.”

“‘Doing as you would be done by’ assumes

rather a one-sided form with you then?—You would do, but you would not be done by!”

“Certainly; I should be too happy to give sympathy, and proud of having asked for it.”

“You would make all the world selfish, but you would keep out of the scrape yourself.”

“There are so many that one could feel for, that could not feel for one. Now, you have the greatest sympathy for poverty—I mean real poverty, not any of your tricky cheats; but that old body, suppose, that you saw hobbling along by the Park rails, one day, and that you contrasted with me:—I have the greatest sympathy with her: I should be delighted to listen to her, and show her all the feeling I had for her; but if I were to expect sympathy from her, she would think it only an insult; what could my vexation at being in a print-shop as a Peeress be to her?—she thinks me at the height of human happiness; how could she comprehend any annoyance I might have?”

“You are quite wrong!—quite—quite wrong!” cried he, indignantly; “that is just mere, downright, fine ladyism—aristocratic

exclusiveness ! Because this woman is in rags, you choose to suppose she is heartless ; because she has no money, you, in your pride, suppose that she has no heart ; because she is old, you, in your exulting youth, suppose she has forgotten that she was ever young. I can tell you, Lady Umfraville, that this very old woman would be as well able to feel for you as you for her. You gave an absurd instance for her sympathy about your Peeress difficulty, because you know she could not understand it ; but, if it was any rational sorrow, that old woman could sympathize with you ten thousand times more than any of your fine lady friends : if you had lost a relation, or lost a lover, she could feel for you, just as well as you can feel for her age—her poverty.”

“ I congratulate you, Mr. Mortlake ! So you have, at last, found a sympathizing heart : for, of course, this excellent old woman would feel for you as well as for me : at last, after forty years Diogenising it about the world, you have discovered one good heart, in this old woman, whose name even, I am afraid, you do not know.”

“No mocking! You know I am right—and that you are most excessively wrong—in supposing that feeling exclusively belongs to your order——”

“I did not say so, indeed!” said Evelyn, “what I meant was, that in the absolute want and beggary, and fear of actual starvation before her, how ridiculous and insulting to her would appear mere mental sufferings; and there is what appears to me always to be the selfishness of asking for sympathy, that one does not know what may be the pressure and anxiety or sorrow that your confidante may be suffering all the while on their own account: but you give me up, I see: your only confidante—the only sympathetic heart, is the old woman; and her you have lost—you never thought of asking where she lived——”

“I know where she lives very well, and I have a great mind to send you to her, as a lesson. But after all, what sorrows can you ever have had to be felt for, upon which you have made this grand system of the selfishness of sympathy?”

“I have had as few sorrows as any body ever had,” said she, with a sigh.

“ And therefore you sigh ? ”

She had sighed, because she felt she was not as happy as she had been ; but she smiled as she answered—

“ I must not be selfish !—I must not give you the idea that I was unhappy—I must not be so ungenerous as to look for sympathy !—And I shall be most ungrateful if I was insensible to all the happiness I have had, and have. I have not the least scruple in asking for sympathy in happiness ! not the slightest. I do not see the least selfishness in that ! If you make ever so little hesitation, Mr. Mortlake, in sympathizing with happiness, I shall set you down as envious—envious !—horribly envious ! ”

“ And I shall set you down as horribly selfish, if you ask my old Mrs. Cricklade to sympathize in pomp and riches, and youth, and everything that can make the height of human joy : selfishness, indeed, it would be to expect her, in rags and wretchedness, to feel anything but envy for you.”

Evelyn recollected Lord Rupert's saying that there was a generous pleasure in admiration of splendour in a mob ; and she blushed at

the vividness of her recollection, as she scarcely heard Mr. Mortlake's acknowledgement that—  
“There is a great deal of truth in this selfish sympathy system of yours, after all. It is quite a new idea to me—I shall ponder ——”.

Here visitors were announced, and he went away.

When alone, Evelyn recollected his words about “pride and aristocratic exclusiveness,” and fine ladyism, and recollected, with very disagreeable feelings, that she was afraid he was right, that there was some truth in his words; and she was glad that he had not heard the conversation with the colonel and Mr. Poynings, the night before, about the American: she felt that it had been not only foolish, but wrong; and she suspected that her reluctance to encroach upon sympathy was perhaps more from pride than from unselfishness: but she quite forgot these reflections upon the wickedness of pride in the sudden rouse to all the pride of her nature, which was occasioned by a conversation between her father and Lord Belvoir, who joined them as they were riding in the Park; and, after they

had talked over all the *on dits* of the day, to which Lady Umfraville, with a pre-occupied mind and aching head, paid very little attention. Lord Belvoir went on with—

“Very natural match this, between Lord Rupert Conway and Lady Maria Ongley.”

“Lord Brompton’s eldest daughter is she, or the second?” said Mr. Windham, working a fly off his horse’s neck with the end of his whip.

“The eldest,” said Lord Belvoir.

“Not handsome, either of them, I think,” said Mr. Windham.

“No—not at all—nothing remarkable in any of them; but it is all in the official line.”

“Quite right; there could not be a more correct match; the Brompton connection is so extensive, it was quite a matter of duty in Lord Rupert to marry into it.”

“And very sensible of Lord Brompton to settle it so and not let her make some foolish opposite party match,” said Lord Belvoir.

“He should look after Lady Annette now, and take care she does not marry some ‘talk Irish cousin,’ ” said Mr. Windham.



“Not likely, when her sister is Lady Rupert Conway,” said Lord Belvoir.

“Who is that in spectacles riding with old Gunning?” said Mr. Windham.

Evelyn had during this dialogue kept her eyes intently fixed upon one of the upper windows of a house at some distance—so fixed in her memory was every line in that window and the wall about it, that if it chanced in after life ever to catch her eye—it was with a shock of intense pain, so cruelly did these words, so carelessly uttered, burn into her very heart and brain. Lord Belvoir continued to talk, and her father to answer, and Evelyn bowed mechanically to those they passed, but the torture would have been too great, had she not been allowed to be quite silent—although she would have given worlds to have asked “what is your authority for this marriage?”—And twice the words, “it is all nonsense, a mere report, without the least foundation,” in the intenseness of her certainty that it was so—almost passed her lips—Fortunately no one else joined them—it was late, the Park was empty, and, as they reached, Grosvenor Gate, Mr. Windham said—

“Are you going home, Lord Belvoir?—Evelyn, you look as if you had had enough—we may as well go home.”

And at last they were at home, and at last Evelyn was alone.

Alone with what a tumult of thoughts! But the chief and strongest, after the first startle of the news, was pride—the pride not to suffer from “what, after all, is no concern of mine.”

Then the romance of the tournament, and was it only romance—only nonsense—all folly, and only folly! Was not the whole of her romance about him extreme folly? Was it not wrong now? No; it was only an imagination, an ideal hero, an idol of the fancy. But her blush, even as she thought of him, and the beating of her heart, told her that it was more than an ideal that she loved. Too true even to herself to pretend to disguise the fact to her own conscience, bitter tears of shame and wounded pride burst from her eyes, as she thought that she loved one who could never return her love. Would it not have been much wiser and better to have accepted the good-hearted, straight-forward, common-place,

Duke of Plessingham? And the thought—so natural to a wounded mind—did occur to her to show her indifference to the man who possessed her whole heart, by giving her hand to another. But the dishonesty and injustice to the affectionate duke disgusted her with herself, for entertaining even the shadow of such an idea. If, however, Lord Rupert was really engaged, it was guilt in her to think of him for a moment as a lover. But she need not marry another, to show to herself that she did not love him—marry merely to be married! Her proud heart swelled at the thought. If ever any one was completely independent, she was. But, after all, this was a mere report! Her father's total indifference about it did surprise her, though she knew so well that he had not the slightest reason to concern himself, or to think that she concerned herself about Lord Rupert Conway. Her father thought of him only as Prime Minister—why could not she think of him as only Prime Minister, and not as Knight of the Lily? How she rejoiced that she had never confessed her fancy to her father! that he was not now to pity his daughter as

rejected ! In all her rank, and wealth, and beauty—to love in vain ! That no human being should ever know ———. Then a pang of shame and remorse, at having told the duke that she loved another; but he would never guess who it was—he did not seem even to have dwelt on the idea, or affixed much meaning to it—he was satisfied to believe Alfred Rheinfels the Unknown; and she despised his want of penetration even while she rejoiced at it.

After all, the report was a mere report, and might have as little truth as the report of her own engagement to the Duke of Plessingham. Lord Ipswich's illness, Lord Rupert's stay at Billingsly, Lord Cornbury's absence—all seemed to conspire against the possibility of an explanation.

## CHAPTER II.

LADY UMFRAVILLE'S *fête*, honoured by the Royal Presence, was a very splendid affair, and went off delightfully. It was unlike many great honours, pleasure too—to Mr. Windham it was ecstasy: it was the happiest day of his life—it had been so prospectively: he found it so in the realization; all his abilities were directed—and had been all his life directed—to ceremonials; and, upon this occasion, when his daughter had the glory of receiving her Sovereign, the whole combined powers of his mind and body, and all the accumulated knowledge of his life, were brought to bear in the arrangement—only deferring, of course, to Evelyn's exquisite taste—and exquisite the whole affair was.

It is a touching sight—the réception of a young Queen by an old grey-headed servant of the Crown. It is an interesting sight, when a young and lovely female Sovereign is received by a young noble, whose house she honours with her presence, where all the devotion of gallant loyalty may be displayed; but there was something peculiar and captivating in the reception of a youthful Queen by her youthful peeress.

Anxious and vexed, and annoyed, as Lady Umfraville had been at the manner in which her name had been dragged before the public, and harrassed at all the foolish embarrassment of her position with Lord Rupert, with whom explanation seemed now impossible, she had, however, struggled with her own agitated feelings, and for her father's sake, as well as that it was her duty to do so, made it her business to appear gay, in the gay scene over which she presided; and, in the effort, a sort of fevered brilliance was in her eyes, and a hectic brightness in her colour, which dazzled the beholders.

The Queen and the Prince departed, the *fête* was over, and but one sentence that had

been spoken during the night, remained in Evelyn's mind—Mr. Bowen's reply to her question of how Lord Ipswich was—"that he was supposed to be out of danger; but that Lord Rupert was still at Billingsly."

In the hurry of her spirits, and the weariness of London, Lady Umfraville had fixed the day for her departure: she had no chance of seeing Lord Rupert while his father continued so ill. She felt dispirited, and as if nothing but the freshness and the calm of the country could restore her.

She was not, however, yet free from the annoyance of the peerage persecution. A pamphlet was sent to her, entitled, "A Letter to the Queen on the Privileges of the House of Lords. By a self-elected Seneschal of Dignities." And to secure it being at least seen, if not read, and to prevent all possibility of buying up, or suppression, a copy was sent to Her Majesty's Private Secretary, to each of her great officers of state, and to all the reviewers. It began very seriously—

"May it please your Majesty,—

"It cannot be inappropriate, under a female

Sovereign, to make some inquiry into the claims of the female peers.

“The right of succession in the female line, the independence of the Salique law, which has always been maintained in the British realm, is one of the most glorious privileges ; and supported as it has been by the splendour and renown attendant on our Queens-regnant, we may justly boast that inherited power has never been so nobly used as when in a female hand.

“Our oldest peerages are also inherited in the female line. In the days of chivalry, when every peer was a knight, and every knight a hero ; when every nobleman was also a warrior ; when armour and arms were worn by every gentleman ; when to wear a device upon his shield, and to challenge the world in its defence, was the prerogative of the barons of England, in those days, the inheritance of the honors of his barony was permitted to his daughters. In those days, women were thought worthy of representing their warrior ancestors ; but now, in more modern days, when peers are only carpet knights, when war is unknown, when



armour is borne only at a pageant, and when noblemen wear no weightier panoply than their robes of state, now their female descendants are not thought worthy to represent them.

“But when the only fame to be acquired is in the duty of a senator, and such peaceful business of a peer, why should they not be performed by a woman ?

“Our peeresses, in their own right, are allowed uncontrolled possession of their estates ; they bear the arms of their ancestors ; at a coronation, they walk as the representatives of the honours they hold ; they are permitted to sign their names as peers ; and, when married, they retain their hereditary honours, and transmit them to their children. Is it not then, a strange anomaly, that with all this power, and all these possessions and privileges, there should be one withheld ?

“The privilege of sitting and voting in the House of Peers as a peer.

“Your Majesty, when sitting on your throne, wearing the crown of England, carrying the sceptre ; the Sword of State borne before you, surrounded by the great officers of State, and

presiding over the Peerage of the Realm—your Majesty is there in the exercise of every privilege inherited from your ancestors : your Majesty reigns as a King.

“Why, then, should not your female subjects, who inherit, from their ancestors, the rights and privileges of a peer, why should not they, as your Majesty does, exercise all those privileges ?

“Would it appear strange that a young and lovely lady should take her seat among Senators?—Strange to see the slight figure, the feminine dress, the fair curls, the delicate colour, seated among the burly forms of the grave and reverend seigniors, or beside the dashing band of younger lords :—Why should such a sight be strange, when your Majesty presides in this assembly ?

“Why should the genius and capacity of our female nobility be abandoned to the selection of a list at Almacks, or the choice of a fancy dress, or the arrangement of a quadrille, or presiding at a tournament, or coquetting with half a dozen lovers ? Let such low pursuits be left to those inferior souls, who, not born

peeresses, inherit none of their rights. How few of these fair descendants of illustrious lines are there now ! How few have there ever been : why should not those very few—those so rarely favoured by their birth, enjoy those rare privileges which their birth bestows.

“Let us calculate the chances : in eight hundred years only five Queens have sat on the British Throne, and among the few Peerages which descend in the female line the chances are barely, two for every generation : no alarming preponderance to female influence in our Senate.

“Alas ! that it had not sooner been thought of—how much weakness, and stupidity, and barbarism had our House of Lords escaped, had it been blessed with some ladies in its councils : as the most glorious eras of our empire have been under the reign of our Queens, how constant, how certain, how everlasting would our glory be, had our Peeresses their rights : what counsels, what eloquence ! If our Peers can speak, so much, so often, and so well, what would not our Peeresses !

“And what a triumph over the French :

French women are always politicians, but their political influence is confined to boudoirs and salons, and such underhand and pitiful performances. How they would envy us our absence of the Salique Law, what glory, what ecstasy to a French woman to be a ruler, a senator—to find it her duty to speak, and speak in public—to speak to an assembly of men! To be sure its being their duty would, perhaps, to a French woman destroy even the pleasure of talking!

“But to an English woman her duty is her pleasure; and the pleasure and honour of serving your Majesty as some of your Senators, might surely be conceded to the privileged few who inherit the right.—Conceded! how could it be refused? When Evelyn, Baroness Umfraville enters the House of Lords, and takes her seat, and gives her vote, who or what can prevent her doing so? What law, what statute, what barrier, is there to prevent her from doing so?

“Custom. It has never been the custom. But what is custom? Where does it begin? Is it never to end, never to change? Where

are the limits so precisely defined—how shall the fleeting rainbow-colours, which melt into each other, be so clearly marked among the shadowy outlines of distant ages? Who shall arrest their forms and determine which have been, which are, or which are not to be, the custom to which we are to adhere?

“Was the claim urged by Lady Umfraville one which involved a stretch of royal or of popular prerogative, she would never have brought it forward: she does not ask the Sovereign or the Parliament to bestow any new powers, all she demands is, a right, long withheld indeed, but not, for that reason, the less due—a right in the very spirit of our most ancient institutions—a right belonging to the very essence of our Law of Succession. As descendants of loyal servants of your Majesty’s ancestors; as representatives of those who have fought and thought—the heroes and the legislators of old: if they are allowed to bear their names, to wear their honours, and to possess their property, may not—must not the peeresses in their own right have the right to sit and vote as peers of your Majesty’s Parliament?

“ Evelyn, Baroness Umfraville has been the first to claim this right, she should be the first to be allowed to exercise the privilege, &c. &c.”

It was signed “ X.”

Deeply mortified at the use thus made of her name, irritated at the impossibility of preventing the publicity of it, worn out with the fatigue of appearing, night after night, as a duty, to show how little these attacks annoyed her, while annoyed to the quick all the time ; preyed upon by doubt about Lord Rupert ; sighing for the calm of home and the country, and tormented by Lady Amery’s lamentations over the final rejection of her son ; lamentations with which she had assailed Lady Umfraville in the intervals of her anxiety for “ her darling Emily,” by note, or in person, two or three times every day since her last interview with Mr. Vernon. From all these causes Evelyn felt herself, the evening of the day on which she read this impertinent pamphlet, so unwell, that she went to bed instead of to the ball to which she was engaged.

Mr. Windham, frightened out of his wits now, and regretting that he had detained his

daughter in town, sent for the physicians, and waited in an agony of anxiety for the result of their consultation.

The physicians, as usual, not knowing what to say, said a great deal, but they agreed in the essential assertion that—"there was no immediate danger."

Day after day passed, consultation after consultation was held, but Evelyn continued in a state of stupor, or as the newspapers, in their hideous phraseology, informed the public, "The beautiful Lady Umfraville now lies dangerously ill at her mansion in Spring Gardens."

She could not be said to be delirious, for she said nothing; but she had many symptoms of fever, and nothing seemed to rouse her.

The prognosticated day of crisis arrived, but no change appeared.

Mr. Windham was nearly broken-hearted. He had at first been consoled by the regular enquiries from the Palace, and the host of calls from acquaintance, who did not care whether his daughter lived or died, in the least; but their cards or messages were very satisfactory.

The Duke of Plessingham was as unhappy as it was in his nature to be about anything, and that was a consolation.

Miss Windham had been summoned from Kensington the first day, but she was an invalid herself, and very helpless.

Lady Amery, though always ill, and a pious fine lady—a particularly useless combination—was really friendly and anxious, forgetting her son's wrongs in her gratitude for Evelyn's attention when she was herself so ill at Amery, and really sensible of constant kindness, which Lady Umfraville had shown to herself and her little children through all the dissipation and occupations of a London season. She was grateful, and she urged Mr. Windham to employ the doctor—Dr. Venn, the quack—who had last cured her Emily, with that peculiar benevolence of faith, which makes a miracle of a cure, and then wishes it to be exercised on everybody else.

Mr. Windham was surprised at Lord Rupert Conway coming three times himself, and sending his servant regularly twice a day to inquire; but he set it down as official, as the ditto of



the messages from the Palace. But all other thoughts were at last merged in terror for his daughter's life. The physicians were evidently alarmed. Was one so young, so beautiful, so gifted, so good, to pass out of life?—his daughter, his only child! Miss Windham now besought him to take Lady Amery's advice, and send for this wonderful Dr. Venn. Mr. Windham was most averse to doing so. His correct notions were all against employing any one not a regular practitioner; his prejudices were all in favour of being killed *secundum artem*; and, above all, the fear of the ridicule attached to a belief in a quack, long supported his natural weakness of mind against the advice of Lady Amery, and the entreaties of his sister. Lady Amery constantly urging the piety of her favourite, and his calling every day to know if he could be of any use, had disgusted Mr. Windham so much that nothing but sheer terror would ever have made him yield. When, however, at last, his sister came from Evelyn's room in an agony of tears, and exclaimed, "She must die!—you are killing her. These physicians have given her up—they do not know what to do. Oh,

if you would preserve her life, send for Doctor Venn ! ”

The physicians were gone ; they were to come again in the evening. If he sent for this quack, they would never consult with him ; if he did not, his child might be lost. If he did, she might not recover after all, and he should have committed himself in vain ! He looked at Evelyn as she lay—so helpless, wan, and wasted, in a senseless stupor—so lately full of life and loveliness. Oh ! what can save her ? He turned to his sister—“ Send for Doctor Venn ! ”

But the other physicians ! He followed Miss Windham—“ Send in your own name, not in mine.”

She obeyed, She had strongly the propensity—which seems nearly universal in the female mind—to quackism ; strong in woman’s nature, but omnipotent in one like herself, an invalid.

The message was sent. The Doctor arrived. Mr. Windham would not see him ; even in the extremity of his anxiety, his dread of ridicule, his fear of an embarrassment with the other

doctors prevailed ; his double weakness almost distracted him, with neither the confidence to rely unshaken on the skill of the best advice in England, nor the courage to give it boldly up, and declare his faith in a quack : he retreated to his study more wretched than he had ever been in his whole life before.

Miss Windham led Dr. Venn into the sick-room. He remained so long examining the patient that, unable to endure the suspense, she said, at last, " Well, what do you think ? Is there any hope ? "

" There is. I think I can —— "

Evelyn started, and opened her eyes—the first symptom of life she had exhibited.

Dr. Venn withdrew Miss Windham into the next room. " I perceive," said he, " that the disease is on the nerves ; and my opinion is confirmed by that sudden start on hearing a new voice. The connection of the nerves with the mind, and with the organs which are the channels of communication between the mind and outward objects, is the true secret of medicine. To keep these nerves and organs in a proper state of balance is the

business of the enlightened physician. When the nerves, the organs, and the mind, in their subjective, objective, and recipient states, are all precisely balanced in their dependence one upon another, and in their mutual and their particular action, then we are in a state of perfect health. The balance is now disturbed in Lady Umfraville's frame; the nerves are, as it were, off their centre; the organs no longer convey the outward impression directly through the nerves to the mind; the subjective is no longer ready for the objective, and, therefore, the recipient is a void."

Miss Windham stood entranced with admiration at the number of incomprehensible words, uttered in a sharp husky voice, and mumbled tone, which seemed to add to their power; and her recipient mind was not indeed a void, but it was filled wholly with one idea—this is a man of genius indeed!

"And do you think, sir, that you can restore this balance, and put the nerves again, as it were, on their centre?"

"I flatter myself I shall, and I am delighted to find that you so fully enter into my

ideas on the case. I intend to try a remedy which will perhaps appear singular to you, and which is certainly not according to the routine of practice ; but, I trust you will find it successful. Will you dismiss the attendants for the present." He wrote on a piece of paper.

They returned to the room, where Lady Umfraville lay with more appearance of life than she had exhibited for a long time. The attendants withdrew.

The doctor whispered to Miss Windham, looking on the paper which he gave to her, "Just read this to her and pause at the end of each question ; I will mark the effect on her pulse and her countenance."

Miss Windham seated herself at one side of the bed, and the doctor, standing at the other, took Evelyn's hand.

"Mr. Vernon—Prior Vernon—is most anxious to know how you are?"

She kept her eyes still shut, and remained motionless.

"The Duke of Plessingham, too, has been here continually, quite miserable about you ; but that he has the best right to be, has he not ?"

She opened her eyes and turned them on Miss Windham, but they did not seem to see what they looked upon, and with an uneasy moan, she closed them again.

Miss Windham paused and whispered, "Shall I go on?" Doctor Venn nodded.

"The Knight of the Lily is here!"

Lady Umfraville started, opened her eyes again, and looked round.

"I know who he is ——"

She raised herself by a violent effort and gazed on the speaker.

"Aunt Lydia!—Did he tell you?"

Miss Windham, terrified at her sudden revival, knew not what to say. The doctor whispered, "Say, Yes." In her confusion she could not catch the low sound: he repeated, louder, "Tell her, Yes he did."

Evelyn gave a piercing shriek, and, turning her eyes upon him, snatched her hand from him, and exclaimed—"What is all this? Who are you? Where am I? Father! Father!—Where is my father?—Aunt! who is this?—Go—go—take him away! Father! Father! come to me!"

The wildness of her air, the agony of her countenance, and the touching accent of extreme distress in which she called upon her father, and terror at the effect she had produced, so overcame Miss Windham, that she burst into tears. The maid, who had, probably, not been far from the door, opened it with—"Did you call?"

"Call my brother—call him instantly!"

The doctor, coming round, drew Miss Windham with him out of the room. The father entered, a moment after, by a different way.

"Father, did you know of it? Did you let him come here—here, in my room?"

"My child," said he, quite overcome; "I am so glad to hear you speak again."

"Is he gone? He is not here, is he?"

"The doctor?—No; there is no one in the room but me."

She took his hand, and, drawing him close to her, whispered—"Who do you call the doctor?"

"Venn is his name. Your aunt sent for him."

"Doctor Venn! Never—never let him come near me again! Do you know who he is?" and she again lowered her voice, and with a thrilling whisper of agony—"He is Sir Luttrell Wycherley!"

Mr. Windham started; and, in a voice broken by grief at this state of delirium, he answered, afraid to irritate her fancy,—“Be calm, my love; you shall see nobody that you do not like.”

“You will not let him come here again?”

“I will see him, my dear, directly.”

“But is——where is Aunt Lydia? Was it a dream?”

“Your aunt shall come to you, my love. Do not be alarmed—here is Anne, she will stay till your aunt comes back.”

The maid entered with a cup in her hand—  
“The doctor ordered, my lady——”

“I shall not take anything he orders.”

The maid stopped short, confounded at this, the first act of disobedience to her physician she had ever seen in her lady, who had submitted, unresistingly, to take whatever had been ordered for her.



"Never mind it now, Anne," said Mr. Windham; "just stay here till my sister comes. Your lady had better be left quiet now."

Lady Umfraville sank back, and her father went into the next room. "Doctor Venn," said Mr. Windham, "my daughter is very much excited, sir: she is quite delirious: she will not let you see her again."

"Not now, perhaps," said the doctor, in the same thick speech and husky voice in which he had at first addressed Miss Windham, "not immediately; the effect of the method I have adopted has even been more successful than I expected; the state of stupor, or languor of the nerves has been broken through. The nerves, you are aware, form the outer garment, as it were, not only of the body but of the mind. They lie involuted over the surface of the body like the coils of a watch-spring, and extend over the brain. When these involutions have lost their tension, they are as if the spring was loosened in the watch; the throb of life cannot proceed along the line. A touch at the end of one of these involutions,

when in their natural state of elasticity is felt in every coil and into the brain. A strong stimulus was necessary to brace these nerves and put them to their duty again, and that stimulus has been applied."

"But it was too strong I fear, sir. She talks so wildly now, which she has never done before."

"Did not Anne take her a calming dose, which Doctor Venn ordered," said Miss Windham.

"She would not take it, and that quite frightened me. She spoke so short and decidedly—and she never before resisted anything. So unlike her usual self: she is so yielding and complying." And the father stopped in great emotion.

"She will be quite herself shortly; but perhaps, madam, you can persuade her to take something; she will be quite exhausted now."

"She wants to see you sister."

Miss Windham returned to Evelyn, who started up again as she entered. "Are you alone?"

Miss Windham assured her that she was;

and, asking her what she would like to take, she instantly agreed to allow the maid to prepare something by way of nourishment; and, as the woman left the room:—

“Aunt Lydia, what did you mean by what you said about ——. How do you know? Is he here? You said he was here.”

Miss Windham, one of the most truthful and innocent of beings, knew not what to answer. She had read the paper put into her hands, as she was ordered, as if it had been a prescription, and had repeated the words without considering that they came, apparently, from herself.

“Did he tell you—*is* he here?”

“Who are you speaking of, my dear? You had better rest. There is nobody but me here now.”

“What did you mean, then, by ——. Did you not say something of ——. You said you knew who —— the Knight of the Lily is?”

“We will not talk of that now, my dear; wait till you are stronger; rest at present.”

She sank back, and made no further exertion. She took the prescribed drink, and sank into an uneasy slumber.

## CHAPTER III.

MR. WINDHAM was a good deal puzzled about Dr. Venn ; there was an air of mystery and charlatanerie about him, which was very quackish ; while, on the other hand, he talked so much, and with such plausible fluency, that he was awe-struck, but his chief anxiety was to get him out of the house before the regular physician returned. And when his sister came back, and reported that Lady Umfraville was asleep, he rejoiced at the doctor's immediately saying—

“ I will go now, then, and not return till to-morrow.”

“ You will be a better judge then,” said Mr. Windham ; and, as he spoke, he had his hand on the fee, to draw it forth, but the learned practitioner went on :—

“ Sleep is one of the negative elements of life ; and you must not expect too much from Lady Umfráville’s being asleep. The positive elements of life, all life being electrical, it must necessarily consist of positive and negative in every possible modification: the positive elements, such as food, exercise, exertion of the mental powers, and the development of the sensibilities being all in their proper degree, and their proper combination. Sleep, the negative, performs its functions correctly ; or, to speak more properly—for the negative can hardly have a function—the powers of mind and body become subdued to the negative in a just measure ; that is to say, the positive uses to be productive, it exists only in breathing, pulsation, and such other functions, whose mysteries have no outward type or demonstration. While the mind, though deprived of its positive symbols, becomes negative only in degree, it acts only on itself, and the degree is the state of health or of disease. If the positive struggles with the negative, and at all supersedes it, fantastic, or what are commonly called feverish, dreams occur. While, if the negative has established its

supremacy, dreams, the unreal types of thought, are only as shadows: they pass over the *tabular rasa* of the negatived brain, and leave no trace behind. And if you find, madam, that, on awaking, Lady Umfraville speaks of having dreamed, or attempts to repeat any of her dreams, you may be sure that the opposite poles of her system are not yet rightly adjusted, and that some further measures must be pursued."

Miss Windham was too thoroughly amazed by the sublimity of this system to make any other demonstration but a silent bow of her head. Her brother also bowed, and gladly following the doctor to the door, would have put the fee into his hand, when he, with a negative wave of his hand, smiled his rejection, and ran down stairs.

But at that smile, Mr. Windham started: it reminded him so strongly of Sir Luttrell Wycherley.

There must be a strong resemblance, thought he; but he did not like to admit to himself, far less to tell his sister, the delirious fancy of his daughter: he only said—"Altogether,

Lydia, I do not know that you have done any good by calling in this extraordinary quack."

"Indeed, I feel very doubtful myself," said she, in a troubled voice. "He made me ask her such odd questions, and, indeed, made me say things that were not in the least true. To be sure, I only repeated them from him; but they had a wonderful effect upon Evelyn. She asked me again what I meant. I did not know what to say—some nonsense about one of the tournament knights."

The brother and sister were interrupted by the arrival of Dr. ——— They said nothing of what had happened in the interim; and having ascertained that Evelyn was awake, and had asked for lemonade, Miss Windham conducted the doctor to her room; but the instant Lady Umfraville heard his footstep at the entrance, she started up.—"Who is there? Aunt, who are you bringing here?"

"Dr.——Dr. —— my love, only Dr. —— who has been here so often."

Evelyn looked anxiously towards the door, and' in the darkened room she tried to see the approaching figure: it was tall and thin, and

totally unlike the object of her horror ; and she sank back. Doctor —— felt her pulse.

“ My pulse is hurried, I am sure,” said she.

“ I am glad to hear you speak again ; you have had some natural sleep, and been refreshed by it.”

“ I have slept very little ; but my aunt has told you, I suppose, how I have been startled.”

Miss Windham interposed, and, drawing the physician aside, confessed how she had been induced to send for Doctor Venn. “ You have heard of his cure of little Emily Vernon.”

“ Yes,” said the physician, with a look expressive of all that fierceness of hatred which the regulars of medicine always display for the volunteers. “ If that is the case, I had better withdraw ; for I can be of no further service. Either one method or another is to be adopted. I cannot be answerable for the consequences of means adopted without my sanction.”

And he left the room, and went to poor Mr. Windham, who suffered every agony, in acknowledging that Doctor Venn had been there, but threw the blame on his sister, declared that his



daughter had been made delirious by his presence, and ended by declaring that he would get rid of him the next day, if he could; and that as soon as he was fairly gone, he would recall Dr. — and his colleagues, in whom he had perfect confidence. Barely pacified with this assurance, the medical gentleman departed, and Mr. Windham was left to feel all the force of his doubtful “if he could,” get rid of the intruder.

Miss Windham, however, had—but she did not dare to acknowledge it to her brother—still great faith in the man of mystery, and her niece’s state justified her confidence; she was calm all evening, but not in the state of stupor in which she had been; when she spoke it was rationally, and in her natural voice; and her night was tranquil, so that Miss Windham, as she and her brother left Evelyn’s room next morning, after visiting her, expressed her satisfaction, and ventured to triumph in her success. Mr. Windham said nothing—afraid of everything, he took care to be out when Doctor Venn arrived; who, having heard the report of the attendants, and of Miss Windham, said to

her, "You perceive that striking the chords, till they vibrated even to jarring, has produced the effect I predicted. The mental nérves—that is, the life which depends on thoughts and affections has been revived. We are now to restore bodily sensations: the eyes and ears are the portals by which outward things, material and immaterial, are introduced into the mind, but beyond these portals are long avenues which must be kept perfectly clear for reception—no cloud or mist must obscure their passage; and in the body every pore is one of these portals to the nerves; sensation depends upon these.

"I have decided, from what I have heard, upon which is the best course to pursue. In all common medical practice, drugs, and all kind of bodily specifics are resorted to, but the mind is left to itself, and a more dangerous neglect cannot be imagined. When the body is in full vigour, the human creature resembles a well-ventilated mine—all the valves have been properly left open, all is free and uncorrupted; while in bodily weakness, or when any of the bodily functions are out of order, the

valves are not opened—the noxious vapours collect; and at last, perhaps, ignite and destroy the whole. And the finer the mind the more subtle the essence of life, the more easily is it detained and collected in disproportioned quantities; and, in an organization so singularly refined as that of Lady Umfraville, to neglect the prerogative of mind is to annihilate the whole constitution. Now let us see her.”

He came in so softly that Evelyn did not perceive him.

“Are you better?” said her aunt.

“Yes. But now I am quite awake, will you tell me what you meant? Is there any one else in the room?”

“None of the maids are here.”

“What did you mean by saying the Knight of the Lily was here?”

“It was nonsense—I—it was——”

“What was it?” repeated Evelyn, eagerly.

Poor Miss Windham, in the greatest confusion, knew not what to say. Lady Umfraville looked at her with amazement.

“Surely I did not dream it all! Aunt! Did you not bring a strange doctor here? My mother said you did!”

Miss Windham, in her agony of embarrassment, to hide her countenance, stooped down and picked up the piece of paper, which she had held and dropped the day before : it had fallen within the curtain ; and as Lady Umfraville pushed the curtain aside, to obtain a fuller view of her aunt, the paper appeared.

“ Yes ; you had that paper in your hand—it is no dream ;” and as she spoke she took the paper so suddenly, that poor helpless Miss Windham had no power to prevent her. The instant she cast her eyes on the paper she rang the bell—“ Tell the porter—Never, upon any pretence whatever, to admit——”

But, at this moment, the object of her forthcoming order, not knowing what had passed, or in the least what she was going to say, came round to the other side of the bed, and would have felt her pulse.

Snatching her hand from him, she exclaimed, “ Here !—here, again ! Send Mrs. Standish here instantly.”

The maid disappeared.

“ You are better, I can easily see, without

feeling your pulse, my lady," said the doctor, in a low and husky voice.

"And you think to deceive me? Aunt! where is my father?"

The housekeeper appeared. "Tell Goulding, tell all the footmen, and Barker himself, that if this person is ever admitted into my house again, they will all be dismissed that instant."

"Yes, my lady."

"And call some one to the next room, to shew him down stairs this moment. Aunt!" continued she, as the housekeeper flew to execute her orders—"Aunt, as you brought this person in here, will you take him out again?"

"Miss Windham," said Doctor Venn, in the same voice, "you must be aware that Lady Umfraville is already infinitely recovered by my advice; and you will not, I hope, yield to this delirious violence."

Exhausted by the exertion she had made, Evelyn sunk back, and the doctor stood looking at her with an expression which Miss Windham could not see; for, not knowing

what else to do, she had begun to cry. The housekeeper, however returning, said, "James is in waiting in the next room, my lady."

Lady Umfraville started, opened her eyes, and, fixing them full on the intruder's face, exclaimed, "Begone!" in an accent of such contemptuous authority, and with such a flash from her indignant eyes, that he shrank back appalled. "Go!" repeated she.

Recovering himself somewhat, however, he said, "Be calm;" and assuming a tone of authority, though still speaking as if something in his mouth impeded his utterance. "As your physician, Lady Umfraville, I must ——"

"My physician!" and she stopped for a moment, to command her voice.

"Your poor lady is quite delirious," said the doctor to the housekeeper, who stood at the door. "You need not be surprised or alarmed at anything she says. I will manage her."

Lady Umfraville resumed, in a low, but thrillingly distinct voice: "Sir, if you hesitate one instant longer to obey my orders, you shall be turned out by force. You are aware

that there is a footman in that anti-chamber : at a word, all his fellows will be about you, and carry you by main force out of this room, and put you into the street."

Mrs. Standish stood with her hand on the lock of the door, and her eyes fixed on her lady.

"She is in hysterics—your poor aunt," said the doctor, and he ran to Miss Windham.

"Anne!" cried Lady Umfraville to her maid, who stood at the other door, "take care of my aunt. Do not stir, aunt," continued she, holding her hand fast. "Mrs. Standish, open that door."

She obeyed instantly.

"Some salts, Miss Anne," said the doctor.

"Look at this!" cried Lady Umfraville, suddenly, bringing the pencilled paper before his eyes. He started. In the hurry of writing his secret instructions to Miss Windham, he had forgotten to disguise his hand, as he had his voice, in the agitation of his first entrance into Lady Umfraville's presence. He started back—Sir Luttrell Wycherley—not confessed—but betrayed.

At this instant, behind Anne, at the opposite door, appeared Mr. Windham.

The doctor turned, and fled; and James's only difficulty was to keep up with him down the stairs; and the porter could not open the door with more alacrity than the intruder showed in vanishing through it.

"Oh! father, you have ——" she stopped, unwilling even at this cruel moment to blame him. Miss Windham, overcome by all that had passed, hurried out of the room with the maids; and Mr. Windham, in dismay, regretting the mental cowardice which had made him shun the dismissal of the quack, took his daughter's hand; but, uncertain whether her agitation was delirium or reality, he said nothing.

"Did I not entreat you not to let him? You did not believe. Is not that his writing? Burn it now, and let nothing remain ——"

Mr. Windham knew the hand, and, tearing the paper in a thousand pieces, crushed them in his hand. "My dear child ——;" but, exhausted by all she had gone through, she had fainted.



Nor was she, when recovered, restored to consciousness ; she remained in a sort of cataleptic stupor, from which nothing could rouse her. Her case was pronounced hopeless. Mr. Windham wrung his hands in despair :—

“Can nothing be done ? Oh ! cannot you think of anything ?”

To this terrible appeal, the physicians, who have in the course of their profession so often to undergo appeals as terrible and as vain, retired to consult once more ; and when they returned, it was proposed—but evidently as a hopeless measure—to have her carried to the sea, and put on board a vessel, that she might be entirely surrounded by the sea air.

\* \* \* \*

“Where am I ?” cried Evelyn, for the first time opening her eyes : the bright, blue sky above—the broad, broad sea around—but her maid was with her : what could it mean ? At a sign from the maid, Mr. Windham was beside her.

“My dear father, where am I ?” and she looked beyond him, with doubt, at a stranger who came up with him.

“ Mr. Bage—a young surgeon whom Dr. ——— has deputed to attend you. The sea—being actually at sea—he pronounced to be your best cure : and I am ——— ” he was so happy to see her once more alive, that he could say no more.

Mr. Bage now advanced and felt her pulse, and declared her better.

Slowly, and as the painful events of a wild dream gradually return to the mind on waking from a deep sleep, the recollection of the past rose to her mind ; cloud after cloud seemed to roll away, and the figures, words, looks, and voices of the previous scenes were distinctly before her. She had never been delirious ; she had been perfectly conscious when not in an absolute stupor.

Is not this annihilation ? thought she—is this, is such as this, to be the end of all ! But it has been only suspended ; my reason, my recollection, is as distinct as ever. She felt no doubt of the reality of what she remembered : the phantasms of delirium had not perplexed her, and she had not the painful humiliation of thinking of herself as having

been beyond her own control. She remembered distinctly the orders she had given ; she was perfectly aware that she had felt her own power, and that it was not a phantom of state, an unreal mockery in the midst of the severest woe, the form of authority without the substance: it was not in her, that hideous attempt to guide others while Reason no longer held the reins. She recollected distinctly her own determination to be obeyed, and the devotion of her attendants ; and, with a sort of triumphant contempt, she recalled the look of confounded guilt in the countenance of the audacious discovered intruder ; she recalled—and it was the last thing that remained in her mind—the extreme affection, the fond gaze of her father as he looked at her : this look remained a bright sunny spot on the very edge of memory, while all beyond was gloom. It seemed as if she had reached the brink of some great gulf, and sunk, and risen again to look past it, and see all the former journey of her life as distinctly and as bright as ever.

How bright it had been ! And yet her conscience did not reproach her with ingratitude ;

while encircled with that bright halo of existence, and though she felt it now more poignantly, she could not reproach herself with having been before entirely insensible to the nothingness of all she possessed. But she did, indeed, feel how different reflection is from facts—anticipation from reality. All that the prescience of sensibility—all that the humility of real piety could give of anticipative knowledge, was as nothing compared to the reality of conviction in the helplessness of illness—the actual approach of Death!

She felt, however, that she had not discovered in herself any terror at passing from the world's gay pageant, where she held so distinguished a place, she felt that all which clings to the mind and the heart is all that life has really to give. She felt (and it was that for which she most reproached herself in her past life) the wayward passion of her heart. And yet, what was there wrong? Wrong? Nothing. But it was foolish. It was an early romantic nonsense, which Lord Rupert's own romantic folly at the tournament had seemed to sanction, and his subsequent ex-

pressions, when he renounced his allegiance as her knight, and his agitation, had exalted, while they embittered her feelings.

The good-natured duke was the cause of all this anxiety—and her father favoured his suit; anybody might have been happy with him. Yes, “anybody.” But she could not, even in the humiliation of illness, and the submission of weakness, even in the overwhelming sense of the vanity of vanities that makes up life, she could not consider herself “anybody.” She knew that she was very easy tempered herself, and could have borne the duke’s inconsequence; and no one could help being attached to such a kind heart; she felt a great regard for him, but she should always know him to be her inferior; and besides, she loved another.

But then, there came back, suddenly, a bitterer pang than all the rest—the report of Lord Rupert’s intended marriage. If he marries I must not think of him; but I need not marry; and yet, if he can forget me so soon! Anything, though, would be better than the tideless existence of a union with the Duke of Plesingham.

It seemed quite occupation enough to bring back the faded fleeting events of the last months. She was moved from the deck for the night, and brought up again for the day, and lay under an awning ; and she evinced so little disposition to speak or to hear, that Mr. Bage kept her father from speaking to her, and left the fresh air, and the gentle movement of the vessel on the calm sea, to work its own effect ; which it soon did. She began to look about, and to feel that she existed, and to speak, no longer appeared the most horrible exertion. She called her father to her, kissed his hand, and hoped he was not very uncomfortable.

“ I am more happy than I can express to see you restored to me.”

“ And Aunt Lydia—where is she, and how is she ? I am afraid I made her very ill.”

“ Oh, she is as well as usual now, and at home, and just as usual.”

“ What day of the month is it, and what is happening to everybody.”

Mr. Windham sat down, and began to read the newspaper, which he held in his hand.

“ This is our latest news.”

He was delighted to see that Evelyn listened attentively. He read over the summing up of news from various parts of the world, and then the fashionable movements and *on dits*, and among the number of marriages said to be “on the *tapis*,” he read on in just the same voice—“It has been for some time rumoured among the higher circles that a matrimonial alliance has been arranged between Lord Rupert Conway and Lady Maria Ongley.” And on he went to the end; but Mr. Bage, who stood near, stopped him:—“I think Lady Umfraville has heard enough; she is tired now, let her rest.”

“Thank you,” said she.

He had perceived a change in her look, and, with that half knowledge which makes his profession like hazard played against loaded dice, he saw the effect, but was perfectly ignorant of its cause.

Pride, however, which strengthened with her strength, prevented the evil that might have ensued to her from this intelligence. I am not to break my heart, thought she, because Lord Rupert thinks no more of me. It is

better ; I shall be free from all doubt and anxiety now. I must have entirely mistaken his words and his looks, he was only making believe in his tournament character. Now I shall regard him as I did before I ever saw him, as a great man to be admired, worshipped as an idol ; but, no more. How absurd ever to have thought of him as a lover. Prime ministers have nothing to do with love. The tournament part he acted as other statesmen play whist or chess, just as pastime, only chess and whist are considered the correct thing for ministers and officials, and may be done in the eyes of the world ; but such a noble sport as a passage of arms is thought too childish ! and was to be done secretly. This match with Lady Maria is just a political announcement."

"Is my jewel-case with us ?" said she to her father, who, startled by the question which seemed so irrelevant, and so out of character, feared something wrong. He could not have supposed that his newspaper had begun the thread of association which made her feel for the chain : it had never been removed, and the



Maltese cross still hung to it ; she thought she ought now to take it off!

“No, my love, it was left at Storr and Mortimer’s ; I thought it was safer there than undergoing the perils of the sea.”

“Surely,” said she—and the chain and the cross remained.

The surgeon wondered how the vanities of life could so cling to a fine lady. Mr. Windham supposed she was only thinking how long she had been unable to wear these jewels.

She went on with her own thoughts—yes, such a political connection—a marriage of convenience. Lady Maria will just be at the Drawing-Rooms as Lady Premier, and preside over his establishment, and in a politician it is best so. What vanity to think that I could form—that love such as I should care to have—could form any serious part of the business of one to whom the care of empires is entrusted. What an atom am I—a unit in the vast scene of existence which he is occupied upon. The praise or the abuse of millions hangs upon every measure that he may propose. What can a woman’s smile be to him, except as an amuse-

ment—a relaxation—as he would read a novel, or win a game at cards, never thinking whether hearts or diamonds were trumps.

“Land!” cried a man at the mast-head. The sound was startling. What a host of ideas did that word, connected with our earliest tales of adventure, rouse in Evelyn’s mind. She raised herself: the outer world, which hitherto scarcely attracted her notice, seemed all at once to burst upon her.

“Where are we? What land?”

“The coast of Spain,” said Mr. Windham; “we cannot see it from deck yet.”

“I had no idea we were so far. Spain!—I shall so like to see even the coast of romantic Spain. Yet, the last things we heard of Spain were not very romantic. Do you remember the Duke of Plessingham’s story about the eggs? Where is he gone this summer in——? I quite forget the name of his yacht.”

The Duke of Plessingham stood before her.

## CHAPTER IV.

“ I HOPE you will always remember it hereafter,” said the duke—“ The Halcyon. Mr. Bage is looking daggers at me for coming so suddenly before you——”

“ Oh, I am so strong now : you need not be alarmed, Mr. Bage, thank you. But I really think I could—could walk : if you will give me your hand, Mr. Bage, that will give a sanction to the attempt. It is such a lovely evening, and I should be ashamed to look at Spain, for the first time, from a sick couch.”

She rose ; and, though giddy at first, and with that strange feeling peculiar to a first attempt to stand after long recumbency—that one is walking on a feather bed, or on a cloud, a feeling much increased when our

first practice is on ship-board—she stood, and walked across the deck.

“But how do you happen to be here, duke? Nothing has happened to the *Halcyon*, I hope?”

“Nothing,” said the duke, laughing. “Mr. Windham, how well you have kept your secret: you are on board the *Halcyon*!”

A deep blush crimsoned her cheeks, and in spite of all her recent philosophy on the incompatibility of politics and love, her first thought was, no wonder Lord Rupert engages himself to Lady Maria; he can have no doubt that I am engaged to the duke; how could my father accept such an obligation——

“Good heavens! how I must have tormented you! What a trouble I must have been to you!”

And she recollected having heard a voice, once or twice, which sounded like the duke's; but, too weak, and caring too little for the outward things of life, she had made no enquiry.

“Trouble, my dear Lady Umfraville: you must know how delighted everybody in

England would have been to have had the honour and pleasure of seeing you."

"When Dr. ——— ordered the sea for you, my love," said her father, in a deprecatory tone, "the duke was with me, and offered the Halcyon so kindly, and Dr. ——— recommended so strongly your being put on board it, in preference to any hired one, and instantly, I could not refuse it."

"Had not your ladyship better lie down again, now?" said Mr. Bage.

"No, no ; if you do not command it : I am quite happy sitting here : I will take another turn presently."

"I have not been allowed to appear all this time," continued the duke, "and it was wrong, perhaps, to do so now, but I could not resist coming forward when you asked so kindly for me."

"And have I been keeping you off your own deck all this time ? I am so glad I have taken and released you now."

"I am so glad you are allowed to speak and to see, and now you will have something to see : there, through this telescope ——"

“You will make Lady Umfraville quite giddy looking through that glass,” said Mr. Bage.

“Not at all !—And there is Spain.”

“You see,” said the duke, “that you and Mr. Windham have accepted my invitation to my sea-house. Is she not a beauty ; is not——

“I do command you now, Lady Umfraville,” said Mr. Bage : “you must lie down, and be perfectly quiet.”

She obeyed, and was very ready to be perfectly quiet, but outward objects had now much more power over her attention ; and, as she grew stronger, external life seemed to return : sight and sound seemed now to find their way to her mind ; it appeared as if the mind had hitherto been unable to contain the images and ideas which the senses should convey. Perhaps it is always so in the more intellectually formed ; the mind is more occupied with itself. Ordinary minds are, at all times, the most sensible to outward impression, still more so when weakened by illness ; the ordinary mind never turns in upon itself ; some one sound or sight takes hold of the

sufferer, and he dwells upon it, from mere inability to think of anything else. In minds of a higher cast, the difficulty is to control or subdue the multitude of self-created thoughts. Where the mind is only moved by external objects through the senses, it is easy to shut out or divert its attention. In Evelyn, to recover her external sensibility was to recover her health.

“Africa!” cried the duke, as she stood on deck.

“Africa!” How much rose to her mind in the sound of that name; that undiscovered country from whose bourne so few travellers return. That vast continent, girdled with civilization from the earliest history, and within an unknown world, where age after age, nation after nation, has lived unheard of, and perished unrecorded; and into whose savage mystery neither sword nor science, nor insinuating commerce, nor furious fanaticism, has penetrated. What a host of thoughts came into her mind, as Evelyn saw the coast of that strange land. A new quarter of the globe—and this, if not the most ancient edge of civi-

lization, was its most romantic; this was the country of the Moors: mighty Mauritania, the mother of romance; and Zegris and Abencerages, and all the high heroic glories of their barbaric gallantry would have occupied her for hours; but her lover, though he was pleased for a moment or two to gaze on the tinge of colour which was now in her pale cheek, and the recovered brightness of her eye, pleased as a child looking at a picture, could not remain silent more than three minutes, now that he was permitted to speak!

He began to name the headlands. "Does not she go like an arrow, the Halcyon?"

"Delightfully, but the weather has been so very favourable."

"Don't be disheartened," said he, laughing; "we may fall in with a storm coming back."

"Oh, I hope not," said Mr. Windham; "do not foresee anything so shocking."

"But Lady Umfraville wishes, or at least you did last autumn, wish to be for once in a gale."

"For once and away! but it might be once for all," said she; "and my wish was at



Umfraville, on dry land, and I do not know that it would be quite so pleasant to be in—”

“Do not say that word,” whispered the duke, “in his hearing,” pointing to his boatswain, who was adjusting a rope near them: “he would lay any misfortune that occurred for the next month to your saying it.”

“I would not for the world offend him. I observed him several times, when my father was carrying me up, so carefully putting everything out of the way; and when he had to come near my sofa, always stepping so gently.”

“He is a capital fellow where there is no superstition,” continued the duke, as the man moved away; “but he really has so many fancies that I have been ready to give him up sometimes for all his merit. There are so many days that are unlucky, and so many words that must not be said, and so many looks of the moon that are to be watched! I declare I am always glad when the moon is not to be seen.”

“You think her a mischievous, not a useful, light.”

“I should be happy to have her light—but when I am told there is a cloud on her horn, or that she rose red, or she sank misty, and a hundred ways she has of making herself disagreeable, I am tempted to wish she would not shew herself at all.”

“The poor moon! whom all the poets in the world have been praising for so many ages, to be told she makes herself disagreeable! How hard upon her,” said Evelyn.

“Upon my life, it is!” said the duke; “but upon land I make it up to her. I really have a great regard for her whenever I happen to see her; but on shore, unluckily, one has no great opportunity of attending to her; at sea, she is always in the way, I think.”

“I am afraid you have not a genuine taste for the thing. I am afraid you will always be called a fresh-water seaman, if you don’t feel more respect for the moon—‘mute arbitress of tides.’ All real navigators have such reliance on her promises and threats. It shows that your voyages have been only coasting, or never very far from land. When you cross the Atlantic, or get into of the Pacific, then you will have

more feeling about an old acquaintance, like the moon. One would be so glad to see, among all the new constellations, such a faithful friend once more in the desert of an unknown ocean."

"I never thought of the poor moon in that view. You make me quite ashamed of my ingratitude to her. There!—Gibraltar! Lady Umfraville!—Lady Umfraville!—Gibraltar!"

The duke was an excellent guide as far as knowing all the places, but he never allowed time for reflection upon anything he pointed out.

"Will you cross the Atlantic? As the sea has been of such use to you, suppose you go round the world?"

Evelyn laughed.

"Seriously; why should you not? Mr. Bage, do you not consider the sea quite necessary to Lady Umfraville?"

"It has been of all the service we expected. The trial of its efficacy will be now, when we land."

"And if Lady Umfraville is not quite well at Gibraltar, you would recommend a voyage round the world, would you not?"

“Not quite,” said Mr. Bage, smiling. “The hardships of a voyage round the world would not suit her ladyship particularly.”

“Oh, there are no hardships now. I would hire a tender to carry stores, and I would have the *Halcyon* well prepared here. If we start now, we shall be back about Christmas after next. What lions we should be.”

“Perhaps we should be dead, and only stuffed to bring home; and a stuffed lion hardly pays the showing.”

“You quite exaggerate the difficulties. What hardships are there, Mr. Bage?”

“Heat and cold, and storms and rains, and want of fresh meat, and want of water, and want of rest, and want of exercise.”

“It may be a little hot after passing the line; but an awning and a punkah settle all that; and as for cold, till we reach England again, I do not know where we are to find it. And as for exercise, I defy any one to be at sea without exercise; they must walk up and down, and always in the open air. As for fresh meat and water, and all that, Mr. Bage, those are such old-fashioned notions. I shall get

plenty of prepared beef here, and with plenty of fowl, ——”

“Take care of a storm,” said Evelyn. “Do you remember the hen you diverted us so much with, who escaped in the storm last year?”

The duke laughed at the recollection.—

“All those soup-meat contrivances, and all that ——,” said Mr. Bage, “are very well for a little way; but I can assure you, those who have tried, find they are soon tired of it.”

“But Lady Umfraville would not be tired; and she does not mind about beef and water in the least.”

“How much in your way I should be—how often you would wish me in England at least.”

“How can you say so,” said he with some emotion.

“Because you could not help it. I cannot think how you have escaped throwing me overboard before this.”

“Is it like what you expected—Gibraltar?” said Mr. Windham, joining them.

“No, it stands out more; I did not think it had looked so much apart.”

“ We are going to try what Lady Umfraville thinks of the rest of the world—if the Peak of Teneriffe, and Rio de Janeiro, and Cape Horn, and Otaheite, and Canton, and the Cape of Good Hope, look like their pictures, and any other places you may fancy seeing. You would like to touch at Sydney—Oh, yes! we must see a Platypus, and eat kangaroos—anywhere else, Mr. Windham? You have a fancy for the Ladrões! Very well, anywhere; I assure you I shall be very accommodating, and Bage will write such an interesting narrative of the voyage.”

Mr. Windham laughed.

“ I declare I am serious. Lady Umfraville requires sea-air, and all the sea-air possible. Does she not, Mr. Bage? And the little cooped-up sea of the Mediterranean, he says, would be quite useless—she must have ocean breezes. Nothing will suit the grandeur of her views but the Atlantic and Pacific.”

“ It is a pity you did not think of it in time, Mr. Bage,” said Mr. Windham; “ Colburn or Bentley would have agreed to take your narrative with joy.”

"It will be better when he comes home," said the duke; "all the booksellers will be pulling caps for his work—'Narrative of a Voyage Round the World, in the Duke of Plessingham's Yacht, Halcyon; in Company with His Grace and a Distinguished Party of Fashionables.' Capital! By Jove, Bage, it would take beyond any thing!"

"It would, I am sure," said he. "The first circumnavigation of the globe by an English duke and a peeress in her own right, would sell immensely, I am sure."

"You see Bage is quite charmed at the idea, Mr. Windham; we only want your consent. Fancy what stars we should be! London would go mad—stark staring mad after us—we should be such a sight!"

"We should be in every caricature-shop," said Evelyn.

"Not at all. It would be quite a serious thing. Happy the party that first produces us. How the lion-huntresses will be worshipping you, Lady Umfraville, to give them the first show of you. And Wycherley! upon my life Wycherley would hang himself for pure

spite, to find himself so outdone. Nothing he has ever attempted has made such a sensation; turning preacher and all would be quite faded in comparison."

No human being, except Evelyn and her father, knew that physic as well as divinity was one of Sir Luttrell's characters. Mr. Windham had wisely kept the secret even from his sister, who never comprehended why her niece had taken such a sudden antipathy to Dr. Venn. He had disappeared; and as the season was breaking up, the half-formed rumour of Lady Umfraville having been annoyed by a quack, had died away of itself.

"Are you a good linguist, Bage?" continued the duke; "Mr. Windham and Lady Umfraville are; and, if you can speak the tongues, we shall do very well at Rio, and anywhere they speak like Christians, and at Tahiti, and all those places, what diversion it will be making signs!"

"I am afraid they all speak Christian English, now," said Evelyn; "at least, that they are able to make out all we should want to say. Unless, indeed, we should discover a



new island—‘some happier island in the watery waste,’ where European foot has never trod before—Plessingham Island and Halcyon Port may become as familiar as Botany Bay and Sydney.”

“It ought to be Victoria,” said Mr. Windham, always correct; “the first new Polynesian should be Victoria Island, surely. We cannot aspire to more than naming all the creeks and inlets.”

“That pretty little shady one which I discover for myself,” said Evelyn; “with that stream running so freshly into it, that I shall have the honour of naming Evelyn Freshet; and that beautiful tree—entirely new—that Sir Joseph Banks would have been crazed with delight to discover, splendid is it not? those long pendant wreaths of such bright pink, tipped with such a pure white, that I think I ——”

“You should call it *Ipswichia*,” said the duke, “in gratitude for Lord Ipswich’s kindness in naming his new flower after you.”

Lady Umfraville leaned far over the side of the vessel.

“What a pity,” cried the Duke, “that I did not think of this before we left England; I might have provided myself with beads and hatchets; here all those kind of things will be so difficult to get—but do not you think our islanders will be very much obliged to us for them?”

“We shall be very much obliged to them for all they give us in exchange; their yams, and that new and delicious fruit—we will call it the *Albertonia*, in honour of the Prince—a sort of grape, with the taste of lemonade; quite new, ‘and promises to be a valuable addition to the Horticulturist’s choicest varieties for the aristocratic banquet,’ as the newspapers will say. We shall be delighted to buy these at a nail or a button a bunch but what quarrels there will be when we are gone, scrambling for the knives and scissors, that they did so well without before.”

“We shall be in in an hour,” said the duke; “how surprised and delighted Philip will be to see us.”

They ran in with a fresh breeze, and anchored at Gibraltar. That proud possession of in-

domitable British valour: the key of the Levant, the hard won, and harder maintained Rock of defence, whose solitary grandeur seems to speak itself the property of the Island Queen—our sole possession on the European continent. How many of our noblest victories has it witnessed, how many of our proudest fleets have swept along beside this haughty rock triumphant and supreme!

Caring not so much as one of the brass-headed nails he intended for his savages about its acquired glories or its natural grandeur, the duke lowered his boat instantly, and went on shore: Mr. Windham accompanied him to make arrangements for himself and daughter in some hotel. They had settled to take leave of the hospitable Halcyon and her kind owner here, and crossing over to Lisbon, return home from thence. Lady Umfraville was obliged by business to be at Umfraville in September; and oppressed with the sense of all the inconvenience she must have been to the goodnatured duke, she had determined to go home by land to prevent the possibility of his offering to take them back in the Halcyon.

It was late in the evening before the duke and Mr. Windham returned.

“Philip is on duty, so he could not come out to wait upon you, Lady Umfraville, but he sent you his respects. So surprised he was! Just coming in from a dinner-party, he was to take charge of his guard. Walking up to his quarters, I saw him coming, and met him, taking off my hat, with a low bow, he gave such a shout—‘Plessingham!’ and almost shook my hand off. I assure you, that independently of the pleasure of your company in the voyage, and the happiness of seeing you get so well, Philip’s look when he found it was me, would have been worth the whole trip.”

“I have arranged everything,” said Mr. Windham, “and we are to go on shore early to-morrow.”

“Mr. Windham says you prefer travelling by land instead of by water; and as Bage gives his sanction to it, I must submit; but I am sure I need not tell you how gladly I should have taken you back.”

They were interrupted by a summons to supper.

“You will not be the first peeress to circumnavigate the globe, then?” said the duke, as they sat down; “I am perfectly serious in the plan; I think it would be delightful.”

“Our not accompanying you need not put a stop to the plan,” said Evelyn.

“It would be nothing then. Next year, perhaps,” and he turned to Lady Umfraville as he spoke, with so conscious a look as to make his countenance appear almost serious.

Mr. Windham asked Mr. Bage to drink a glass of wine.

“No lady has ever gone round the world? Is it on record?” said Mr. Bage.

Nobody could tell. “Does not that tempt you, Lady Umfraville,” cried the duke, with renewed spirit; “would it not be glorious! Now, here is an opportunity of eternally distinguishing yourself! It will be recorded of you hereafter in the Umfraville peerage—think of that! ‘Evelyn, the celebrated circumnavigatrix of the globe!’”

“My dear duke,” cried Mr. Windham, “do you really think of being a second Lord Anson?”

“I should like it of all things ! It is odd you should mention ‘Anson’s Voyage :’ I have not thought of it these twenty—at least these eighteen years, I am sure ; but very likely it gave me a wish to go round the world ; it is one of the few books I ever read with any pleasure—indeed, I cannot say I ever read that, but it was read to me, when I had the measles in the holidays. Fancy the cruelty of being kept in the house in the holidays ! If the stupid measles had come at Harrow, you know, I should have been quite obliged to them, I should have been stopping-out all the time ; but this came at Plessy Canons ; and how wretched I should have been but that Rupert Conway came over, and stayed with me, and was so good-natured, and played backgammon, and told such amusing stories, and read the Arabian Tales, and Anson’s Voyage : my whole stock of learning was laid in then, for Don Quixote and the prints he used to tell me about—”

Any lover but the duke might have been startled by the deep blush which rose in Lady Umfraville’s cheek, and the extreme interest

with which she listened to this childish story ; but the duke's brain could seldom admit more than one idea at a time, and he was now quite taken up with that of Lord Rupert's good-nature.

“Is it not shameful that I should not take more pains to do credit to his instructions,” continued he, laughing, with his usual thoughtless candour ; “but I had the grace to be heartily ashamed, and next when I saw him look so confoundedly stern at the Palace-Ball—that night when we were in the Queen's quadrille—I went and told him I would be in the ‘House’ the next night, if possible ; and it was lucky I added the ‘if,’ for something made it quite impossible—St. Leonard, I believe it was—Rupert looked as if he did not give much credit to what I said ; I never saw him so displeased ; and, somehow, I never had time to get to the ‘House’ since, or even to apologize. Your illness came, and then I could think of nothing else.”

“You feel the cabin close, I am afraid,” said Mr. Bage ; “Shall I open the door, Lady Umfraville ?”

“No, thank you, there is quite air enough ; I am quite well.”

But it was to Mr. Bage's credit, as her medical attendant, the watchfulness which he displayed : she did look distressed. It was not, however, for want of air, but at the duke's speaking of himself as having a right to give up anything in anxiety for her. Indeed, he made no attempt to conceal his interest ; and every sailor and servant on board looked on her as their future duchess. Mr. Bage was very well aware of the duke's attachment, too ; but he did not think Lady Umfraville returned it. Though occupied chiefly with her pulse and her strength—he had probably never put the idea into any shape in his mind—yet, if he had been called upon to give evidence in the case, he would have stated her to be indifferent, but that the duke loved her actually more than he did the Halcyon, as was evident to every one on board.

“You do not think this cabin close, Bage ? I flatter myself it is the airiest yacht of any club in the world.”

“It is delightful, said Mr. Windham ;



"this breeze is so fresh, and yet not windy."

"So it always is in the Halcyon, I assure you ; in a storm you can be as snug as in any room in England."

"You regret, I think, that we have not had a storm," said Evelyn.

"To show-off my good seamanship, and the Halcyon's sea-worthiness, shall I begin whistling for a gale? Tomkins would be knocking at the door, in five minutes, if he were to hear me ; and he would beg to speak to me on business of importance ; and then he would begin, with the gravest face in the world, to remonstrate with me on the iniquity of my ways. Shall I try?"

"No, I beg you will not ; Mr. Tomkins is my particular friend," said Mr. Windham ; "he has been so obliging all the voyage."

"He has been sorely tried by the calm weather, though ; he has not been able to show-off the Halcyon's paces at all ; and two mails, which started after us, are in before us."

"I wonder your grace does not adopt a steamer," said Mr. Bage.

“ Good Heavens ! do you think I would go poking about like a packet—thumping, and shaking, and smoking, with an engineer and a stoker taking everything upon them ! The idea of changing my lovely little Halcyon, skimming, like a wild duck, over the waves, for a great lumbering plough of a thing, sputtering and foaming about, churning the poor dear sea as it does. And with a breeze I should beat one—I did Dalton’s ! Dalton had a steamer last year ; he took a trip to Madeira ; a little execrable machine, it would have shaken a pig to death : one of those little things, pitching and quaking in every beam. Well, we started together from Portsmouth ; I went round on purpose : we had a fine wind ; and, by Jove ! it was glorious to see how we beat her—passed her by, all sails set, colours flying ! Halcyon like an angel, scudding before the gale ! such a lovely sight, and such a heavenly pace, it would have made the dead alive to have felt her motion ! And there was the Vulcan, splashing and tearing away ; you could see the very paddles in a fury ! But it was all in vain, pass it we did—and such a

shout as we gave ! It made Dalton properly ashamed of himself, I assure you : he will not sport a steamer again in a hurry, you will see."

## CHAPTER V.

EARLY the next day the boat was alongside. Lady Umfraville remained below, while the bustle of carrying up luggage, &c. was going on. The duke came down—"You are quite determined not to employ the *Halcyon* any further."

"Yes; we mean to get to Lisbon as soon as we can: but I leave her with regret, and with such deep-felt gratitude, for all the kindness we have received on board her. I know what inconvenience and trouble we must have been to you; you must let me say so, because I want to tell you how grateful——"

"Dear Lady Umfraville! do not talk to me of gratitude."

"If you will not hear my gratitude, you must allow me to speak of my father's; to

serve me so essentially as you have done, is to do him the greatest favour possible."

"Only, the favour was all on my side."

"Oh, no ! I am surprised. But that I cannot blame him, especially when he did it in the agitation and hurry of his anxiety for me; but I wish he had not so encroached on your generous kindness."

"That is the cruellest thing you ever said. I could not have appeared to be troubled, for I was only too happy."

"It is your good-nature in not being tired of us, that makes me more ashamed of having intruded on it. You have made us so comfortable, so at ease ——"

"Thank you ; that is all the gratitude I wish for—to know that you are tolerably comfortable, and that the trip has answered its purpose,—as I really think it has, in curing you."

"We have been so happy."

"Dear Lady Umfraville ! you laugh at the idea of going round the world in the *Halcyon*, but you have found me easy to get on with so far. Could not you—may not I hope that

you could find me companionable for a longer time—for life?”

“That is what I felt and feel so ungrateful, so wrong. I told my father, since our last conversation—I had told him before my illness, and I was shocked to find myself, when I recovered, thus trespassing on your generosity, when he knew that I could make no —— that I could give you nothing in return, but mere thanks, mere gratitude; and, yet, believe me, I do value all your excellent qualities; I do see, that any woman must be happy as your companion for life.”

“How you delight me by saying so; and, if so—why ——?”

“I told you ——”

“But you said you were not engaged. I declared I could, and would gladly wait—I do not understand quite.”

“It is wrong, at least; it is foolish, perhaps, on my part, to feel an attachment. But what a return would it be for your generous love, to give you my hand and not my heart! I would sooner jump from that window into the sea than betray you so basely.”

“You could never act unhandsomely or unkindly to any one.”

“And, least of all, to you. I feel the greatest regard for you, and I only wish you would be satisfied with that regard, and ask for no more. Turn your affections on some one who can give you what you so truly merit—her whole heart;” and, as she spoke, tears filled her beautiful eyes.

“All’s ready!” cried a voice from the companion-ladder. The duke took her arm in silence, pressed it gently, and led her on deck.

She stopped to speak to the boatswain, and several of the men, addressing by name those whom she knew, with that graceful courtesy which in the high born and high bred, wins so irresistibly the very hearts and souls of their inferiors, so that in the loud and hearty cheer which the crew of the *Halcyon* gave—if it was partly to honour their master’s choice and partly for Mr. Windham’s splendid donations—it was most sincere, and most heartfelt in devotion, to the captivating manner of this beautiful woman.

Lord Philip met them at the hotel, and the

governor called on them, and Mr. Windham was perfectly happy in all the honours that were paid to his daughter, who, however, declined all invitations and only visited quietly all that was to be seen, feeling as all travellers do at any English settlement, be it ever so distant, a sort of disappointment at its being so very English. Wherever we are, we carry all our ways with us ; and at the Antipodes, instead of doing as the Antipodeans do, we do only, as we do at home.

When they were to set out, Lady Umfraville found that the duke, Lord Philip, and two of his brother officers were to accompany them, so that if there had been any danger on the road, they were well guarded.

Mr. Windham had hired a carriage but Evelyn rode as much as she was able, delighted to be on a mule in Spain ! She was lost in thoughts of the bygone days of glory in that "renowned romantic land" on which a curse of confusion seems to have alighted. Was it not a cloud of disastrous storm across that vast ocean which divides them from the scenes of their transatlantic cruelties ; a judgment and a vengeance for their crimes ?



She was roused by the voices of the officers who, instead of thinking of Spain, were discussing English politics.

"Oh, you are a radical," said Lord Philip.

"A man may disapprove of Lord Rupert Conway's measures, and yet not be a radical," said one of the officers.

"Radical or not," cried another, "I say Lord Rupert is ruining the country."

"Yes," continued the first, "he is bringing us to the verge of bankruptcy, and all for his party, just like all ministers—for his party."

"That he is not I will answer for it," said the duke, "I neither know nor care, more shame for me, what his measures are, but this I will maintain, that he means them for the good of his country, and that he cares no more for his own place or his own power, than this stick does, except as they can serve England."

"So his partisans say; and as you acknowledge you know nothing of his measures, I cannot see how you can defend them," said one of the officers.

"I know nothing of his measures, but I know a great deal of him, and I never hear him abused that I do not defend him."

“Right or wrong?” said the other, laughing. “Well done, duke, that is a thorough-going friend.”

“I am certain they must be right.”

“Certain that Lord Rupert can do no wrong! Take care you are not talking treason, that is only the Queen’s privilege.”

“Can mean no wrong, perhaps,” said Evelyn, almost unconsciously, and so low that she was heard only by her father, who took it up.

“Yes, the duke would say his friend means no wrong; any one may make mistakes.”

“Of course,” pursued the officer; “nobody says that he sits down regularly to destroy the country; but, as far as acting systematically against everything that is advantageous for us, is doing deliberate wrong, I say Lord Rupert does it; and unless you had rather allow that he does it for the love of wrong *per se*, you must allow that he does it for his party.”

“His party do it for him, you should rather say; he is the leader, they only follow,” said Lord Philip.

“For himself, then, it is only a degree worse;

he would leave his party, I dare say, without a care what became of them, provided he could keep his own power."

"His own measures," said Mr. Windham. "You are giving up your own argument now; we quite agree with you, that he would not care who the men were, provided they supported what he thought right."

"That is the question; I say it is not for the right or the wrong that he cares: he cares only to keep his own place."

"And his place he will keep," cried the Duke, "in spite of all your opposition can do, just because he is the only man in England fit to have it."

Evelyn felt as if it was a sort of treachery to the gallant friendship of her lover to allow him thus to be the champion of his rival.

"The only man in England fit to be Prime Minister, when every bill he brings in is for her ruin!"

"England has been so often ruined," said Mr. Windham, laughing; "according to every opposition, every minister has undone the country."

“I wonder, I am sure,” said the duke, “how anybody can take the trouble to do so much and be so little thanked for it. It is well some people have a taste for labouring for nothing. And he wonders that I prefer dancing and hunting!”

“I wish he would prefer it,” said the officer, smiling; “he might break as many hearts in a ball-room and as many hunters’ knees as he pleased, but he would not be breaking the credit of England.”

How little this gentleman knew of a heart so very close to him at that moment, that had been somewhat near breaking in a ball-room about Lord Rupert!

“I do not know about his breaking the Bank,” said the Duke; “but I assure you he would not break his hunter’s knees; he is a capital rider, and as fond of a good run as I am; which makes it the greater merit in him to stay boring in an office all the season, as he does, and only having a hunt now and then in the holidays.”

“And as to the hearts,” said another officer, “the skill in a ball-room is to break hearts, is

it not? Do you answer for his excellence on the 'light fantastic toe,' as well as in the saddle?"

"Oh, he is not in that line, you know."

"He does not dance, I suppose; so it is no merit in him to stay away, boring in the House, instead of figuring in a quadrille."

"He danced, I suppose, like other people when he first 'came out,'" said the duke, "and—yes, I recollect, indeed, no later than last Christmas, at Plessy Canons, he was dancing. He danced with you, Lady Umfraville; do you not remember?"

A loud laugh from the officers saved her from replying——

"Well done, Plessingham! what a friend you are! Go it, duke! You will not allow him to fail even in an accomplishment! What a pity you are not in Opposition: what a partisan we should have. How you knock everything before you. I wonder you do not show off for Lord Rupert in the Lords; you would carry everything!"

Mr. Bage now came up, and said the next village promised tolerable accommodations, and as they had brought some provisions with

them, they ran no risk of suffering by one of the chief dangers of Spanish travelling—that of being starved.

The journey was pleasant: the officers, in spite of their abuse of Lord Rupert, were agreeable men, and the duke was ready to find amusement in everything; and he was so much engaged making his brother's horse play tricks, talking broken Spanish to the muleteers, that he was very little trouble to Lady Umfraville.

"To-morrow we reach the border, and there we part," said he, riding up to the carriage.

"I shall ride the last stage, or sit on my mule, for it can hardly be called riding."

"Fine creatures though they are I am going to——" but Lord Philip's horse being within reach, he could not resist giving it a cut behind, which made it plunge; his own did so for company, and the whole train were in disorder for a few minutes, while he rode about, asking the men, in an attempt at Spanish, what was the matter, and why they could not keep their beasts quiet, and then returning to the carriage——

“Travelling through Spain will be next best to going round the world: it is quite an adventure for a lady.”

“Very far short of a circumnavigation,” said she; “are you not going to make yourself famous in that way?”

“Without you!—I—just look, what a pretty group those peasant girls are. What fine hair; and how merry they look! Cheveley!—Oh, he has his sketch-book out. I should not be surprised if we all figure in a tour got up by Cheveley and Bage—Cheveley sketches so well.”

“‘Rough Notes of a Trip across Spain; or a Ride from Gibraltar. Dedicated to the Duke of Plessingham.’ I fear it will be hard to fill ten pages, with the utmost stretch of wide margins and large print, and all the names in capitals. Still we have not had a shadow of an adventure, and unless you are kind enough to break the necks of some of the party by your whipping, I fear they cannot make out anything.”

“I do not know, I am sure, how those things are done; but one sees such heaps

of 'Travels' on everybody's table. Oh, look! here is something—a regular gipsy camp.”

And, as he spoke, they came in sight of a picturesque horde, who instantly, like bees disturbed, poured forth upon the travellers, men, women, and children—the men offering horses for sale, the women telling fortunes, and the children begging. The cavalcade stopped. Mr. Cheveley drew the handsomest of the party, who instantly perceived what he was doing, and appeared highly flattered; the duke and Lord Philip began to bargain for a horse, and Lady Umfraville gave money to the children. The mother of one, in her gratitude, came to tell her fortune. It was really a pretty scene: the wild, oriental features, and strange gibberish of the gipsies; their fires and tents; the muttering of the muleteers at being stopped; the merry laugh of the duke; and his, and his companions' fair complexions contrasted with the various shades of swarthiness by which they were surrounded, would have been a study for any painter, or worthy of any romance writer.

The fortune-teller looked with wonder at



the soft blue eyes and alabaster skin of Lady Umfraville; and, after a profusion of gibberish and grimaces, she proceeded, in a very plain Spanish, to pronounce all manner of good fortune for her. She looked round several times at the gentlemen, to see which was the lover; but, as they were Englishmen, and a horse was in the case, it would have been no ordinary conjuror who could have found any love-likeness among them. She began by promising heaps of gold to the lady, who shook her head, and said she had plenty of it, and gave the sybil the most splendid donation she had ever received, telling her that she did not want any more of her skill. But the woman was too conscientious to take so much and give nothing in return; she looked at her hand, and, tracing the lines upon that white palm with her dark and skinny finger, she promised her a very handsome and noble husband.

“Do you give her only one for all that money?” said Mr. Windham; “I think, for so much, you should give her at least three, each handsomer, and nobler, and richer than the other.”

The muleteers laughed, but the gipsy either did not or would not understand, and, looking at the young men, continued—"He shall be very tall." They were all tall.

"A noble husband is her right," said Mr. Windham; "handsome we may suppose would be her desire; and tall he must be, if he is handsome; and riches, she has told you she did not care for: so I do not think you have informed us of anything we did not know before."

"You are the father," said the woman, readily; "and you will give the husband you please, but the lover is the young lady's choice;" and she smiled, in triumph in her own skill, at the blush which this observation called up.

"No, you are wrong," said Mr. Windham; "this lady is her own mistress, and may give that hand you have been studying to whom she pleases."

The woman looked puzzled, the case was beyond her art; but, judging from the blush that she had made a hit about the lover, and that it was impossible so beautiful a person could help loving and being loved, she was

proceeding with her promises of success in her attachment, when the muleteers began to complain aloud, and Mr. Bage to threaten evening dew; and the duke, having bought a horse, came up, as the gipsy, with much gesticulation, was pouring forth in Lady Umfraville's favour; he laughed, and rode by; and she settled he could not be the lover. The carriage drove on, and she and her sister sybils reaped a rich harvest from Lord Philip and his comrades; and though they had seen the duke assume the favoured place beside the carriage, had they heard his discourse and understood it, they would have been wonderful sorceresses to have interpreted it into that of a lover, for it was wholly upon the merits of the horse. Evelyn told him he might have been cheated, that jockies were always cheats, and gipsy jockies above all, and that the horse was good for nothing. He insisted that it was capital, and that he should ride it as he came back; and she prophesied that the gipsy camp and it, would have all disappeared before their return.

“You have been taking a lesson from the

gipsies in prophecying. What a scene this would have been for Wycherley. Do you remember his playing conjuror last Christmas, and frightening Lady Barnstaple? He would have been bribing these ladies, and making them say anything he wished. I think he half believes those tricks. I wonder what he is at now."

"It would be a good trial for those Egyptian magicians," said Mr. Windham, "to ask them what Sir Luttrell Wycherley is doing at any moment, or rather who he is."

The next day, the duke and Lady Umfraville, to get out of the heat, while the rest were bargaining with a set of native Portuguese muleteers, rode on to the halting place. It was like the goat-herd scene in "Don Quixote—" a grassy nook—the horses and mules fastened on one side, the guides and servants on the other, preparing dinner.

The duke spread a cloth on the ground; Evelyn seated herself, and he stood before her. Even a lover so little romantic, could not, in such a scene, help speaking of his love.

"The more—every hour I spend in your

company, makes me feel only the more what happiness it would be to be ——. You have been so generous in telling me I had no right to expect you to confide in me, you might have only refused; but, having told me, having let me think that it was not dislike to me —— Cannot I hope that you might forget?”

Even as the duke spoke, and even though she listened with interest—for true affection, though unreturned, must interest—even as she listened, the idea of Lord Rupert rose to her recollection, with a thrill which told her she could never forget.

“Cannot you,” said she. “I wish you would take a good long sail, if not round the world, in the dear *Halcyon*, and return without any other thought of me than as of a *compagnon de voyage* who was very troublesome, and to whom you were excessively good natured, and who will always most gratefully recal your kindness.”

“I cannot forget you, nor cease to love you as I do with all my heart. But I will not trouble you by speaking of it. I will not see you till I return for the hunting. I will take

a sail or something, and keep out of your way, and then, when I return, perhaps you may have changed, and may at least allow me to hope that you could sometime learn to consider me as more than a friend."

"I will not deceive you. I ——"

"But you may be mistaken."

"I will tell you instantly," said she, rising and walking to meet the rest of the party; "but, before that, when next we meet, perhaps you will have found that you are mistaken."

The two parties separated: Lady Umfraville and her father for Lisbon, and the rest for Gibraltar. The duke was moved as he took leave: he neither smiled nor laughed, nor even spoke; he silently pressed her hand in both of his, and she could not but feel regret at parting with so kind and devoted a friend; though, as he would persist in wishing to be more, she rejoiced to be free from his attentions, and from the annoyance of his belonging, and being reported to belong to her party.

They passed that all but imaginary line which divides two nations so alike and so

different:—whom nature seemed to have meant to be one, and prejudice to have doomed to be separate and separated by a barrier of national hatred more insurmountable than mountains or mines. A little kingdom with all the pride of greatness is in its greatest prosperity,—ridiculous: but the prostration of such a kingdom as Portugal is a piteous spectacle. Relics of ruined grandeur, desecrated convents, and deserted palaces; and the traces of war, and the worst of wars, intestine squabbles, meet the travellers at every step; and the few days at Lisbon, with its dirt, and the poverty pomp of its faded court, were full of melancholy; and it was with delight that Evelyn and her father found themselves on board a British frigate and on their way home.

How proud is the feeling of any Briton on the quarter-deck of an English man-of-war, but how doubly proud Evelyn felt when escaping from the decayed and distracted states through which they had been travelling. That moving miniature of our Island Home—Ruler of the Ocean! The order, the discipline, the cer-

tainty, the perfection of everything in an English frigate, so worthy of our hard-won and long maintained supremacy of the seas.

Captain Langley was brother to Lord St. Leonard, and on Mr. Windham's paying him a visit, he gladly offered a passage home to him and Lady Umfraville. During their short passage home he more than realized the ideal which she had formed of the chivalrous devotion, the peculiar courtesy of an officer in Her Majesty's Navy. They landed at Portsmouth, and while they waited for the arrival of their carriage from town, did their duty by all the sights there to be seen.

London was all, as some one has said, *en papillotte*, the shutters of the private houses closed—the shops all painting; and in the streets, the carriages few and far between, the pavement thinly scattered with a heterogeneous population.—Their letters were the only subject of interest, and one of them surprised Mr. Windham a good deal, and Evelyn a little: it was from Lord Amery, announcing the intended marriage of Mr.



Vernon with Miss Horton. Miss Horton was rich, which was no doubt her chief recommendation, but her mother's name had long figured in all the lists of subscribers to and attenders on Missionary Meetings and Bible Societies, so that whatever other satisfaction the connection was to afford Prior Vernon, he had not that of having converted his bride, as she must have been brought up in the way which he intended she should go.

Poor Miss Windham received her niece in renovated health and increased beauty with the greatest joy ; after all the mischiefs she had done, she had infinite satisfaction in finding a pleasant summer trip by sea and land was all the real result, and she returned to her usual avocation of her cat, her parrot, and her picquet with renewed satisfaction.

Umfraville was in all the richness of the end of September, still in the fullness of summer leafiness, just tinged with autumnal brightness. The feeling of possession is gratifying to human nature; the possession of a noble and beautiful place is exhilarating. But in the business in which Lady Umfraville was deeply

engaged on her return, she had a more ennobling species of gratification—the feeling that she could and did contribute to the happiness of a great number of her fellow-creatures. In the regulation of a great property, the chief danger to a young and generous proprietor is that of attempting too much—a danger from which Lady Umfraville was guarded, in a great measure, by the love of ancient customs, the pride of long-standing usage, early implanted in her mind. The one sole principle of her father's mind—the honour of ancestral dignity—was in her a more rational wish to do that which was suited to the dignities she represented, and the property over which she ruled. Her father's horror of reform—a word which in his eyes was always magnified and distorted into the frightful disproportion of revolution—was in her only a wish to preserve that which time had hallowed in its excellence, not that which it had embalmed to that mummy state of useless preservation, where corruption, because hidden, is disregarded. To respect the old families upon the estates, and yet do justice to the new, was the chief object of her

care. The chief source of her pride in her tenantry, that they should all be payers, and none of them receivers, of public charity.

In the simplicity and reserve of her manner, the absence of all pomp of proprietorship, which characterized her in society, she might have been charged with indifference or carelessness, with being too gay, too thoughtless to be trusted with the serious business of the administration of a great property. But the men who transacted that business for her had formed a very different notion of her capacity. They were astonished at the patience with which she listened, and the discretion with which she decided, and, above all, at the determination with which she adhered to her decisions where she was convinced they were for the best. With all the enlarged views of one who acts on principle, she had the practical powers of attending to the minutest details, and without that little feminine pestering jealousy of power, which is so irritating to those employed by the great; she had a most energetic command of all her subordinates; and all felt that under that extreme gentleness, and capti-

vating politeness of manner, there was a consciousness of power and a will to use it, that it would cost them dear to transgress or oppose. The scorn of meanness and implacable justice towards oppression, which they had seen her show, had soon convinced them of the hopelessness of flattery and the danger of deceit.

## CHAPTER VI.

A VISIT from the Barnstaples and Mr. Poynings, and a large party. They were curious to see how Lady Umfraville looked after an illness, and a voyage, and a tour in Spain ; and, above all, they were anxious to know whether she was actually engaged to the Duke of Ples-singham.

That she looked remarkably well, Lady Barnstaple was obliged to acknowledge to herself, whatever she did to others ; but nothing could be elicited about the duke, but the fact that Lady Umfraville was at Umfraville, and the duke on a cruise in his yacht

There were excellent preserves, and the gentlemen were very happy with their guns, and the ladies driving or walking. Lady Barnstaple had been alarmed that she was getting

fat, and she almost walked Mr. Poynings and Mr. Windham to death, as they were the only non-sportsmen of the party. The park abounded in beautiful walks; and as she secured most of the gentlemen in the morning by turn, at *écarté* or billiards, Lady Barnstaple was tolerably contented. She was only uneasy at Lady Umfraville's easy resignation of all particular attentions. At Plessy Canons, where she was a guest, she could not help being an object of attention, at least to her host; but here, where she was hostess, she was so wholly and sincerely anxious to make her visitors happy, that it made Lady Barnstaple "envious that she could not excite envy," by appropriating everybody that could be appropriated. Even Lord Barnstaple, whose company she never wished for, but whose appropriation she was always troubled about, saved her all anxiety always during the shooting and hunting season; for, after a few efforts at informing Evelyn of his sport, he asked Mr. Windham for music, and then stretched on a sofa, fell asleep till bed-time.

George Beamish was the only distressing

young gentleman ; he would prefer standing by the pianoforte, or sitting by the table where Lady Umfraville sat, to cards, or anything with Lady Barnstaple ; not that his attention could be pointed ; he had taken up the *cui bono* style—everything was above—nothing interested him ; he was doing affectation with all his might, and very hard work it was ; for his nature was all spirits and gaiety, and his natural admiration of his beautiful hostess sometimes surprised him out of his intended indifference.

“We are going to have a round game to-night,” said Lady Barnstaple. “Mr. Beamish, you must join us.”

“Thank you, I am rather exhausted to-night : I walked to the East Coppice, and tried a few shots—it is so tiresome. I wonder what interest people can take in it.”

“You shot nothing, I suppose,” said Mr. Poynings. “A bad shot usually finds the company of those who shoot well—very tiresome.”

“Oh, I shot all I aimed at. It is the bore of the whole thing.”

“Lady Umfraville requests your company,” said Mr. Poynings, “at the game.”

"She is very kind; but I am too stupid. I should not know what I played. Those things do not interest me."

"In your youth, perhaps, you cared for them," said Lady Barnstaple, laughing.

"Perhaps I did."

He had been only six months at Cambridge, and from a fine, ardent, dashing boy, had thought he had turned man by adopting the most exaggerated style of English indifference.

"Well, it is to be hoped that by the time you reach second childhood you may find interest again in something," said Mr. Poynings.

"Do you?" said Mr. Beamish, with a half smile.

"Yes; I have never got out of childhood in that respect, or, perhaps, I have been so long in my second childhood, that I have forgotten the manly age of indifference."

"Do not let me detain you," said he, sinking from the mantel-piece, against which he leaned, into a seat, in an attitude of most becoming negligence.

"Lady Umfraville," cried Lady Barnstaple,



in hopes of seeing her try her powers in vain,  
“will you come here?”

She came.

“Here is Mr. Beamish; he is too much exhausted, he says, to join our party.”

“Is he?” said Lady Umfraville.

“Mr. Poynings told him you requested his company at the game, but it had no effect.”

“We must do without him, I suppose, then. Will you sit down? we are all ready.”

Lady Barnstaple and Mr. Beamish were nearly equally mortified, and Mr. Poynings smiled.

“You see,” said Lady Barnstaple, perseveringly, “Lady Umfraville is quite grieved at your desertion.”

“Grieved and shocked,” said Evelyn, laughing, “at this melancholy prostration of strength. I know only of one remedy for this extremity of exhaustion—going to bed, which I should prescribe in this case. I have observed that children often become wayward about bed-time, and do not know what is the matter with them. Come, Lady Barnstaple!”

“Good night, George!” said Mr. Poynings.

"How tiresome!" said he; but he found the part of sitting apart from everybody more tiresome still. He could not keep it up long, and, at last, sauntered to the table, and, leaning on the back of Mr. Poynings' chair, eyed the party through his glass; and then addressing Lady Barnstaple, for he was afraid of Evelyn—

"How well you do it! You really have the air of caring for what you are about. Can you really be interested in whether that is a knave or an ace? I could not, for the soul of me, know one from the other."

"Are you awake?" said Mr. Poynings.

"I wish I could sleep ——"

"That will not do," said Mr. Poynings; "that cast-off skin has been worn too lately."

"How do you mean?" said George, colouring in spite of himself.

"I mean that if people will go to pawn-brokers for old clothes, they should choose those that have been forgotten by those in whose company they were worn by their original possessors."

"Your wit is so great it quite confounds

me. I cannot be at the trouble of making out allegories."

"I will tell you plainly, then, that Wycherley's old clothes do not fit you: or, if that is too much of a figure of speech, I advise you to show Sir Luttrell's genius before you take up his nonsense."

"Wycherley! What can you mean?"

"I mean that there are no *Precieuses Ridicules* here, and that if he found his follower doing him, the follower might have a beating, without the glory of taking anybody in."

"You had better have taken my advice, Mr. Beamish," said Evelyn; "sitting up too late, you see, you hear things that you do not understand: we, old people, who are used to late hours, and to going to plays, understand what Mr. Poynings means, and, perhaps, when you are older you will know what he is talking about."

Lady Barnstaple laughed spitefully, and the poor youth looked so thoroughly put out, that Evelyn was sorry for him, though affectation is never really worthy of pity.

"Come, Mr. Beamish," said she, "do not

put yourself in the way of being tormented, and nobody can torment you. We are going to have another deal; sit down here, and if you will endeavour to learn the difference between an ace and a knave, I dare say you will get on very well."

She smiled as she looked up at him. It was the same kind smile which had reassured him about the wounded horse. Recalled to his better self, he sat down, and Lady Barnstaple looked quite discomfited: she thought this an immense triumph of Lady Umfraville's. Lady Umfraville thought only that she had relieved a foolish young man from an awkward predicament.

He did not attempt nonchalance again there.

The party were most of them gone—Mr. Poynings remained; when, one day, "Mr. Mortlake" was announced.

He had had a general invitation to visit them in the country.

"So delighted to see you, and see you so well," said he. "One would not think she had been ill," continued he to Mr. Poynings, looking at her as if with a sort of paternal pride.

"Perhaps Lady Umfraville was pretending illness all the time. She thought, perhaps, that she did not excite interest enough in the world!" said Mr. Poynings.

"Pretending!" said Mr. Mortlake angrily. "No, indeed, I can tell you that you have not the smallest knowledge of Lady Umfraville's character, if you think she could pretend anything."

Evelyn smiled at Mr. Poynings' look of surprise at such unusual and unnecessary vehemence.

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"I am much obliged to you for thinking so well of me," said she; "but I am not sure that I do not sometimes pretend like everybody else, pretend to be pleased sometimes when tired of people. I think everybody pretends something: even you, Mr. Mortlake, though you withdraw from the world to avoid its pretensions, I think you pretend to be a misanthrope, and do not pretend it well, for you are always found out to be a most benevolent person."

Old as he was, Mr. Mortlake reddened at this praise, and Mr. Poynings said, "If all the world were stripped of their pretensions it

would be a sorry sight, we had better take people as they are."

"It is the finding out too readily what they really are that torments me, and makes me, whatever Lady Umfraville may say to the contrary, a misanthrope. I hate to be deceived, and I hate still more to find out that I have been deceived."

"So, having found out that I have deceived you, and that you have thought me incapable of pretence, when by my own confession I am in the constant practice of it—now you hate me! You must, you are bound to do so, by your own confession, by your own principles!"

"No; for by the acknowledgment you nullify the fact—you put an end to the deceit when you say you are deceiving. I do not give you up yet—and yet how one is disappointed! I had really a high, a glorious opinion of Lord Rupert Conway." And he gave a glance at Evelyn, who certainly justified her own account of herself by pretending, most egregiously pretending to read a newspaper, which she raised at Mr. Mortlake's glance, and seemed to read most attentively. Mr. Poynings' eyes were

fixed on Mr. Mortlake, whom he was studying as a natural curiosity. Evelyn was absolutely breathless with terror, though had she considered the exaggerated style of the speaker she need not have been alarmed.

“I really had an idea he was a good minister—and now he has brought in a bill for restoring capital punishments in several cases where the wisdom of his predecessors had abolished it—he ought rather to have abolished it altogether.”

“Is that all?” said Mr. Poynings.

Evelyn gave a convulsive laugh, so exceeding had been her alarm, and so surprising the relief, but she continued to be profoundly interested in the Court Journal.

“All!” repeated Mr. Mortlake, in a tremendous tone. “It is an all that undoes him in my opinion.”

“What a pity!” said Mr. Poynings: “what a misfortune to the Prime Minister.”

“It is a great misfortune to a minister, I can tell you, to lose the good opinion of an honest and independent gentleman; but, at all events, it is a real grief to me. I had thought

him worthy—I only hope he is no longer thought so—I had believed him to be really desirous of serving his country.”

“Well, and I must say, at the risk of the misfortune of never having your good opinion,” said Mr. Poynings, “I must say I think he is most particularly serving his country by this very bill.”

“The punishment of death is so abhorrent to every feeling; it disgusts me to hear it supported by any one. That one human being should assume over another the right of life and death is to me something perfectly monstrous.”

“But as long as human beings exist, there will be some who assume the killing of their fellow-creatures without any right at all. Murder is very monstrous, but it would be more monstrous not to punish it.”

“Punish it, certainly, but not by another murder—not by making murder legal.”

“That is a contradiction, I maintain. As you say deceit ceases to be deceit in Lady Umfraville, because she acknowledges it; I say that taking away a man’s life ceases to be murder when it is done by law.”



“What is the foundation of all law?” said Lady Umfraville, laying down her paper; “but the justice and the object of all law is to preserve the lives and properties of those who deserve to have lives and properties. If you do not punish murder by death, what safety have we against being murdered?”

“A great deal more safety than we have by taking life for life. Mr. Poynings says it is a contradiction to talk of legal murder; but I maintain, that if our ritual says, ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ and our Statute Book says, ‘Thou shalt,’ it is a contradiction, indeed—a contradiction of the law of Nature. In a country where there is no such thing as capital punishments, I should think with horror of the very idea of taking the life of a fellow-creature: it would appear monstrous and unnatural; and in the very fury of passion, or in the long-enduring sternness of deliberate vengeance, the idea of taking away the life of my enemy would never occur to me. It would not be made familiar to me by public executions; it would not occur to me to say—‘Thirteen men like myself have the power of hanging any-

body they please, because they are called a judge and jury—why should I not have the same power because it pleases me?”

“Do you speak from experience?” said Mr. Poynings; “Has this reasoning really occurred to you in the fury of passion, or in the deliberate intentions of hatred? If it has, I have no more to say; but otherwise, I should have declared such thoughts most unlikely to arise in the mind of any man actuated by any strong feeling.”

“No, I was never going to take a fellow-creature’s life; it is abhorrent to my nature: and that is just what I say—that by capital punishments you only familiarise man to the idea of taking away life.”

“It was in consequence of capital punishments being the law of the land then, I suppose, that made Cain kill Abel?” said Mr. Poynings.

“What could one do instead of killing?” said Evelyn, “when one is in this state of fury against an enemy, and killing not being familiar to one’s mind, what is a person likely to do? It would save all trouble, to suppose that

the absence of capital punishments prevented people from having enemies, and from feeling fury ; but as you allow this state still to exist in the human mind, what happens when, instead of saying to oneself—a judge and jury—‘ Kill, and so I’ll kill,’ and so stab the object of one’s fury ; instead of this, in a country where there is no such thing as capital punishments, what is the process ?”

Mr. Mortlake half-smiled : “ He would go to law ; he would not expect or wish to take the life of his enemy, but he would punish him by law, and a much more real punishment it would be, being imprisoned in solitude. What is death to a reckless murderer ?”

“ It is surprising, then, why murderers run away,” said Mr. Poynings. “ If death is no punishment, why do they take so much pains to hide their crimes, and to escape from the gallows ?”

“ I believe a great deal of that concealment, and all those tricks of escape, are a great part of the pleasure of crime. If it was not considered as part of the business of a criminal

to escape the law, I think crime would lose half its charm."

"Among the savages, where there are no wicked Thirteen to sanctify murder, there is no such thing, as one human being taking away the life of another," said Mr. Poynings.

"I want to rescue a civilized country from the remains of savagery. I wish for real civilization, by which I mean real justice and security to all classes from all classes. If men were brought up with that feeling of security, and that expectation of perfect justice, it would keep all in an equanimity of feeling; there would not be those outbreaks of fury and avarice, and all the passions which lead men to crime."

"And so we should all fall fast asleep," said Mr. Poynings

Evelyn smiled at the extraordinary self-blindness which made this warm-hearted benevolent—who was in a fury every five minutes—talk of mankind being brought to a state of passionless calm.

"In short, you would have nobody punished

for doing wrong ; and because you do not like that thirteen men should have the power of hanging one, you would leave all the community at the mercy of everybody who had not arrived at this state of passionless equanimity," said Mr. Poynings.

"I certainly would have the laws so enacted that nobody should talk as you do, in cold blood, of such a shocking end to a human being as being hung."

"I thought you said a murderer would not care about it?" said Evelyn.

"He would be much more terrified at solitary confinement. A life of solitary remorse would be more horrible to him, and yet be the means of reforming him."

"You think, then, that to take a life, which by your own account is valueless, is more cruel than to preserve that life in exquisite torture. If I was to be condemned, I should certainly say, 'Hang me at once, if you please, and do not keep me on the rack.'"

"There it is !" cried Mr. Mortlake, getting up, and walking about as if he could bear it no longer. "There it is, the most delicate

lady—high-born beauty, softest, gentlest—talking about hanging as she would of going to a ball! These are the fruits of our sanguinary code, and when we had almost got rid of it, to have it revived! You, indeed, I fear, defend it; because ——” and he fixed his eyes on Lady Umfraville.

Mr. Poynings was making the drollest face of amazement at the strange being before him, and did not attend to either his looks or his words; but they were—or rather their implications were—bitter to Evelyn. Strange how this kind-hearted man, whose whole mind was filled with a wish to serve his fellow-creatures, and who had a most sincere regard for this particular fellow-creature, should in his extravagant zeal have given her as much pain as a very proud, very reserved person can feel, at having the secret of his soul laid bare. Strange that when the eyes of all the world are always so fixed on the doings, and so curious about the feelings of one who held the high position of Lady Umfraville, that her father and all her lovers had failed to discover on whom her preference was bestowed,—even

the most audacious, who had dared everything to wring it from her, while this single old gentleman had by mere force of sympathy penetrated her secret.

"I neither defend or oppose; of course, I know nothing about the real merits of the argument, and I should be glad to hear all that can be said about it. As yet, you have only said that you dislike capital punishments, and that murderers like it. If you can prove that, I think you have settled the question."

"If you were to ask the next condemned murderer if he would rather be hanged than be transported," said Mr. Poynings, "I give up the matter."

"That is making it a mere matter of fact and evidence," said Mr. Mortlake.

"Mr. Poynings refers it to a committee," said Evelyn.

"Yes—just so: that is the way with legislators; they refer everything to a committee, just sneak out of the difficulty and trouble of an argument, and, instead of deciding for themselves on principle, they throw the difficulty and trouble on somebody else, and then

give a string of figures and countings, and strike a balance, as if human beings were so many units or counters, that you could jingle into any kind of result you please."

"How badly a poor minister is used, to be sure," said Mr. Poynings; "they are never treated as human beings at all events. Here is our Premier, who, for the last month of the session, was overwhelmed with abuse, in and out of the House, for not having a committee to inquire into the results of the mitigation of punishment laws, and now you attack him as if he had a dozen committees!"

"That is a mere matter of fact," said Evelyn, sarcastically. "Mr. Mortlake argues on general principles: he thinks that modern legislators always have committees; and therefore there must have been a committee on this bill. That is arguing on a great principle, not on mere facts!"

Mr. Mortlake smiled and said—"Well, I give up the committee, but I shall never cease to argue against the whole principle. I maintain, that to take the life of any human being is to be a murderer, and that he who punishes one



who has taken a life by taking his, only commits a second murder."

"Then, if Mr. Poynings took down that sword of my great ancestor in the hall, and ran at you to cut your head off, you would let him do it—you would not make an effort to save yourself?"

"Indeed I should; for his sake, as well as my own, I should do everything I could to prevent him from killing me."

"In self-defence, then, you would even take the poker, and run the chance of killing him. Then, on a more generous and enlarged principle than mere self-defence, you would provide such laws as would preserve the lives of a whole community? So that you see the question comes to what is the best mode of preserving those lives. You acknowledge you would run the risk of taking Mr. Poynings' life rather than lose your own, and therefore I think you must allow that the law may run the chance of taking a murderer's life, if it would tend to prevent other murders, unless you can prove that a man is more afraid of a prison than death; and that is a mere fact.

On your own argument of general principles, admit self-defence, and you admit that we should take the best means for the purpose."

"I hope you will not put it to the proof," said Mr. Poynings, with a look of mock terror; "for, as you are a great deal stronger and taller than me, Mr. Mortlake, and as I think you can be in a fury, and as I should not quite depend on that reasoning to yourself that you told us of, which, in the midst of your fury, was to prevent you taking my life, I should have a poor chance, I think, against you and your poker."

"Oh, I should run in between the combatants," said Evelyn, "and break off the fight in the very moment of danger."

"I think I would rather you were to be arbitrator, than antagonist," said Mr. Mortlake. "I doubt you would wield the sword of your great ancestor as mercilessly as you do your arguments."

"You were not one of the pistol shooters at Plessy Canons, I think?" said Mr. Poynings.

"No, I should disdain such a modern, mean weapon with which, without any attempt at

danger, or necessity for self-defence, one may become a murderer."

Lady Umfraville and Mr. Windham were engaged to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Bowen, in Northamptonshire : but before the time appointed arrived, Evelyn received a note from Mrs. Bowen to put off their visit for a day, as Mr. Bowen was obliged to be at a dinner at Leicester, given to Lord Cornbury by his constituents, and at which Lord Rupert was to be present. "As Leicester is not much out of your way, you can meet us there, and we can go on together to Bowen Court."

Mr. Poynings and Mr. Mortlake agreed to accompany them to Leicester. Lady Umfraville arranged their starting, so as to arrive a little before dinner ; and she and her party joining Mrs. Bowen at the hotel, accompanied her to the gallery of the Town-Hall.

Evelyn neither saw nor heard anything till the two brothers entered, Lord Cornbury looking as if his brother's sanguinary code was going to be that instant executed upon him. Lord Rupert followed. The assembly rose with the usual enthusiasm, and Lord Rupert

looked so noble, and bowed to the plaudits so gracefully, and was of a presence so glorious, that he charmed every heart, as well as that one which was beating almost audibly when he entered. He sat so that only his profile was visible to her ; and when he looked up at the gallery, it was only towards that part which was opposite to him. She gazed unobserved ; everybody was looking down, and no one remarked or could see on what her eyes were fixed.

There was a great deal of eating, and drinking, and singing ; and she had undisturbed leisure to look more at the object of her love than she had ever looked before. And long she looked, scarce conscious of thought ; one idea made up her existence, every power of body and mind was wrapped and concentrated in the object on which she gazed. The music played, and an universal noise prevailed, but no distinct sound reached her ears till Lord Rupert's voice, as he rose to give "The Queen," struck her ears with a sudden thrill.

All rose : he said but those two words. How clear and glorious they sounded. When

“God save the Queen” was over, and “The Prince,” and all the usual toasts had been given, and when Lord Rupert rose to return thanks for “Her Majesty’s Ministers,” a profound stillness prevailed. It was the first time Evelyn had ever heard him speak in public, and she felt as nervous as if he was going to speak for the first time. But the perfect ease and calm of his appearance gave her an instinctive reassurance. He made a short speech, but it was true eloquence, for it went to the hearts and understandings of all present. The manner was, perhaps, half its power; but power was the impression that it gave. Rare power of body and mind—a superb presence, a voice that, without the least appearance of being raised, reached every part of the hall, and which, without any particular intention, struck the hearers at once as that of a gentleman: language which had the perfection of a finished composition, while it seemed to flow forth without the slightest effort; while everything he said, though it appeared so familiar to him, struck the audience as altogether new.

The terror of the day was the Chartists ;

but while Lord Rupert spoke of them, these terrors seemed to melt away and disappear from the imagination of the assembly.

He sat down ; and while the room rang with cheers, Evelyn looked on the hero of the moment, with a transport of exalted enthusiastic love.

Some one touched her shoulder and spoke to her, but it was some seconds before she could understand that it was Mrs. Bowen asking her to come away and dress for a ball, which was to be at the Assembly Room.

“Nobody will speak now that is worth hearing,” was enough ; and they returned to the hotel. Mr. Mortlake remained at the Town-Hall, but the rest were soon ready, and proceeded to the rooms, where “all the rank and fashion of the neighbourhood” were collected.

## CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Lady Umfraville and her party reached the upper end of the room to which the stewards conducted them, the dancing had just began. Lord Cornbury was leading off: Lord Rupert was listening to a gentlemen who was talking very earnestly—he stopped—Lord Rupert looked around.

Surprise, delight—extreme, intense delight was in that first look. There was no mistaking it: it was love. She held out her hand: he took it; but, at the instant, a constraint came over the first involuntary expression of pleasure; he instantly withdrew it to shake hands with Mrs. Bowen and Mr. Windham, to whom he first spoke—"I am glad to see Lady Umfraville so perfectly recovered."

"Perfectly, thank you: her sea trip has completely restored her."

She glanced at his countenance: it was grave.

"You made an adventurous journey through Spain," said he, turning to her.

"It was rash, perhaps; but it was, unfortunately, altogether adventureless."

"I should not have thought of entering such a disturbed country," said Mr. Windham, intent on clearing himself of having endangered his daughter, "but that we had a very strong escort. The Duke of Plessingham, Lord Philip, and some of his brother officers were kind enough to accompany us."

"My father would not have let me travel there without a large party, but I was so anxious to be in Spain, I should have gone unhesitatingly, alone with him."

"You would have been tantalized to have been at Gibraltar without leaving English ground; but it gratifies one's national pride to feel that English rock the only secure spot in the whole Peninsula, and to think, that after winning all their battles for them, and



re-conquering their country for them, we never attempted to make ourselves masters of one inch of it for ourselves, but rested contented with our old and long-enduring possession."

"For which, Napoleon said we were generous geese," said Mr. Poynings.

"The only combination with generous which he could comprehend. But, with all its faults, and in the midst of all its misfortunes, did you not like to feel yourself actually in Spain?" said Lord Rupert to Evelyn.

"Enchanted! After all one has read or heard of a country, there is always something of which one has no idea till one actually sees and feels it oneself."

"Reality; a vividness of actual sights and sounds that no description can give us," said Lord Rupert.

Several acquaintances of Lady Umfraville's now came up: numbers claimed Lord Rupert's attention, and she had no further intercourse with him that evening. Lord Cornbury asked her to dance: she could not feel being cordial to him: she could not but be exceedingly confused when he again spoke to

her. The last time he had seen her was not, however, so prominent in his recollection as it was in hers, notwithstanding all she had gone through since. Her first idea, as he came up to her, was, what mischief you did me, you unlucky blunderer. He was glad to have her for a partner, because he was more acquainted with her than with any one else in the room, and, as she scarcely spoke, he was comfortable for that dance.

The next morning he and Lord Rupert called upon the party at the hotel. Mr. Poynings presented Mr. Mortlake to Lord Rupert, saying—

“Here is a gentleman, my Lord, who formerly considered you as a virtuous minister, but who now regards you as one of the most wicked men in the universe, and, only that he has an antipathy to any of the human species being put out of the world, he would have you the first victim of your ‘Bill for increase or revival of Capital Punishments.’”

Lord Rupert smiled and bowed, saying: “When people are very earnest against laws enacting severe punishments, I often suspect

that they have some particular reason for dreading them ; I think they must be aware that they run some danger of suffering under them themselves ; but Mr. Mortlake does not look as if he had ever done anything but kindness to all the world ; and it is unfortunate for me that I should be the exception to his general benevolence."

"You are an excellent physiognomist," said Mr. Poynings ; "it is from Mr. Mortlake's excess of benevolence that he is so angry. You have the character of being very benevolent, too ; you and Mr. Mortlake only differ as to the degree : he would be benevolent to murderers and house-burners, and house-breakers : you do not go quite so far."

"I go further than you think, perhaps," continued Mr. Mortlake ; "I would not even prosecute these Chartists that everybody is so afraid of. Here we sit, after an excellent breakfast, with the certainty of having an excellent dinner afterwards—have we any right to judge what temptations men are subject to, who have had no breakfast, and are very likely to have no dinner either ?"

“It is very true,” said Lord Rupert, “we know the guilt—

“What’s done we partly may compute,  
But know not what’s resisted.”

and that is the misfortune—the inevitable misfortune—of all laws ; they can only attack the general class of crime : they cannot possibly foresee every modification of species. Something is left to the discretion of the judge in English Law ; and if all men were like you, Mr. Mortlake, we should be better off, perhaps, were our courts of justice like some of the oriental governments, unhampered by law, and left to decide only by equity. But there is a virtue in certainty that is beyond all others in case of crime and punishment—to know what one’s punishment is to be by law, and not by the peculiar temper of any judge, would certainly be most satisfactory to me.”

“And does even our sublime system of jurisprudence effect this ; are we sure of being justly treated ? Do not ‘wretches hang, that jurymen may dine ?’ ”

“But you know,” said Lord Rupert, smiling,  
“legislators, who have breakfasted, cannot

comprehend the feelings of a man who is uncertain where he is to procure a dinner !”

Mr. Mortlake laughed ; and Mr. Bowen said : “ Are you certain where you are to have a dinner to-day, Lord Rupert, or will you run the chance of finding one at Bowen Court ? ”

“ A certainty of an excellent one, I am sure I should have, but we are unfortunately engaged at Frampton Hall to-day ; and to-morrow evening I go to town.”

“ I am quite disappointed,” said Mrs. Bowen ; “ we had hoped we might have induced you to honour us with your company for a few days. Lady Umfraville and Mr. Windham are going there with us, and several of your friends will be there to-morrow. Lord Cornbury, are you going to town also ? ”

“ Oh, no ! Rupert is only going up for a Council ; but I am going to Darrell’s to-morrow.”

“ Perhaps, Lord Rupert,” continued Mr. Bowen, “ you may be coming to this part of the world after your Council, and could give us a day.”

Lord Rupert said he was afraid it was impossible at present.

“At all events, you will come to us as usual when you can, I am sure,” said Mrs. Bowen.

The carriages of the party were now at the door; and while the hospitable Bowens were doing civilities to Mr. Mortlake, and while Lord Cornbury, with his hat in his hand, was wishing himself out of the room, Lord Rupert turned to Lady Umfraville——

“Evelyn, my dear,” cried her father, perfectly unconscious of the interest she took in what Lord Rupert might be going to say to her, being the very opposite extreme of Mr. Mortlake, who seemed to forget the minister in the man, while Mr. Windham always merged the man entirely in the minister.

“Evelyn, can you take Mr. Mortlake to Bowen Court?”

“With pleasure,” said she. How much it cost her to say this as kindly as she did, Mr. Mortlake never knew. Lord Rupert took leave; and Evelyn, alone with Mr. Mortlake—for her father went with Mr. Poynings—would gladly have sunk back in the carriage, and reveried over the pain and pleasure of the last few hours; but he began the instant they were out of the streets of Leicester.

“It is impossible to be in a passion with Lord Rupert, in his company. And yet, I think I am more seriously angry with him than ever.”

“Because he is good-humoured?”

Mr. Mortlake looked at her earnestly for a moment, and then turning away his eyes as if they saw so much, it would not be fair to see more, he went on:—

“Yes, I am angry with him for being a diplomatist: it is unnatural, it is dishonourable.”

“Dishonourable!” cried Evelyn, half-laughing, half-indignant.

“I really think so. It is coming to fight with the unarmoured, cased in panoply of proof; it is cutting at a doublet, unaware that there is chain mail underneath.”

“People in public life are so accustomed to be abused, they are quite hardened to it.”

“Exactly, hardened: that is what disgusts me, and what ought to disgust you,” said he, with emphasis. “He is hard. Mr. Poynings paid a most unmerited compliment to his benevolence. I doubt very much if he has any feeling, or any motive of action beyond the

mere vulgar notion of keeping his place, like any other minister that ever was born."

Lady Umfraville was too seriously displeased to make any reply, and they were silent for some time.

"Do you think day-dreams are injurious to those who indulge in them?" said he, at last.

"I am not a fair judge. I ought, perhaps, to say that they are; but I should be very glad to be convinced that they are not, because I have been day-dreaming all my life."

"So I thought. Extraordinary, mysterious power of instinctive sympathy! The first moment I saw you, I think, I understood your character, at least a part of it, instantly; the romance of your disposition, by its resemblance to my own, became more apparent to me than it is to any one else in the world."

"Do you think me very romantic?"

"Very."

"But what do you mean by romantic? for there be many and sundry kinds, and much that I should be sorry was in your disposition, or that you fancied to be in mine, goes under that general head."



“I mean unworldliness.”

“Yet you see me living in the world.”

“Yes; but your very position in the world is one which, though with a common mind it dooms to livelong trivialities, is in an uncommon mind such as yours, the very source of romance, such as I define the word—belief in generosity, as well as being generous yourself—belief in generous attachment—the wish to love and be loved for love’s sake, without a care for the usual ways of measuring merit by precedency at a Drawing-Room, or superabundance of acres.”

“That is very much what I think romance—that is to say, the merit and distinction that I value are personal, from high qualities or noble actions. If I had been born in the days of war, or in the happier ages of knight-errantry, I should have expected great deeds alone to have won my heart.”

“Just so; and as there is no war, and as knights are to be had only in got-up pageants, you are fain to—In short, you are romantic, and you imagine that there is more in—That is one of the essentials of romance, to

exalt every object in the imagination, and to live in an imaginary world. If you would always live in it!"

Lady Umfraville blushed, and turned away displeased.

"You are angry at my impertinence—I acknowledge it to be unjustifiable, but having myself felt that dread waking, that 'stern arrest' which dragged me from my visionary happiness into the reality of sorrow—I have, unwarrantably and unpardonably, perhaps, trusting to the instinctive sympathy of our natures, trespassed on a confidence which I am aware I have surprised, not received. I was, even as a boy, as a child, romantic: educated at home, it was my fate to see, when I was about sixteen, a person so beautiful, so interesting in her appearance, that she at once and for ever took possession of my heart. She was engaged to be married, her lover was with her: she evidently did not care in the least for him: I built a whole novel upon every look she gave, and every word she uttered; the most casual expression, every turn of her head, every movement of her

beautiful mouth, every rise or fall of the long dark eyelashes which fringed her lustrous eyes—all was interpreted by me into the sufferings of a martyred being, going to be sacrificed by the tyranny of parents to a loathsome monster. In her presence I never withdrew my eyes from this scrutiny of her soul's expression—absent from her, I spent every instant, planning her release from this impending doom. At last, intoxicated by one or two smiles bestowed upon the boy, and, carried away by the headstrong impetuosity of a love, that originated at least in generous and chivalric feelings, I declared it to her, told her I knew she was a victim, but that I would rescue her. She was two or three years older than myself, and considered me as a child: she only replied that she was, as I knew, engaged, and was therefore surprised at my venturing to address her as a lover, and that her being engaged was answer sufficient.

Far from damping my ardour, or dissipating my romance, this reply only exalted her into the most heroic of devoted women: the most pure-minded and virtuous of destined victims. She

married, and I, resolved to emulate her virtue, determined never to see her again. I did not see her, but I never thought of anything else. Day and night I dreamed of her, her dreadful existence chained to one she could never love, her suffering, her angelic endurance, the turns of fate which were at last to release her and make her mine. My father sent me to Oxford, and intended that I should make a figure in public life; I was a scholar and scholarly inclined. I believe, I was ambitious too; I do not think I was naturally indolent, or deficient in capacity; but from the time that I became the slave of this passion, I am not conscious of ever having had the power of turning my attention to what I was about: I became, if one may use the term for a chronic disease as mine was, absent, to such a degree, that my tutors complained, and my friends were alarmed. My father died, however, and I was spared the necessity of going into Parliament, and the wretchedness of disappointing him. I travelled, and I saw something of the scenes I passed through, but I was much more really occupied with the scenes

which were constantly passing in my own fancy. I had kept my resolution; I had not seen her since her marriage; I had resisted several opportunities of doing so, but in fancy I was meeting her continually: I was always, in imagination, irresistibly impelled to betray my passion, and was continually exalting it by the nobleness of her conduct and my own in these unreal situations.

“Mr. —— died! she was free. I saw her, and in her weeds, that mockery of woe seemed to me only to enhance her charms, she was quite as lovely as ever, and the high wrought visions of all she had felt, and thought, and suffered during the years of her unhallowed union seemed to be all realized in her countenance. She received me as an old friend very kindly, I thought it was with marked feeling only restrained by her widowed propriety.—Her year of weeds was over. I was at her feet, I poured out all my long concealed, exalted vehemence of passion. She heard me without the slightest emotion; and saying, she did not think I should add to her happiness, refused

me as coolly and indifferently as she would a partner at a ball."

Here Mr. Mortlake started up and leaned over the side of the open carriage,—“even now,” continued he sitting down, “the agony of that moment tears my very soul,—I told her I knew how unhappy her marriage had been, how I had suffered for her, how I had rejoiced in her freedom, how I had flown to devote myself to her, and try to render the rest of her life as happy as it had been wretched. ‘You are very kind,’ said she, ‘and I am highly flattered by your intentions, but my marriage was one of choice, I have been perfectly contented and happy, and I am concerned you should have thought I was otherwise.’

“Perfectly contented and happy with that being,—and perfectly contented you seem to be at his death too, Madam. ‘I was sorry for his death, of course.’—I could bear no more, I rushed from her presence; ‘sorry for him of course,’—I was disenchanted at once. I know not whether I felt most indignant at her feeling any sorrow for him, or at her speaking of it so carelessly as a mere matter of form.—I under-

stood her at last, at last I had discovered that her soul had no correspondence whatever with her beautiful features—I understood it all, she had married to secure a good establishment, and a fine jointure which she had,—she did not care for my fortune though it was large : she had married first for money, she married again for rank, a very few months afterwards, she accepted an elderly nobleman of high rank, with whom, I suppose, she lived quite contentedly, and was sorry for, of course, when he died ; she is now a happy widow a second time, and enjoying all the grandeur of her position.—The anguish of that disenchantment—may you never know it !—I left all human society, I retired to my estate in Norfolk and I became as you see an old man, and a misanthrope ; for though I endeavoured by general benevolence to fill the aching void in my heart, I have had little communication with society. That youngsculptor”—

At this moment the carriage stopped, while the gate was opened at Bowen Court.

“I hope you will attend to the moral of my story,” said he, as they drove up the approach ; a thing we romantics seldom do.”

It is extraordinary the pleasure people take in telling their own story, and the ingenious excuses they make to themselves for doing so ! So thought Lady Umfraville, as she marvelled that Mr. Mortlake should have persuaded himself of there being the smallest resemblance between their fates. That Lord Rupert loved her she could not doubt, his looks, his words, the real interest with which he spoke—and yet his expression of not being privileged, implied that he still believed that the Duke of Plesingham was her affianced—or was he really himself affianced to Lady Maria ? Was Mr Mortlake right ?—was he devoted to ambition, and ready to make a match which seemed some political alliance ? She determined to ask the Bowens, who must know.

At Bowen Court, where was a large gay party, she was obliged to put away her romance and be of the world. In the evening, however, on Mrs. Bowen's saying, "I regret so much that Lord Rupert could not come ; I regret it really for his own sake ; he is so much devoted to business, that I am always glad when he is in society."



"He spends most of his holidays at Billingsly," said Mr. Poynings.

"Yes, they are a very attached family."

"Is Lord Ipswich quite well?" said Evelyn.

"Perfectly; he is able to go about among his hot-houses as well as ever now."

"His illness postponed Lord Rupert's marriage, I suppose," said Mr. Windham: "Where is Lady Maria?"

"At Frampton; the Bromptons are there."

A cold chill came at Evelyn's heart. She felt herself turn very pale. Was his interest in her, mere good-nature, or was he, loving her, and believing her to be engaged, going to unite himself to another out of pique? These thoughts rushed through her mind while Mr. Poynings said:—

"And when does the marriage take place?"

"I do not think there has been anything fixed, except by the newspapers," said Mrs. Bowen; "I should imagine his visit to Frampton had nothing to do with Lady Maria. I really do not know though: it is a very natural alliance with the daughter of one of his colleagues."

Mrs. Bowen belonged to the diplomatic corps, and she would not commit herself by an opinion, one way or the other.

"I wonder they have not contrived a match for poor Cornbury," said Mr. Poynings; "he would be saved so much trouble if he had a Lady Cornbury to speak for him. All the preliminaries settled by other people, it might be managed, I think; but his ever getting out the proposal himself I cannot fancy."

"Oh, no!" said Mr. Bowen, laughing, "how wretched he looked at the dinner yesterday. I doubt even, if the preliminaries were settled and all ready, if he could ever be induced to enter the church door."

"It could be managed by a special license in a private way," said Mr. Poynings; "but then the bridal visits; he would blush to death at the first. They might go abroad: I will advise his friends to send him and his bride to travel, and after six months he would be quite at ease, and she would be such a safe-guard to him in society."

"It is a great pity he is so shy," said Mr. Bowen "for he is a most amiable fellow. I

admire his great admiration for his brother, and his deference to him—waiving his birth-right from respect to his brother's abilities. I do not know which of their manners and conduct to each other deserves most praise ; for Lord Rupert does and says everything for him without ever appearing to do it.”

“ Strange disease that extreme bashfulness,” said Mr. Poynings to Lady Umfraville.

“ Yes, ‘ the night-mare of the soul,’ ” said she ; “ one wonders how it can survive school and college, where people are so laughed at for any peculiarity, and so forced to act for themselves.”

“ So much is lost in the crowd : a school-boy is scarcely considered as an individual, unless he is something very marvellous, or unless he does not join in their sports ; as long as a fellow can make one in a cricket-match, or take an oar in a boat-race, he gets through at Eton or Oxford—he is not esteemed or thought much of—but as long as he is not troublesome, he will be one of a crowd, without any great effort on his part ; he is not called upon for any individuality, unless he

chooses it, so that when he comes into the world as Lord Cornbury, he finds himself in a situation where he is a personage, and without the least idea how to do the character."

"It is a mere amiable defect, however," said Evelyn, "than the contrary. Self-sufficiency is a much worse fault, or premature knowledge of the world; one cannot believe there is much feeling when there is no embarrassment in a young person."

"Much more amusing, though," said Mr. Poynings; "a conceited fellow, who talks ever of himself, is better in society than one who talks not, even if his silence is from real modesty. One can laugh at a puppy—a poor abashed, one can only pity."

"And pity, however poetic," said Evelyn, "is, I acknowledge, rather dull in company; from all which it is very clear that it is much better to be unamiable in society."

"No, no, the amiably-pleasant are the best; they bring their wares into traffic, not only good in themselves, but nicely made up; and everybody is ready to trade with them on their own terms."

“ While the poor ill-prepared amiable is shut out of the market, having, perhaps, the most valuable article there. Bad morality! and sadly against the copy-book maxim—‘ Be not deceived by appearances.’ ”

“ We are not deceived in mere society ; we know what we want ; as we are only for the hour ourselves, and expect no more from our neighbours, very good or very grand are little valued except to be stared at.



## CHAPTER VII.

“ I WISH you would bring the ladies with you, Mrs. Bowen, to look at the pretty stream that I saw as we passed yesterday ; I want to examine its capabilities for trout, and you would find it a pleasant walk, it is not a mile from the gate,” said Mr. Poynings, next morning.

“ Lady Umfraville was talking of driving over to Lodore Abbey to-day,” said Mr. Bowen.

“ But the abbey will do just as well to-morrow,” said Evelyn ; “ let us walk to the trout stream to-day.”

“ You can do both easily,” said Mr. Bowen, “ by ordering your carriage to meet you at the bridge ; it will save you the walk back, and show you the prettiest part of the stream.”

“ That will do, exactly,” said Evelyn.

“I will order the carriages—yours, Lady Umfraville, and our phaeton will just hold the party, I think.”

“It is kind of you to dignify it at once as the trout stream, Lady Umfraville,” said Mr. Poynings.

“I did it from sheer ignorance. I did not sufficiently mark that you spoke doubtfully of its possibility. I cannot understand how there can be any amusement in fishing, and, therefore I cannot well sympathize in the pleasure you expect in the anticipated joys of catching the trout, that you suppose may inhabit there.”

“Do you not do honour to my powers of imagination, which can look so far forward? Cannot you emulate them, and fancy me looking interesting in a large straw hat and fishing-jacket, with a rod in my hand, sentimentally gazing on the stream, ‘wherein the finny prey do glide?’”

“With the anti-sentimental ulterior view of eating them for dinner.”

“I declare now, conscientiously speaking, and upon honour, with my own recollection—I have frequently been for hours alone with

my line and the river, and have not once thought of dinner."

"Because you caught nothing; that is an easy way of accounting for your not thinking of your dinner till you had it."

"On the contrary, we think most earnestly of what we feel uncertain about; had I caught my dish of trout, it would have been a settled affair, and I could have thought no more about it: as long as my success was doubtful I was much more like to be 'mentally occupied' by it."

"How long—I do not ask you to speak conscientiously from your own experience, but from the observation of those who are in that line—how long between breakfast and dinner can a man be 'mentally occupied' about what he is to eat at that dinner? I mean in situations where uncertainty does not, as you say, add to his earnestness."

"I believe, in some cases, uninterruptedly,—that is to say, supposing him to have no luncheon to break the pure continuity of his dinner anticipations. He may, of course, be occupied by different things in the course of those hours,



and apparently attentive to them; but the under current of his mind is, depend upon it, all the time carrying on the stream to his future enjoyment."

"Of all classes of men, then, gourmands, according to you, are the most imaginative."

"And, like all others who indulge in such pernicious habits of the mind, to what woe-ful disappointments are they subject! Even when ordering their own *recherché* banquets at the best house in Paris, it has been my fate to be in company with a person undergoing the horrors of something not exactly as it should be."

"What consolation could you offer?"

"I once attempted consolation by suggesting a glass of wine, but I made the matter ten times worse. It was not the right moment for wine; and, above all, I mentioned a wine that was at that particular juncture wholly inadmissible; and my friend not only rejected my offered consolation with a 'pshaw,' but—though one of the most correct men in the world—actually uttered something like an oath."

“In fact it was a case,” said Evelyn, “beyond the ordinary formalities of society.”

“Quite so, and I took care never to be in that gentleman’s society upon such an occasion again.”

“How much of life and character those restaurateurs must see: no one ever went to a restaurateur to enquire into a person’s character, yet one might learn a good deal of the temper, at least, from two or three such opportunities of studying human nature as you have just described.”

“Yes, that is what ladies never have; men see women where they are always to be seen, in society or at home, and in the scenes where their dispositions are naturally displayed—where is fixed the chief interest of their lives. In a ball-room, even, a good or bad temper breaks out; or the indifference to, or the too great earnestness in the matter, marks the frivolity or the cause; and a man of any observation can, even in the whirl of a town life, form some notion of a woman’s tastes and habits. A woman rarely sees a man when his temper is really tried—never at Tattersall’s or

at the restaurateur's, the two real interests of a man's life."

"Some men; you do not include everybody, I suppose. And you do not consider how much genius, and wit, and resource, would be wasted in a woman, if she knew perfectly well beforehand how she was to manage the animal afterwards. If she knew every time when he would become restive, all her skill in driving him would be lost; she would be prepared to give him the rein, or to touch with the whip; but, unprepared, it is all her own genius at the moment: anybody can do what they are prepared for; real ability is, to know what to do on an unexpected emergency."

"It will be a thousand pities, Lady Umfraville, if you have no opportunity of shewing your genius in this line: if 'the animal' you undertake to drive will go the road, without a rear, or even a start, your admirable theory will be wasted."

"Like many other things which sound well in theory, the practice would be found a very different affair," said she, laughing.

The party walked by the stream, through

flat meads and pretty fields, some still green, and some in their gossamered stubble, gay in the October sun. Mr. Poynings pronounced it decidedly trout-producing, and the carriages were at the bridge, and they drove to the Abbey ruin.

“A good deal of that anticipatory force of imagination about dinner has been here, I fancy,” said Mr. Poynings, as they paced the Refectory.

“I suppose there was: but one does not like to think so, when there was such great preparation for withdrawing from worldly cares, and ‘all appliances and means to boot’ for sanctity and devotion, one wonders how such things could trouble men so situated.”

“But you do not call eating a care of the world,” said Mrs. Bowen, “do you?—people must eat everywhere; and even if one lived on water-cresses, one might like some water-cresses better than others.”

“It was not the fare of these excellent and holy men, we may suppose, however, from this well smoked and ample fire-place; their kitchen does not seem to have been at all like a grot for coolness,” said Mr. Poynings.

“How fortunate we are,” said Evelyn, “to enjoy all its beauty, all wild and picturesque as it now is, looking at the sky through these arches, instead of seeing it smoky and steamy, and full of saucepans and cooks.”

“Upon my life, I don’t know!” said Mr. Bowen: “if we had not had luncheon before we set out, I fancy none of us would dislike a *rechauffé* of game, or a smoking venison pasty.”

“One has so much more romantic a notion of monasteries here, where we see them only in beautiful ruins; but I remember being so shocked at a convent at Liège—do you remember taking me there?” said Evelyn to Mr. Windham. “Such shocking fat, coarse, everyday looking people—not a novice even that could, by any force of fancy, sit for Clare. So very smooth-faced and stupid, not one of them looked as if they had ever had any story, not even as much as would make a tale in an annual, far less a *Mysteries of Udolpho*.”

“Is a story necessary for a monk or a nun?” said Mrs. Bowen.

“Essentially—they are only people in brown

or black gowns ; unless they left the world for some sad cause, some dire misfortune, or shocking wickedness."

"And if we were all now to appear to you as monks and nuns, gliding about these cloisters, what stories could you make about us?"

"Nothing at all, I am afraid," said she, laughing ; "we all look too comfortable, and at ease."

"You do not allow enough for the force of contrast," said Mr. Poynings. "A very young, very fair, poor, childlike victim renouncing the world she never knew, is quite as touching as any old, cadaverous sinner, who has been scourging and macerating himself about his story. You would look the part very well, making your profession ; looking so fair, and fresh, and smiling ; cutting off all your beautiful hair—how we should all cry : it is quite moving even to think of."

"I should not smile, should I?"

"It would be very touching," said Mrs. Bowen ; "it would seem as if you were an unconscious victim."

“What a pity you cannot do it,” said Mr. Poynings: “what a capital romance it would make;—the young and beautiful Baroness Umfraville withdrawing from the world, renouncing all its pomps and vanities——”

He was interrupted by Mr. Mortlake taking his leave. He went off in his usual abrupt manner; and the rest of the party walked home. Their way lay by the skirts of a common——

“What is the matter?” cried Mrs. Bowen, as she saw people running, and dragoons riding——

“Chartist mob! I suppose” said Mr. Poynings, coolly.

They hurried into the lane that led to Bowen Court, and were soon safe within its precincts: but on reaching the house, they found everybody talking about the mob, and the unexpectedness of the meeting, and the dispersion by the soldiers, and the activity of the magistrates, and, above all, of the wonderful fact that this mob had been headed by——Sir Luttrell Wycherley!!

It was doubted. Mr. Bowen went to

inquire—it was a fact. He had been recognised : indeed, he had, in his speech, declared himself as their leader. It appeared that he had been for sometime engaged with their proceedings in secret, but that he had, this day, appeared publicly, armed, and as their chief ; and, on the dispersion of the body by the military, had barely escaped capture : he had got off by hard running : the constables were in full pursuit, but had not found him.

“ This is likely to be the last of his exploits,” said Mrs. Bowen.

“ He has settled himself now, I think,” said Mr. Poynings. “ He has never rested till he is fairly within the clutches of the law, and, according to Lord Rupert’s sanguinary bill, he would run a great chance of that shocking event occurring, which your friend, Mr. Mortlake, thinks it so indelicate to mention.”

“ It would be a just riddance,” said Mrs. Bowen.

“ I do not know,” said Mr. Poynings. “ I think we shall miss Wycherley, immensely : he was so obliging ; he filled up each variety of wonder. When there was no Sandwich



Islander, or Sonneteer from the Lakes, no coronation, or christening, or any particular event, we were so accustomed to some extravaganza of Sir Luttrell's; we shall hardly know how to get on without some of his harlequinades to fill up the scenes while the principal actors are off the stage."

"Poor Wycherley!" said Mrs. Bowen, "I think that speech would be worse than hanging to him—not to be one of the principal characters; to be merely a harlequin or clown of the intermediate drama—too bad; he would punish you for that, if he heard it."

"He would be Punch," said Mr. Poynings, "which is surely low in the scale of theatricals, if he thought it would create a sensation for half-an-hour: to be a harlequin would be quite in his way; that is just what he would like to be, a great poet one hour, and a great horse-jockey, perhaps, the next: as quick as Mathews in changing his costume, he could, to do him justice, change his costume of mind, as well as Mathews too. He has been early smitten, I think, with the fairy tale of the ogre who transforms himself from the largest

to the smallest animals, and is, alternately, a hippopotamus and a mouse; and it requires no small skill, I assure you, to change at once, impromptu, from the ideas and language of a hippopotamus to those of a magnanimous mouse."

"His changes were very amusing," said Mrs. Bowen, "one found him always something new: there is nobody like him; he will leave quite a blank, I think."

"He was a bore," said Mr. Bowen, "he was such a puppy he took up everybody's attention and he was so ill-tempered and ill-bred."

"His ways were not those of peace, nor his paths the paths of pleasantness," said Mr. Poynings, "he was so full of himself he could not admit another idea, and he was so satirical he could spare nothing and no person: he was so omnivorous in his appetite for satire, that I believe he would satirize himself rather than have anybody unattacked."

"I do think," said Mr. Bowen, "he is as thoroughly unamiable a man as ever I saw, and that made it surprising the pleasure that ladies took in his society."—

"I have often observed that ladies like that

species of company in which there is a certain degree of terror," said Mr. Poynings, "I believe that is the recondite allegory of the pepper and cream tart, it alluded to those sweet doses of creamy flattery which delighteth the female ear, but seasoned, the dead sweet taken off, by some of the dangerous sharpness, the spirited flavour of the pepper of sarcasm.—There are certain animals which like for their particular and choice dish—the prickly pointed thistle."

"You talk of Sir Luttrell's severity, what are we to think of your's," said Mrs. Bowen.

"That it is all for your good!—Now Sir Luttrell never thought of anybody's good: to do him justice he never thought of being good himself, so it would have been hypocrisy in in him to attempt anything but mischief."

"You forget his sermon," said Mr. Bowen, laughing, "surely that was meant to improve his congregation."

"Did you ever read it," said Mr. Poynings. "I actually did and so did Lady Umfraville, I know, but could anything be more audaciously hypocritical? Of all his tricks that pulpit snatching was the most abandoned."

“Not worse than being a body snatcher, which I believe he really was,” said Mr. Bowen, “I know we had a galvanic soirée one evening, and suddenly on a curtain being withdrawn, a dead figure was seen extended in an inner room: he applied his galvanic wires, and made it stand up, move its limbs, open its eyes and stare with such horrible mockery of life, as almost drove the soirée mad.”

“What became of his hatching human beings?” said Mr. Poynings; “that was to be galvanic too.”

“It was never attempted, I fancy; it was probably only talked of among a multitude of other nonsenses never really attempted.”

“I hope he will write his life,” said Mr. Poynings. “It was now what Dr. Johnson used to say, ‘turning patriot was the last refuge of a scoundrel.’ Publishing his or her memoirs is now the last effort of a bankrupt in reputation. His own views of his own adventures are the only possession he has unentered in the schedule, and upon their publication he often makes a handsome livelihood. And ‘The

Memoirs of an Un-hanged Baronet' will have a splendid sale. Everybody would buy and read them. Would you not, Lady Umfraville? Do not you think it would be quite in character for Sir Luttrell to write his own life and adventures, and introduce those of all his acquaintance, with every addition that spleen and malice could suggest?"

"One could not be surprised," said Evelyn, "at his being splenetic at the world from which he has banished himself. He is so fallen now, that I think he should be treated with mercy."

She was disgusted and shocked at the heartless mockery of these men who could thus coolly talk of the ignominious end of a man who had been their companion; and she felt a sort of gratitude to Sir Luttrell, in the midst of her dread and dislike of his character, for never having betrayed his visit to her as the quack. She would surely have heard of it if he had. She was convinced that he had not by a conversation which took place the next day.

"Here is Prior Vernon's marriage," said Mr. Bowen, turning over the newspaper."

Everybody instinctively turned their eyes towards Lady Umfraville, but as instinctively, and before she looked up, turned them away again.

“A very grand affair; I should not have thought the Amerys would have had such a large party. I should have thought they would have despised such worldly vanities,” said Mr. Bowen.

“For their son and heir, I suppose, even saints wish to show off a little, to blazon to the world the good they have done it by the birth, education, and perfections of such a wonderful combination of human excellence; and at his marriage, especially, which assures to posterity the continuation of this race of saints,” said Mr. Poynings.

“But Prior is not the only son,” said Mr. Bowen; “there is the little fellow, Willy, besides.”

“Oh, one does not count those sort of things as sons till they are passed Eton at least—a distressing time to most mothers, I believe, when the young gentleman can be no longer concealed, and in his height and his ‘stand-ups,’

and 'tail-coats,' bursts on the world indisputable evidence of mamma's age ; but, I suppose, Lady Amery will *prôner* her second son as she has done her first in all the dignity of her sanctified humility pride."

"How did she get over his Rawson lapse?" said Mr. Bowen.

"She never heard of it," said Mr. Windham.

"That little boy," said Mrs. Bowen, "looks as if he was something of a rogue : he has not yet acquired that subdued and demure air which Mr. Vernon has. A very pretty boy he is ; and Georgiana will be a beauty. Was not one of the Vernon children cured in a strange way by a quack doctor? Had you not the same man for Lady Umfraville? Did he do any good? What became of him? We never heard of him afterwards."

"Lady Amery recommended him, and my sister called him in ; but he was all nonsense," said Mr. Windham.

"How strange of Lady Amery to employ such a person ! But he had rather a run, I think, for a little while ; one heard of people who had had him—something German, was he

not?—and things about sympathy, and keeping the system nicely balanced; but I never heard the end of him.”

“Nor I,” said Mr. Poynings; “but one can easily suppose it was death by starvation. I suppose nobody consulted or paid him: he did not take, and so dropped off like an ill-graft. It requires a great growth of impudence, and some strong sap of ability, to grow such a graft on the old-established tree of medical humbug.”

“So many of those kind of people get on so very wonderfully,” said Mrs. Bowen.

“They go the right way about it. Now Lady Amery is a very timid person; all her fanaticism is spent on one subject; she has none to spare from religion, for medicine, and could not set up her quack with all the zeal and devotion which a man requires in such a desperate undertaking. She is satisfied to save the souls of the New Zealanders, without troubling herself about the bodies of the Londoners; and, upon the whole, I think she is right: it is a much safer employment, and if it fails, nobody knows about it, so far off.”



## CHAPTER VIII.

"I AM happy to say Lord Rupert Conway finds he can give us a day or two," said Mrs. Bowen, quite proud of the official dignity which procured her such a visit. "He will be down to dinner to-morrow. We have been expecting him this fortnight."

"Has he sent down his hunters yet?" said Mr. Poynings.

"No : there have been some hunts : but it is not begun in right earnest yet. The Duke of Plessingham is still abroad ; you may be sure there is no real sport begun as long as he is away," said Mr. Bowen.

"When did he say he would be over, Mr. Windham, when you left him?" said Mr. Poynings.

“For the hunting. He fixed no more exact time.”

There was no more to be said. Nothing could be elicited by the most determined gossips about the duke, either from Lady Umfraville's looks, or from her father's words; and the world halted between the two opinions, that 'there was nothing in it,' or that they were so decidedly engaged, that his comings and goings were, to the father and daughter, a well-known matter-of-course. Mr. Windham, indeed, had almost persuaded himself it was so, that his daughter would quietly make up her mind to be Duchess of Plessingham, and all go right; while his daughter, thinking over Mr. Mortlake's sermon against romance, still felt proud of hers. Had it not been for this long-cherished and high fantasy, she might have been by this time married, or, at least the affianced bride of the duke—a soulless, tideless calm of existence, that would have been wretchedness to her high-wrought ambition, and treachery to the honest and hearty affection of the duke. Whether her own attachment was returned was still uncertain, but her

fluttering heart told her, that Lord Rupert's visit was to her.

He arrived. They met among numbers, as usual, in the drawing-room, before dinner, as carelessly as possible, and at dinner they were at opposite ends of the table; and, though Mr. Bowen found his right-hand neighbour rather dull, he did not in the least suspect that it was, because she was trying to hear what was saying by the right-hand neighbour of Mrs. Bowen, at the other extremity of her diagonal.

In the evening, when the gentlemen appeared, the ladies were all in the billiard-room, which opened from the drawing-room. Lady Umfraville and Miss Erpingham were playing. The whole party looked on and talked.

"Bad job, that of Skotto's at Doncaster," said Sir John Erpingham to Mr. Langley.

"Unlucky—done up, I fancy."

"Capital race, that last of Blue Mantle and Charivari, though," said Sir John.

"Yes," said Mr. Langley; "old Bognor knows what he is about, still."

"You thought well of Blue Mantle, Lord

Rupert, when we were at Bognor, last Christmas ?”

“ Very ; she appeared to be a high-principled being ; she would not allow any one but her own jockey to mount her, or any one but her own groom to touch her. She flung three boys while I was there, and kicked two helpers almost to death. Nobody could doubt her spirit.”

“ She had her match, very nearly ; indeed, till it was fairly won, it was near even betting on Charivari,” said Mr. Langley.

“ Blue Mantle’s favourite, in which she showed her sagacity, little Snell, is such a capital hand,” said Lord Rupert. “ I did not see the race, but I can fancy his skill doing nearly as much as Blue Mantle’s speed. I have often seen him at Bognor, and he is such a curious wizened little wretch, and so amusing—he has not an idea that there is anything in the world beyond stables and race-grounds. He has a notion of there being a certain space to be passed over between Newmarket and Doncaster, and his other fields of fame, but that is all ; and he has a kind of brute fidelity

to his master, but he is an absolute centaur; if you were to separate him from his horse, he would cease to be."

"He is invaluable," said Mr. Langley, gravely.

"That is a splendid animal of your's, that Cornbury rode at the steeple-chase, at Needham; I wonder you did not enter him for the hunter's cup," said Sir John.

"I never had a racer. Just the actual run is a pretty sight," said Lord Rupert. "One is, after all, so completely in the hands of such fellows as that little Snell. I regret that Bognor should have gone into that so much—everybody has their taste, to be sure, but I never did fancy, that summing up of books; and all that counting-house work is so paltry; one good run on a fine hunter, in a fine country, is worth all the races I ever saw."

"There is a magnificent horse, of Needham's, just come to Melton," said Sir John. He is worth looking at. When do your horses come down?"

"I have not quite determined," said Lord Rupert in an absent tone, watching Lady Umfraville's ball as it missed a canon.

“You could go by Melton, when you return to town,” said Sir John; “it is not much out of the way, Mr. Windham, is it, from Frampton? you are going to Frampton from this, I suppose, Lord Rupert?”

“Melton is a little out of the direct line,” said Mr. Windham; “but Umfraville is nearer to Frampton, and, if you have business at Melton, Lord Rupert, I am sure my daughter and I should be delighted, if you can come to us; there is no one at Melton yet, and you can ride over when you like. My dear,” said he to Evelyn, who, having, at the beginning of her father’s speech, made an opprobriously bad stroke, was now, mace in hand, awaiting her adversary’s play—“My dear, I am asking Lord Rupert to come to Umfraville, as he has business at Melton, and there is nothing there yet.”

“Will you come to Umfraville?” said she, with a blush, which appeared to the spectators only shyness, beautiful and natural—but what a whirl of emotion did it conceal. What an existence of passionate life may pass in a few seconds, unseen, undreamt of by all but the

one excited being, appearing all the time just like all the other beings about her. "Will you come to Umfraville?" What careless words! How her heart beat as she said them!

Lord Rupert bowed, and said, coldly, "I shall have much pleasure in doing so."

Lady Umfraville was to play. He continued to Sir John: "But I am not going to Frampton now, and Needham's horse will be at Melton all the season, I suppose, and I can see him whenever I am able to get down."

The game was over, and Miss Erpingham triumphantly victorious. Mr. Windham was challenged by Sir John, and as they were worth looking at, everybody was earnest in their attention.

"They are well matched," said Mr. Langley.

"Yes, but Mr. Windham should win," said Mr. Poynings. "Darrell is a better player than Sir John; I have seen Darrell beat Mr. Windham, but no one else."

"They may try to-morrow," said Mr. Bowen; "for Darrell is to be down to-morrow."

“Without Lady Louisa?”

“Yes, he is only coming for a day’s shooting. He comes by the train.”

“Do not you find yourself annoyed by people coming down for ever, and coming——” Mr. Poynings stopped, for Mr. Bowen was betting with Mr. Langley. “How quiet and retired you are at Umfraville,” continued he, turning to Evelyn. “No one could suspect you were near such a riotous place as Melton.”

“Yes,” said she, “its quietness is its great charm. I can wander about the woods there for hours in perfect solitude.” •

“Almost as happy as if you were in that cell in the White Abbey, which caught your fancy so much the other day.”

“Not quite, it is not for ever; once in that beautiful cloister, one could never leave it; from my woods I may be called back too easily.”

“Do you enjoy retirement so exceedingly; do you like to be so very quiet?”

“Exceedingly: I do enjoy being away from the bustle and hurry of London—from all the representation and the glare and ‘*faste*’ of the world.”



A deep sigh from Lord Rupert startled her. He was at a little distance, and she had been going on talking to Mr. Poynings, as an interlude, expecting Lord Rupert to join them ; and not thinking particularly of what she said till Lord Rupert's sigh. Why did he sigh ? Her heart interpreted instantly : he must live in the world ; he thinks I could never bear the '*faste*' of public life. She looked round, but at the same moment he moved away.

"Look !" cried Miss Erpingham, "what a stroke is on the balls now for papa." Everybody looked except Evelyn, who, undutiful daughter that she was, instead of staying to see what stroke her papa would have, after his antagonist's play, suddenly left the room, and passed through the now deserted drawing-room into a conservatory beyond : she felt vexed, anxious, agitated. The simple act of having said—"Will you come to Umfraville?" to Lord Rupert, had stirred the inmost recesses of her heart. He had dined at her house in town, but he had been invited by a formal card, and it was altogether a mere formality affair. How different from asking him to Umfraville

herself, in the uncertain position in which they were ! The bright autumnal moon was streaming in, and all the lawn beyond was a flood of light. She gazed upon the lovely scene with that melancholy sense of contrasted restlessness which always strikes us as we look upon the calm of nature, with our own anxious and unpeaceful hearts. How often had she watched those bright planets, and thought how man of high degree had fabled that their might depended on those distant worlds. Her soul was knit to one of those great spirits which, in ancient days, would have believed his destiny to be one of those starry orbs ; and her own high heart swelled at the thought. The events of her own life had been, and could be but few ; linked with his, the fates of nations were part of her existence ! If she had felt, and still felt, in the midst of the wealth and pomp of life, all the agonies of doubt and anxiety, that belong to love ; she would not relinquish them : their object was as a star of glory, for all the calm of passionless nature on which she looked.

She turned, and Lord Rupert was beside her.

“I cannot endure this sort of doubt. Believing you to be the affianced of another, I thought I had no right to address you; and yet, I have fancied, there have been moments when I dared to hope—I fancied there was a kindness in your look and your tone,—but then, I feared that it was meant to mark, that believing I knew of your engagement, you treated me as knowing it; and yet, when you spoke, when we met at Leicester—when we first met after your return—I almost dared to hope ——. You looked—I cannot endure the doubt ——; you wrote to me once: it was a mere formality, I know; but, how often have I thrown everything else aside, and gazed upon the first words, in the wild hope that they were not mere words. Oh, tell me, did you really,” said ——

“Dear Lord Rupert!—I said it then, as I say it now, from my heart;” and, as she spoke, she put her hand in his. It was enough: her hand was clasped, and kissed in ecstasy by her lover.

“This is happiness,” murmured he, as he held her hand and gazed on her beautiful face

in the clear and sacred light. "How perfectly blessed I am—every doubt, every fear is gone.—The cross?"

"How could you doubt me?" said she, as she drew out the long-concealed gift. "How could you think that, engaged to another, I could accept your chivalry, and wear your gift; how could you think me such a heartless coquette—so doubly false?"

"I thought you considered all the chivalry as nonsense, and the gift as part of it, and that ——"

The sound of approaching footsteps—she snatched away her hand, and with one fervent "my life, my love" from him, he opened the glass door on the lawn, and disappeared, while Lady Umfraville walked towards the drawing-room. Mrs. Bowen and Sir John met her——

"What a magnificent night! I do not wonder you are admiring it," said Sir John.

"And, in this conservatory," said Mrs. Bowen, "one can enjoy the moonshine without 'fear of flannel and a tooth-ache,' as Antony Whyte says."

“One is safer still here,” said Mr. Poynings, at the edge of the drawing-room carpet; “that Indian matting is a very nice thing, and that moonlight is so picturesque; but, at this season, I must say I think a good Brussels carpet and lamps, and that poor creature, a sea-coal fire, are fully as interesting objects.”

“Do you wish these doors to be shut?” said Mr. Bowen.

“No, no; not the least. I am quite warm here, and you all look so very well there, it would be a pity to spoil the picture.”

It would. Lady Umfraville was, at the instant, gathering a sprig of myrtle: everybody looked with admiration at her bright eyes, and brilliant colour: every one thought “how lovely,” but no one suspected “*l’amour avait passé par là*,” so lately.

She came into the room, and, showing her myrtle to Mrs. Bowen, said she had been allowed to gather it. Much followed upon myrtles, and conservatories, and flowers, but, of anything that was said, Evelyn had not the faintest idea, except that, on some one speaking of a geranium in Lord Ipswich’s collection—

and looking for Lord Rupert to confirm the fact, Mrs. Bowen observed that she believed he had gone to bed, and that he looked tired—an involuntary smile played upon her lips, and she looked still more intently on a volume of Paxton's gardening which was open before her. Mr. Windham came to look at it too.

“Oh, did you win?” said she.

“Yes; but it was a pretty near thing. We are to have another to-morrow, and if Colonel Darrell arrives before we go, and I have already beaten Sir John, I am to be put to my utmost strength with him.”

“It was a splendid game, yours and Sir John's,” said Mr. Langley: and billiards became the theme; and Evelyn looked on, uninterruptedly, at her Paxton; but all the glories of his superb performances were thrown away upon her, and, when Mrs. Bowen gave the signal for departure, she almost started: so perfectly lost and perfectly happy had she been in her own thoughts.

As soon as she heard her father's step in the gallery, and his door close, she hurried to him. When, in answer to his quiet “come in,

his daughter entered and threw herself into his arms, he looked quite startled.

“Lord Rupert Conway,” whispered she.

“Lord Rupert!—What of him?” cried he, amazed: but as he gently raised her head from his shoulder, and looked upon her face—  
“Lord Rupert has proposed for you?”

“Yes,” cried she, withdrawing her arms, and kneeling at her father’s feet, as he sat—  
“Give me your blessing, my dearest father, and say that you approve, and I shall be perfectly happy.”

“But you have not accepted him, have you?”

“I have; but only from myself—not surely if you disap——” she stopped, as a cold, dead chill came upon her heart. She had never contemplated his disapprobation, and the idea of the Duke of Plessingham came too, with a sort of irritation she had never felt before.

“My child! what could I disapprove in such an alliance? But do you care for him in the least? You told me you did not think you could love the duke enough to

make him or you happy ; how then could you care for Lord Rupert, of whom you have seen so little ?”

“ My dear father, I have been in love with him all my life, almost.”

“ All your life !—Why, it is hardly eighteen months since you first saw him !”

“ Yes, but I had been thinking of him for years before, and reading about him. Why he first struck my fancy, except from his noble name, I really cannot tell ; but I made him my hero, and he would have always been so, even if I had never seen him, but when I did —— ”

“ You thought him very heroic looking !—and so he is. My dear Evelyn, I never suspected that you were so romantic.”

“ No, I know you did not ; and it was because I thought it nonsense myself, and that you would think it still more so, that I never told you of all this dream ; for I never knew, decidedly, that it would be a reality till an hour ago, when he followed me into the conservatory and spoke —— ”

“ And did you never think that he was in love with you till then ?”



“A thousand times before and one thing—but, perhaps, he would not like that even you should know that, you would think it unworthy of his official station, perhaps—but one thing convinced me of it; and only that he thought I was engaged to the duke, he would have spoken long ago. I hope you forgive me now, for having refused him.”

“My dear daughter, I only regretted it, because I thought him so attached to you, and such a suitable match; but Lord Rupert is infinitely more suitable, and worthy of you in every way—really able to value and appreciate you; while the poor dear duke, with all his good-heartedness, certainly is not; and, as to my forgiving you, you are so entirely your own mistress, that I cannot tell you how deeply you touch me by your confidence and kindness, and deference to my opinion; and if you make Lord Rupert half as happy as you have ——” He stopped in emotion, very unusual to him.

“God bless you, my dear child,” said he, embracing her fondly; “you have never given me a moment’s pang, almost in your whole life, except when you were ill; and that man, who

is to have the treasure of your love, what a precious gift shall I bestow on him ! ”

The company at Bowen Court had retired,\* and gone to bed and to sleep, and awoke again next morning very much as usual, except three of them, the colour of whose whole future lives had been entirely changed by one short dialogue which had taken place unknown to everybody else, and in so small a space of time, that the absence from the rest of the company of the principal persons concerned had been scarcely observed.

Mr. Windham was very nearly as happy as the lovers themselves. The alliance—he would bestow no commoner name upon it—was perfection. His daughter would not be a duchess ; but the duchess to a duke, only the second of his name, was too vulgar for him to prize for one moment in comparison with an ancient knightly name, known as Knight-Palmerins in days of chivalry, whose heraldic coat was blazoned with the most antique and honourable names in England, while the lover was himself in the proudest position almost that a man could hold, in the radiance of his sovereign’s

confidence, of such exalted character, with such distinguished personal merit, that his attachment was—what Mr. Windham would hardly have considered the attachment of any one else under royalty—an honour to his daughter, and the signature “E. Plessingham Umfraville,” which had so long been before his puzzled mind’s eye, made way instantly for the infinitely more satisfactory “Umfraville.” All was now right: her barony would not merge while she married a man of precisely that superiority of rank which was desirable, and which would yet involve no loss of her privileges: none of his powers or his merits afforded his future father-in-law half the satisfaction he enjoyed from Lord Rupert’s younger-son rank, which would leave his daughter’s own right and nobility intact, and which allowed him to repeat to himself what sounded so well—Lord Rupert Conway and Lady Umfraville: Lady Umfraville and Lord Rupert Conway. He had soon arranged the blazoning of their arms, and fell asleep, effecting a compromise between the black and white liveries of the Conways and the white and gold of the Umfravilles.

This was all sufficiently childish, and yet Mr. Windham was not entirely incapable of appreciating the high qualities of both his daughter and her lover, but he considered them rather as the inalienable privilege of their birth than as a peculiar personal merit.

“Shall we meet as usual, among numbers,” thought Evelyn, as she dressed : “will everybody be assembled?”

She had hardly reached the end of the gallery before Lord Rupert joined her; and the first meeting, so precious, after such a conversation as that of last night, was unwitnessed.

“I have told my father, and he is enchanted.”

“Then I may follow you to Umfraville to-morrow?”

“Can you?”

“I will.”

The rest of the breakfast-table were chiefly concerned about a fancy fair, which was to be held soon in the neighbourhood.

“What a pity you are not to be there, Lady Umfraville,” said Miss Erpingham; “it will be so beautiful.”

“I never saw a more charming collection,” said Mrs. Bowen; “it is a thousand pities you cannot stay for it.”

“Is it not rather late in the year?” said she, to say something.

“It was put off on purpose, because more people are in the country now.”

“How long has it been preparing?” said Mr. Poynings. “The perseverance of ladies in these performances is truly wonderful to me, and the amazing skill they display. One regrets their having such powers wasted on ladies; but, I suppose, that such ingenuity would never be expended to contrive one earthly thing of use. It is the peculiar merit of these sales is it not, that everything should be useless?”

“Not at all,” cried Miss Erpingham, eagerly, “there is everything that is most really useful, and to gentlemen, particularly—watch-guards, cigar-cases, and everything.”

“That is conclusive,” said Mr. Poynings: “everything includes everything, certainly. I wonder people have not thought of having a real ‘fancy’ fair, and selling imaginary goods.”

“A Barmecide sale do you mean?” said Evelyn, to whom he spoke.

“*Real* fancy, Mr. Poynings,” said Mr. Bowen, “is not that rather a paradox? Can one say real to what is imaginary, Lord Rupert?”

“We say, ‘works of the imagination,’” replied he, “and ‘creations of fancy.’ Is not Mr. Poynings making a more correct use of the word, by applying it to the efforts of the imagination, than Miss Erpingham does, in giving it to the stern utilities of watch-guards and cigar-cases? But, however, as long as we use the word to express what is not real—an ‘imaginary evil,’ and so forth, one can hardly talk of real imaginations. It is like many other words, very ill-used, and over-tasked—a servant of all work, and her merits and services ill-appreciated, and worse paid.”

“All the time, I said real fancy, not real imaginations; and we had better not set about to define the limits of their several dominions; but what I meant—let me see how to put it into words that cannot be cavilled at.”

“Wonderful words they would be,” said

Lord Rupert ; “you may put that art down among your sale of fancifuls.”

“We would give any price for such words in the House,” said Mr. Bowen.

“I do not think I can find anything better than what you have just let fall, Lord Rupert, ‘sale of fancifuls,’—At my sale—you know at Stanton I made a good auctioneer—I shall have one stall named the Weather Predictor, where the state of the weather for an unlimited period shall be prognosticated unerringly, only sold very high.—Another stall is to be named Prophetic for the Heart ; and here a gipsy, or a sybil, to speak in a more refined style, should preside.”

“We had some amusing gipsies in Spain,” said Mr. Windham.

“What did they tell you, Lady Umfraville?” said Mr. Poynings, “because what they said might furnish a useful hint to me.”

“Nothing particular ; I regret that I cannot assist you with anything remarkable : they wisely dealt in generals : everything they gave me, all sorts of good fortune, much the safest style.”

“But too mean for me, and scarcely a saleable article, one particular goods is priceable: people like peculiarities: to prophecy to a young lady that she will be married, is to tell her nothing, but tell her she shall be married within twelve months, and she will pay you well,—add the colour of the eyes, or the height of le *Futur*, and you will not only be paid handsomely by her, but she will bring countless customers to the sale. But besides “Prophetic for the Heart,” I shall have “Prophetic for the Hand,”—this is exclusively for mammas; it is considered quite incorrect for a young lady to be seen at this booth, though we make immensely by the chaperons. I have another which is wonderfully profitable too: because those who affect it, despise the art of prophecy; have no squeamishness in learning about the past, no difficulty in coming to ‘the stall of scandal, or the secret history of many distinguished families revealed.’”

“Do you class that among imaginaries?” said Lord Rupert.

“Among ‘realities to catch the fancy,’ and there is a category for you!—Ah! Wycherley



would have been the man for me at this work—I wish he had thought of it, instead of those vulgar Chartists.—How he startled Lady Barnstaple, with those awful words, ‘a foreign Count’—Now I know how he came by that piece of intelligence.”

“I advise you not to tell how it was,” said Evelyn, “It would show a total want of confederate honour.”

“I was no confederate of Sir Luttrell’s, I assure you.”

“A total want of skill in your art, then : if you acknowledge any material means of acquiring your information you would be ruined. Who would pay for your telling them, what they could by their own unassisted curiosity find out?”

Lady Barnstaple could never know, nor, if she had, would she ever have appreciated Lady Umfraville’s good nature in stopping what might have been said to her disadvantage. There was one present, however, who understood and valued it, and admired so much, not only the kindness, but the good taste and ease with which it was done, that he could not help

looking towards her, though he had purposely placed himself at some distance from her on the same side of the table.

“Thank you,” said Mr. Poynings, “I am willing to receive any suggestions, the plan is only in its infancy: but if I can mature it in time, do you think, Miss. Erpingham, that you could prevail on Mrs. Stourton of Stourton, to allow me to erect my stall?”

“I do not know, I am sure,—it would be very odd, would it not?”

“Exactly what I want everybody to say. And I would bet anything—Langley, will you take me up?—that I shall make more at my stalls, than all the rest of the room.”

“Who are you to have for the presiders at these stalls?” said Mr. Langley, gravely, “I should know that before I take up the bet.”

“Very true,” said Mr. Poynings, “I cannot, I fear, do them all myself, even Wycherley with all his Mathews powers would hardly be equal to that, though he was pretty near it, at the Tournament, with his double characters, and his fightings on both sides.”

“Was he the Unknown Knight of the Lily?”

said Mrs. Bowen. Evelyn coloured at the bare supposition.

“No, no,” said Mr. Poynings, “we had a known unknown, and an unknown unknown. Sir Luttrell was soon known, as Knight of the Salamander,—who the Knight of the Lily is unknown to this day.”

He turned as he spoke to Lady Umfraville, but she had risen from table.

“Come, Mr. Windham,” said Sir John, “let us to our game.”

## CHAPTER IX.

ALL adjourned to the billiard-room, except Lord Rupert, to whom Mr. Bowen had given his letters. The game began. The two daughters undertook to mark for their respective fathers, but Evelyn was dreadfully absent ; she was, indeed, entirely absorbed by her own happy thoughts, only turning her head every time the door opened ; till, at last, Mr. Poynings, who had remained silent wonderfully long, came up. On her, a third time, omitting to mark, and being reminded of it by Mr. Langley,

“You cannot attend to the game for looking at it !” said he, as he observed her eyes, unconsciously, following one of the balls.

She smiled, but made no answer.

“Are you really going to-day ? Will not the fancy fair even tempt you to stay ? Such

a pleasant party as we are ! Think how your presence would grace the scene—you should consider the cause of the charity, and reflect how many will go there to see you.”

“Then the report that I am going will answer quite as well. If you consider the charity, you can cause it to be reported,—that Mrs. Bowen is going, accompanied by Lady Umfraville, and a large party of fashionables.”

“And disappoint all Northamptonshire, and, perhaps, many belonging to the adjacent counties. What a cruel and treacherous proposal !”

“Do you not think people who go, under the mask of charity,” said she, smiling, “only to stare at their neighbours, deserve disappointment at least ?”

“Could you find it in your heart wilfully to disappoint anybody, even a Northamptonshire ‘squiresse?’ And it would so injure the sale at the bazaar : disappointment sours the temper. How many more shillings and sixpences would be spent in the sunshine of your presence than under the cloud and gloom of your non-appearance.”

“That is right, Poynings,” said Mr. Langley; “Lady Umfraville has not missed marking since you began to speak.”

“How do you account for that phenomenon of the mind?” said he. “When you were only attending to the game, you did not mark as well as now, when you have a double call upon your powers.”

“I suppose the strain is now so immense that every nerve is excited, and all my powers of attention, which you do not seem to rate very high, called forth.”

“I have seen a marker *aux billiards* go on when he was really fast asleep—that is, he had no other power of mind or body left, but what sufficed to know the numbers, and to move the hand.”

“True to his post, even in sleep—a fine character.”

“True to his franc or his five-franc piece, or whatever bonus he was entitled to on each turn of fortune.”

“How unjust to attribute his spirit to mere avarice; he might have a real sense of duty. Some great general, perhaps, was lost in that

neglected spot—a noble sentinel, at least, who would have saved the army even in his sleep.”

“Can you suppose a sense of duty in a billiard-marker?”

“Why not? Consider what temptations he is so subject to—how he might be bribed, and might cheat—and the greater the temptation the greater the virtue.”

“There is no virtue, then, where there is no temptation. What virtue can——”

She heard no more; for the door opened—it was only Colonel Darrell just arrived.

“Just in time,” cried Mr. Langley. “Sir John is nearly beaten. We are all waiting to see a crack game between you and Mr. Windham.”

“Have you been travelling all night,” said Evelyn; “it will hardly be fair to set you to work directly.”

“No, no; I have only come from Hilston’s this morning; I am quite ready to avenge you, Miss Erpingham, if I can, for Sir John’s defeat.”

Evelyn resigned her post. She went to the drawing-room; but half the party were there;

and when Lord Rupert appeared, they had only the sensation of being in the same room to console them.

“You expect the Amerys, and Mr. Vernon and his bride, Mr. Windham says?” said Mrs. Bowen.

“Yes; they have promised to pay us a visit soon.”

“Do you know her?”

“No; I have never even seen her.”

“She is not handsome,” said one of the ladies.

“But she is very good, of course.” said another.

“She is, I am sure,” said Evelyn; “for Lady Amery writes as if she was very fond of her.”

“Mr. Vernon must be doubly pious now, I suppose,” said Mrs. Bowen. “I should be rather curious to see how a pious and a *pieuse* get on as bridegroom and bride. Rather ridiculous—and nobody would grieve much at his or her being laughed at. Do you think any one could, Lady Umfraville?”

“Yes, I should be very sorry. Mr. Vernon



is a friend of mine, and I hope she will be my friend too."

"Is not Mr. Vernon rather a bore in the House, Lord Rupert?" continued Mrs. Bowen, determined that somebody should agree with her.

"He speaks well; he is listened to—which is saying a great deal," replied he.

"When a person is really in earnest he must be attended to, I should think," said Evelyn; "and though one may think their ways tiresome, I do not see how they can be ridiculous; or, at least," continued she, smiling, "if one does smile, one ought to be ashamed of it. One might as well—it would be hardly less wrong to laugh at some personal defect than at the really noble objects of people, because their way of pursuing them was not exactly ours."

"You have more charity than I have, I confess," said Mrs. Bowen. "I have known Mr. Vernon always, and the Amerys, and have always done civility to them at Mr. Bowen's desire, but I really think they are vast bores; and they would do well if they imitated your

real charity, Lady Umfraville, and thought there was some virtue in those who did not talk their particular shibboleth."

"To speak from my own experience, they have always borne with me, and, by your own account, with you too, I think, Mrs. Bowen, as you say you have so long kept up the acquaintance."

"Yes; but all the time feeling that they regarded me as in a state of perdition, and, after all, that is rather unpleasant."

"Victorious again!" cried Mr. Poynings, entering from the billiard-room. "You go off with flying colours."

"I should have bet higher," said Mr. Langley, "only you said so much of Darrell's strokes. I was pretty sure of Mr. Windham, but not as sure as I ought to have been. It is really a splendid sight, such a well-played game."

Mr. Windham was the happiest man in the world; he had triumphed over two first-rate players, and his daughter was engaged to the first man in England; and she would be happily married, and would not change her name.

He found time to express his satisfaction to Lord Rupert; and Lord Rupert continued to meet Evelyn, to press her hand, and whisper "To-morrow;" but when Mr. Bowen led her to the carriage, her lover was included in the rest of the company, and the slight bend of the head as she left the room. And she departed, leaving the world behind in complete ignorance of the great event which was to take place.

How far Lord Rupert's diplomatic habits prevailed over nature, and how well he was able to keep up his character of an easy and amiable guest, when he thought every hour a century, at least, while he remained away from Umfraville—never can be known.

How bright and beautiful were her woods in the setting sun, and its rays seemed to gild the lordly turrets of her Castle more brilliantly than ever, as she looked at them with the thought that they were hers to bestow, and that all their beauties would be shared by her lover.

She received, the next morning, the following letter from Sir Luttrell Wycherley:—

“DEAREST LADY UMFRAVILLE,

“ A fugitive, an outcast, one ignominiously hiding from the justice of the laws of his country, has perhaps no right thus to address you—no right, wrapped in the foul fog of his own disgrace, to approach the pure ethereal you inhabit. But once, and once only, I must allow myself to write that loved name; and once, and for the last time, to claim your attention to one who is, I acknowledge, wholly unworthy of it. You will not, when you see the handwriting—which you know, alas! too well—you will not fling it aside in disgust. I trust to your kindness, I trust to your own excellence, and feel sure, judging by yourself, you will think as you open this letter, that it is, as I mean it to be, an humble and penitent entreaty for your pardon. Humble! I little thought that I should ever have used such a word—but I am ill, and an exile. I am humbled, indeed. You would have thought it more noble in me, when I braved the laws, to have abided by their penalty, but I could not endure the thought of so ignominious an end to my career; and yet, perhaps, it would have

been less disgraceful than to be thus self-banished. I put no date to this letter, nor shall I say aught of my future, except that, as Her Majesty would have sent me to the next world if she could catch me, I wish to anticipate her benevolent intentions by substituting, with a slight difference, New for Next, and in quitting all that I have ever known, in quitting my country for ever, I quit all that belongs to it. I give up my name, I become as though I had not been; and if what I have written remains, it will be as the work of one now dead—I write to you as from the grave. To the world I have known. I am no more. What has been is henceforth to be to me as a dream; of all that has been, of the schemes and follies, and hopes and interests of the past, the wasted powers, the despicable objects upon which I bestowed the abilities with which I was born, the misuse of the station in which I was placed, the abuse of the trust of sacred song, degraded instead of ennobled by the sounds I have drawn from her lyre—of all this wreck, rising and sinking before me in the stormy

surges of my memory—of all, what thought remains, on which I wish to dwell but you? I write to you for a pardon, which I shall never receive; for henceforth you will know not where, or what, or who I am: but you have long since, I know, forgiven me unasked; I feel certain, that when others have bestowed on me that full measure of blame which I deserve, that your lips have never been opened in my dispraise. And yet how much I have wronged you! Loving you with such frenzied passion all the time!—frenzied you might well suppose it, when it showed itself by every sign that hate could show. But then I was stung and goaded by my sense of your contempt.

“My first—you will say my worst attempt upon your peace, was the endeavouring to break the engagement which I fancied existed between you and Prior Vernon; by tempting him to become unworthy of you: how I could ever, even in the triumph of success, boast of it to you, I cannot now conceive. I wronged him, and he never knew it; he has forgiven himself, and as he is now married and happy, I may perhaps be forgiven

too—forgiven the wrong, and you whom it was designed to injure, it injured not; had it, you would long since have pardoned it.

“A far greater, more direct, and mischievous injury did I attempt, and in part successfully, in bringing your name before the public; making you the theme of absurd paragraphs; making you the subject of a ridiculous pamphlet, endangering the loss of the friendship of your Sovereign; causing you every annoyance that publicity and notoriety can give to one who detests both; stealing your likeness to make it a common caricature, for the vulgar to stare at—the image of those beautiful features which I had so often gazed at with such wild ecstasy of admiration—endeavouring to have represented that expression which is not to be painted, and which haunted, and haunts me still, as the visible realization of heavenly beauty. I could endeavour to have that exquisite look made the gazing-stock of every impertinent fool in London, by having you—but I cannot dwell on this; your own sense and spirit crushed the evil before it had power to hurt you. One print, however, I must, in

this my plenary confession, acknowledge that I have retained: it was the first impression struck off. It is the only relic of England I possess—the only one belonging to a state of existence that is passed. I have taken off the name. Except to those who have ever seen the original, it is only a fancy piece. Perhaps, in after years, in some obscure corner of the universe, it may be recognized as yours, and the long-perished stranger be traced——; but what inconsistency is this! How fondly we cling, even in despair, to the notion of being remembered; thinking, even when taking every precaution for secrecy, how surprised people will be at the discovery of the secret.

“I delay—can I dare, even in the deepest contrition, to allude to my last and worst, most audacious—oh, it is, it should be unpardonable. I, at least, can never forgive myself. The only extenuation of my folly and my faults is, that I never betrayed the secrets to any one human being, except ——; but I trust the letter can never reach its destination. I did, in the first burst of vengeance, at being turned out of your house, write what was in-



tended most deeply to injure you. I could, at that moment, have done anything—disappointed and scorned. Disappointed in an object as base as the means I took to obtain it were cruel and audacious. I was certain, and am certain still, that the secret of your heart was the Knight of the Lily; to discover who he was, I had planned various ways of surprising the secret from you.

“Long before, as I recollected telling you, at Plessy Canons, I thought of the amusements I might have as a St. John Long or mesmeric trickster; and after the noise I had made as a preacher, I turned practitioner, and having cured little Emily Vernon, as a most pious performer, I thought I was sure of a long series of fine-lady consultations, and diverting nonsense of all sorts; the ease with which I imposed being my only mortification. I perpetrated several miraculous cures among Lady Amery’s high friends and low dependents, a little ashamed once or twice of tricking so really good a person, whose charity to mind and body are truly admirable. Let me make one good use at least of my deception, and

bear witness to goodness which I learnt only as her medical adviser. Just then you became ill—can you believe that I rejoiced—it was an unhoped for opportunity. Lady Amery worked successfully upon your aunt ; I doubted that Mr. Windham would ever allow of so incorrect and ridiculous a thing as consulting a quack doctor ; but I was sent for. I had, in five minutes, a supreme power over your aunt. I was admitted ; but the sight of you, so wan and pale, so ill, so helpless, with such a look of gentle, patient suffering, it unmanned me completely : I forgot my assumed character,—my feigned voice ; and, in the eagerness of the moment, I spoke as myself. How your start, your exclamation, thrilled through and through my soul. I hardly dare to tell you,—but I perceived that attached to a peculiar chain round your neck, you wore a small Maltese cross. I was sure it was the gift of a very dear hand. Never, in the hurry of the moment, and in the state you were, foreseeing that it was possible you could see or know my writing—it never occurred to me to disguise it—I wrote that—lie—for it was

nothing else—which I made poor innocent Miss Windham read as from herself, saying that ‘the Knight of the Lily had called, and that she knew who he was!’

“As she pronounced the words, the effect was more startling even than I expected. I thought the name was on your lips—of what followed I cannot bear to speak—the energy and decision with which you banished me I had never counted on, and the constancy with which you concealed who the intruder really was from all your attendants, saved you from being as cruelly compromised, as you might have been, had the servants, whose presence my pertinacious intrusion required, in the least suspected that I was Sir Luttrell Wycherley. The instant that Mr. Windham entered, and that you showed him the writing, I knew it was all over with me. I rushed from that room, where I felt so guilty ever to have been; I gained the street, but where I went, or what I did for hours afterwards, I have no trace left in my mind. To such a frenzy was my passion then inflamed, that I felt as if I had never loved you till then, and

yet with such an alternation of fierce hatred for your scorn, your loathing of my presence. It was in the fury of this hatred that I wrote, what I trust will never meet mortal eye ; least of all, the eyes of him for whom it was intended. The whirl of wild schemes that passed through my brain at this time ! I flung aside my medical disguise ! I could not pursue, for a moment, a jest which had become such fearful earnest."

"I learnt how ill you were. My hatred, my revenge, vanished ; and in an agony of remorse, I thought of you as my murdered victim ! Night after night did I hover about your house, watching the rounds of the police, disappearing as they approached, and returning as they receded, to the pavement before your door. Knowing that your room looked backward, I once scaled the walls, and in the garden gazed upon the faint watch-light from your window. I was tracked, and so narrowly escaped the police, that I dared not attempt it again.

"You left England so secretly and suddenly, that till you had actually sailed I knew not of

your purpose. Had I been aware of it, I would have gone as a sailor in the duke's service; though, when I learnt that you had gone in the Duke of Plessingham's yacht, and that he was with you, I could have torn him limb from limb—I should, had he been within my reach. I thought of setting fire to Plessingham House—of blowing-up Plessy Canons; and I hardly know why I did not do both—I felt like an unchained demon.

“Some nonsense against me by the Bishop of London, for preaching in one of his lordship's churches without his leave, obliged me to keep out of sight. And I fell in one day with a chartist—a socialist too. The stuff that he talked was new rather to me. I went to one of their meetings: I spoke; I perceived that I produced an effect; I felt that I could wield the multitude; and ever since I have been so wrapped up in their schemes—so entirely had the idea of regenerating society, and redressing imaginary wrongs taken possession of me, that I heard of your return to England without attempting to see you!

“The newspaper had told me you were

alive, and the despair of my remorse was relieved. But governing a mob—being a rebel! was new and exciting. I had not hitherto been generally known to be Sir Luttrell Wycherley. At this last meeting I thought all was ripe—I spoke as myself—I declared my name publicly. I was to head it! and sword-in-hand we were to win redress! The cowards! the first sight of the soldiers was enough—all dispersed but one small party, who remained with me, and made so gallant a stand as to lose two of their own party, and kill or wound three of the dragoons. One I cut down myself! But they were too many for us. I barely escaped—galloped to Northampton—left my horse on the road, ran to a barber, had myself shaved, got a wig, and no mortal could recognise me; bought clothes at a pawnbroker's, and made my way out of England.

“Worn out with fatigue and vexation I have been ill, depressed to the lowest ebb, amidst all that I had to regret in my past life, as I reviewed it—a banished Traitor,—all was as nothing compared to the wrongs I had done to her whom I love more than life.—I have

told you all, and now farewell! I have even as I write pictured to myself your countenance as you read: coming like a sunbeam, that sweet look, over the arid desert of my soul; and so it will, however distant, so will your radiant smile be as the last, the only regretted of all that I quit for ever.—Bright Houri of happiness, what a Paradise awaits that unknown being on whom you have bestowed the sumless treasures of your heart—but who is worthy of them? Worthy of you, on whom every blessing,—but how dare I attempt to call down blessings, I fear to wake some evil spirit! I will stop: and yet how terrible it seemed to me to snap at last the long drawn links of what still in fancy connects me with you.

“Oh, Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure, will you ever cast one thought upon the miserable being who addresses you? Will you ever, as your gilded galley is floating down the unruffled stream of prosperity, will you ever, while lulled by the sweetest music—thine own praises,—hear the far off sigh from that world to which I am going?

“It must be said——! Farewell for ever!

“Your passionately devoted, for the last time  
I sign myself,

“LUTTRELL WYCHERLEY.”

Lady Umfraville was touched by this letter—she was gratified by his having anticipated the dignity and generosity which forbade her joining in the blame, so abundantly lavished on this victim of unrestrained indulgence in his own caprice.—She could not but feel moved by the expression of the adoration he felt for her. Had she received it sooner, she might have found it more difficult to think of one who had so injured her, with the complete justice and forgiveness that she now did, but she was now triumphant: at the height of human happiness, Sir Luttrell and his love, and his wrongs, were nothing to her now.

Mr. Windham received Lord Rupert in state in the great hall, and himself conducted him into the saloon; and taking, his daughter's hand, he placed it in that of Lord Rupert's, saying with as much dignity as feeling—

“I give you, my lord, my daughter's hand, as she has given you her heart, because, I



believe you to be worthy of both : her hand and her heart are entirely at her own disposal. I have only to say, that I firmly believe she could not better bestow them ; but permit me to add now, what I cannot say when I shall be at the altar, in that solemn act which is to bind you for ever to each other, again give you this dear hand, that as I know she will make the happiness of your life, as she has blest all the later years of mine."

"But, my dear sir!" exclaimed Lord Rupert, "do not speak of your daughter as if she was no longer to be with you; surely, surely, wherever she lives, you live also. Is it not so?" and he turned his eyes, with the fondest devotion, upon Evelyn.

"Thank you," said Mr. Windham; "you will find me a very tame and harmless domestic animal."

The lovers stepped out upon the terrace.

"At last we are alone!" cried Lord Rupert. "Never but once have we been alone together since those never-to-be-forgotten days at Richmond. But, Lady Umfraville, I never thought you a coquette but once."

“ You did think so once, really ? ”

“ That night at the palace. I could not bear to see Plessingham handing you to the quadrille, and he seemed to me so triumphant.”

“ I do not think I shall ever forgive you, for daring to consider me a coquette, even for a moment. And, you see, how badly people reason in a passion ; they lose their senses, indeed. You, in your foolish jealousy, lost your senses, both of hearing and seeing, and your powers of thinking, for which you have such a reputation ! If you had considered, you must have known that we were going to dance by command—that we were in the Queen’s set, and, lovers or haters, we must have done what we were bid ; and, if you could have seen, you might have perceived the duke was anything but triumphant ; and, if you could have heard, you would have listened to his apology about not attending the ‘ Lords ’—for he was quite terrified at your tremendous looks. He thought it was all for his disobedience, and went to exculpate himself ; but you treated him disdainfully, and all be-

cause you would rely upon a complete mistake of Lord Cornbury's, who just made the slight of blunder of taking a thing for precisely the contrary —— he —— ”

“He took a refusal for an acceptance, and I was convinced it was so; and, yet, your look as you took my offering—but that is all over now. Only do not condemn poor Cornbury as a fool, because of that mistake; he is wretchedly near-sighted, and very easily overwhelmed by his own shyness; but he has great abilities, though nobody in the world knows that but myself. Alone with me, he shows all his powers—to no one else, not even to my father. He sighs and groans over Cornbury's impossibility of overcoming his bashfulness, and he never will now; I quite despair of his ever making the figure he might. He has been my only confidant; he will so rejoice when I tell him.”

“He knew of your tournament disguise?”

“Yes; he managed it all, and there never was a secret better kept. You did not think it childish: I was afraid you did.”

“In fact, you thought I considered the

Duke of Plessingham a far more sensible person."

"No, no," said Lord Rupert, laughing, "I only thought him far more fortunate."

"I do not believe you had so little penetration as to suppose I cared for him in the least—that is, beyond great regard for his kind-heartedness and good temper, which, if you are ever so jealous, I shall always feel a great regard for."

"I should regret so exceedingly if you did not. I only hope his good temper will be greater than mine in the same circumstances, and that he will put up with a disappointment better than I did; for he is my friend, and has been so since we were boys."

"That I know very well, from him; he was continually giving me such exquisite pleasure, by telling me of your constant kindness to him, from the days when you read 'Anson's Voyage' to him, in the measles, and did his impositions at Harrow, to your vain attempts to make him do his duty as a senator. He told me all these things, so unconscious that he was praising his rival; but I really have

such trust in his friendship for you, that I believe he would have praised you as much had he known the fact. Nothing can have been more generously kind than he has been to me—troubling himself with the care of an invalid in his yacht, and doing everything he could think of for me, while I was refusing him over and over all the time.”

“Did not Mr. Windham favour his suit?”

“Yes, he did; but he favours yours more, now that he knows it. The duke is so very ignorant, it distressed my father continually, though he told me, that, as I was not romantic, I might just as well accept him—but you see what it is to be a man of genius, as you are; you discovered at once how romantic I was.”

“I do not know about the genius—I saw, and I admired; I conversed with you, and I loved; and have only loved more and more ever since, in spite of all that the newspapers and poor Cornbury did to convince me it was hopeless.”

“But how had you time to think of me?” said she, smiling; “that was what I always

felt—‘What can I be to a person who is guiding the affairs of the world?’”

“And I thought, ‘how’ can she ever have time to regard one more than another in the midst of the host of adorers by whom she is surrounded?’ It was reported that you were engaged to Mr. Vernon, but I was not certain : it was only report, and I doubted instantly whether your particularity to all who approached you was from an engaged, and therefore, immoveable heart, or from one so disengaged, that it was moved by none—that the chosen one was yet to be——”

“Neither supposition quite correct, you see.”

“Lovers are not famous for the accuracy of their views, and you accused me just now of being particularly inaccurate in mine.”

“But you were not always a lover.”

“An admirer from the very first.”

“So you say ; but an admirer’s eyes should have been more clear.”

“It was love from the day I left you at Richmond—perhaps I did not quite know it ; because, as you tell me, some one said of me—

‘I was not in that line;’ but, ignorant as I was, I can now, looking back on my feelings then, understand very well that it was, from the days at Richmond—downright, undeniable love. At those gardens—which was the next time we met—it was the first time you leaned on my arm : I know I was in a state of feeling I never felt before ; and when you were gone—when you would be so very civil to Lady Amery, fearing she was tired, and departed so soon—the scene became quite disgusting ; and to have something of you still, I went back to the flower you had named : I thought I would have the Evelina : I gathered it. How angry my father and all the gardeners were I never heard ; but you had touched it—you took it, you may remember, and looked into it—you had touched it, out of respect for it, I suppose, with your ungloved hand : I plucked it in its beauty, and pressed it to my lips, and wore it next my heart : I could not part with it.

And, when I heard of the tournament, I could not bear that so many should be your knights, and I—chained by office—forbidden to wear your colours, or to lay

my trophies (for trophies I was resolved to have) at your feet. However, I determined to run all risks, and be your unknown knight, and to wear your flower as my badge. I was fortunate in my practice at the tilting ground; but then the tournament was put off. I met you at Charlton, and at Plessy Canons. I sometimes dared to think you, at least, did not (according to the language of romance,) you 'did not absolutely hate me.' I determined, that, if successful at the tournament, I would dare my fate: I had your flower enclosed in that little Maltese cross, and I gave it you with a beating heart. And all this while you supposed I was so wrapped in cares of State, that I never thought of you. Time to think of you! I do believe, that, from the very first moment that I looked into these dear eyes, you have never been one single instant, waking or sleeping, out of my passionate thoughts—a consecrated, holy happiness, on which my heart dwelt with all the softness, fondness, and fervour that belongs to a love, to which I felt myself exalted, in devoting all the freshness of an untouched heart.



Even had it been, as I so long thought it, unsuccessful ; wretched as it made me, I should still have always rejoiced that I had been ennobled by such an attachment. Now, I feel a charmed existence, which no low-thoughted care can ever dull."

Her eyes sank beneath the expression of his, and they walked on in silent ecstasy.

## CHAPTER X.

“How beautiful this is!” exclaimed he, as they entered the wood—‘now in glimmer and now in gloom’—passing from the still leafy elms to the open coppice, or under the vast oaks, whose mighty branches still cast a shade in their dark withering leaves.

“You like it?” said she.

“It is charming.”

“I never thought it looked so well as it did yesterday,” said she, while a rich blush suffused her cheeks, “for I thought of it as yours.”

He pressed the hand which he held, but answered in an altered and graver tone—

“My dearest Evelyn, I only fear that you love this place and its retirement too much.”

“ So, that was what made you sigh the other night, when I said I delighted in the quiet of Umfraville.”

“ Did you hear me sigh ? ”

“ Could you sigh in my hearing without my marking and mourning at it ? ”

“ I was not conscious that I sighed audibly, but my heart sighed : I thought that you wished I should know how you hated the artificial troubles of public life. Now, my Evelyn, to public life I belong, and must belong—my career is fixed, for good or for evil—I have undertaken to serve my Queen and country as a politician—that is the thorny path I have doomed myself to tread ; I think its glory surpasses its perils ; but you should consider, my own Evelyn, even now, in this bliss of calling you by that name which I have often murmured so fondly to myself—even now, in the first thrill of calling you mine, I must stop and warn you, to bethink you well of what you undertake. I determined as I was coming here to-day, that cost me what it would to cast the coldness of reflection upon OUR happiness, I resolved that you should seriously look upon the truth of my position.”

“Do you imagine I do not know it? You say you knew at once that I was romantic—how romantic I am, you have no idea—you have been my idol ever since I—ever since I knew your name. You tell me of your love from the first moment you saw me, but I—I worshipped you long before I saw you. I was dreaming all my childhood of knights, and warriors, and high heroic deeds; but when I was old enough to find that such things are not, I heard and read of you. I fancied you the happy warrior—if not literally in arms, for that, alas! there were no arms to be used, still in high thoughts and devoted services. I cannot tell you yet—I do not know if I can ever tell you how much, how constantly, I thought of you! you were—there is no other word for it—my idol!”

“How extraordinary! how fated! How strange that when we met you should not have been disgusted at the flat reality!”

Evelyn gave one conscious glance at her lover, with an eloquent blush, which told, indeed, how well his looks realized her romance; but she laughed as she replied—

“Disgusted! How can you use such a word? It was long before I was quite sure of your reality; and not till that unfortunate night—the first meeting after the tournament, after Lord Cornbury’s mistake—not till then, that I really knew your feelings—or even my own, exactly.”

“It is so extraordinary: to be sure there is, I firmly believe, where there is a heart, always another destined for it, though so often undestined to meet. But you had been making me your idol; while the moment I beheld, and conversed with you, I saw the realization of that ideal of perfection, which I had long despaired of ever meeting. But, my Evelyn! let us put aside all idols, and ideals, and romance now, and look at the reality of the life you must lead; a life of representation thoroughly artificial; false, indeed, in some degree; surrounded by hollow friends and designing enemies; obliged to smile, and smile and be the same, through all the changes of friends and the attacks of enemies. I am steeled to all that; but you would writhe at it. I said I had chosen the thorny path of

ambition : I chose it, knowing it to be so, and determined to brave it ; but you——” And he went on, with a seriousness that startled his companion.

“Yes ; your lot is far harder than mine. I have, while labouring, or while being abused, always the hope of the happiness that awaits me at home. I have action, the exertion of my own powers, the proud feeling of surmounting difficulties, of outliving calumny. You have only to suffer, you can only sympathize in my anxieties, you can only conceal what you feel. Subject to all the attacks which envy, and the greediness of place, are unceasingly levelling at those in the high station you occupy : to that worst and most insidious of foes—friends, who would endeavour to influence or to mislead you. It chills me to think of those smiling eyes, dimmed by the tears which malice may call forth, or those bright cheeks paled by anxiety and care. You think I might have spared you all these common-places upon the perils of ambition, or that I might have said them to you before, I asked for this dear, dear hand, but I could

not ! I never thought of the injury I might do you ; the ruin to your happiness I might cause, till I had secured my own ! How could I think of it till I knew you were mine ? But can you, who are truth itself, bear to be ever seeming ? You, who have never felt the stings of calumny, how will you bear to hear the man you love, the object of ceaseless abuse ? And, harder than all, how will you endure to think yourself that I am wrong, and be unable to persuade me to be right ? You have made me an idol, how will you bear to find me a mere mortal. You have hitherto, Evelyn, looked at my position only in the vivid colouring of your own imagination, look at it now in its pale cold truth. I will not deceive you—it is not too late—cost me what it may, I will not lead you unwarned to what may be your misery.”

“Generous and true, as I always knew you must be ! But you do not understand me as well as I do you. I am not a Lady Davenant, with powers to assist or advise you. I should never doubt that you were right, and as to hearing you abused, do you think that will be

a new thing to me? I have heard you plentifully abused, I can assure you, and accused of all sorts of political iniquity."

"My dearest Evelyn, I am serious."

"And so am I—seriously I am prepared to bear and forbear; I am ready to be whatever you wish me to be. I do not look at the glory of your station without seeing the dark as well as the bright. There is no lot in life without its cares; I know those of that lot I think myself so blest to have chosen. I know my own mind; I know what will make my happiness; had it been in calm inglorious ease, I might have secured it, by remaining as I am, or by uniting my fate with one who has no ambition, but that would not have been happiness to me. I had my destiny in my own power, if ever woman had, and I did most seriously consider whether I was right in what I believed would make my happiness, not merely for my own selfish future, but I was and am convinced that I should only have given up my own, without securing the happiness of another—whether I can make yours," continued she, turning the soft lustre of her



beautiful eyes full upon her lover—"whether I can make your life happy, remains to be tried; but this I know, that to look up to and adore you, must be mine. I know full well the danger and pain that are inseparable from your office; I know all this, and I am ready, I am determined to brave and to bear them."

"And how happy we shall be," exclaimed he, as he passionately pressed to his lips the hand he held in his: "the happiest—trusted with the highest public duty, and knowing that I at least endeavour to fulfil it to the utmost; and, in private life, blest with you as my companion. How exquisite will be the bliss of my home! How exalted—not the dulled and worn-out connection of uninterrupted domestic life—the times we shall be together—however few, however short, will be a heaven of which vulgar, common-place, and common-stationed souls can never form the faintest idea."

It was rather inconsistent and unsuited to a great statesman, to find perfect happiness immediately in that which he had just been describing as surrounded with sorrows; but Lady

Umfraville forgave the inconsistency, if she observed it, and felt only the passionate enthusiasm of his love.

Whatever was to be their future, their present was delightful; how many days or weeks they remained in the exultation of their first mutual confidences is not recorded, but the time came when the business part of the affair was to begin. An illustrious personage had been duly informed of the engagement, and Mr. Windham and the lawyers were as happy and as busy, as settlements of such high degree and vast possessions required.

Lord Rupert was obliged to return to town—he had informed his father, and the intended alliance was formally announced by the several fathers to all who were deemed worthy of such a communication, and the newspapers might well be considered as peculiarly fortunate at this dearest season of the year to have such “A Marriage in high life” to paragraph about. One fact, however, which they announced at this time was the return of the Duke of Plessingham.

Evelyn had written a letter to meet him in

London.—She thought it due to him, that the announcement should be from herself.

“DEAR DUKE OF PLESSINGHAM,

“You have intentionally done me many and great kindnesses, but you have often unintentionally gratified me exceedingly by your praises of Lord Rupert Conway, and delighted me by what you have told me of your constant friendship.—Can you continue your friendship for him when I tell you that he is your unknown, your successful rival—we are engaged.

“I did not wish that you should learn from common report, or from any one but myself, what so deeply concerns my happiness, in which I cannot but hope you still feel interested, while I trust that you have ceased to consider me as more than what I most sincerely wish, always to be, your friend. If I give you pain, I know you will believe it grieves me to do so, I thought, however, it was due to your constant generous kindness, the very first moment I could, to put you out of suspense.

“Very sincerely your grateful friend,

“UMFRAVILLE.”

The day after the duke's arrival she received the following :—

“DEAR LADY UMFRAVILLE,

“Thank you for writing to me yourself,—I am most grateful to you for thinking of me,—Conway is the most fortunate man in the world, but he deserves it, and I hope I may always deserve to continue to be his friend and to be allowed to be still,

“Most faithfully your's,

“PLESSINGHAM.”

Evelyn wrote also to Mr. Mortlake, to tell him that his sermon on the folly of romance had been entirely thrown away, and that Lord Rupert was as romantic as herself, and that he never would, or could disappoint her. Mr. Mortlake replied.

“I do not give up about the Penal Code in the least; I think, and I shall always think, and will maintain to him and to you, that Lord Rupert was wrong there, but otherwise, I cannot find a fault in the choice you have made. As you have succeeded in your romance, I

must tell you how much I sympathize with you.—It was your interest in Lord Rupert that first interested me.—I was told when I went into the studio at our friend the sculptor's, as I passed through, looking for what I could not find—I forget now what it was, something I was very anxious about at the time, and I saw a very beautiful person looking at a very beautiful bust, I knew the bust to be Lord Rupert Conway's. Mr. Windham and the sculptor were in a different part of the room, and you did not perceive me; you thought you were alone, and you gazed at that face, as if the original was of no common interest to you: there was a fond idolatry in your eyes which revealed the soul within as worthy of its form; I was surprised when I heard your name; I should have set you down as a mere fine lady, I should have looked at you as a beauty only, but the calmness of your manner joined to the deep feeling which I had discovered, was just the union to catch the fancy of a romantic old fool like myself. How delighted and gratified I was, when, in some of those haunts of misery, with which I am more

familiar than with beautiful young ladies, I found traces of your bounty as secret and unknown to the rest of the world, as your attachment, and I rejoiced in the discovery the more, as it was all my own. My dear Lady Umfraville, as bright a vision as yourself has seldom crossed my path; and childless, and objectless, as is my solitary existence, I have sympathised with Mr. Windham, in the happiness of being your father, and except himself, I suppose nobody in this world can rejoice more sincerely than I do in your happy prospect. My visit to Umfraville was an event to me, as I so seldom quit my hermitage, but I shall not try to resist the temptation of your flattering general invitation, and shall avail myself of it in spite of Lord Rupert's delinquencies about capital punishment.

“Your attached friend,

“EDWARD MORTLAKE.”

Everybody was very much surprised at the announcement of the intended marriage. Nobody could cavil at it, or doubt its propriety; it struck all the world as the most

correct thing possible, and all the world wondered why they had never thought of its suitableness before. Mrs. Bowen, especially, wondered with great wondering how it escaped her, a woman of the world, as she piqued herself upon being, for she had seen them together so lately, and had never suspected it; she inclined to believe that it was a mere marriage of convenience, arranged by Mr. Windham since the visit of Lord Rupert to Umfraville. He had talked, when he left Bowen Court, of going to Melton; and Mr. Bowen had said something, after his departure, about his having been invited to go on to Umfraville, but she had thought nothing of it—in fact, Lord Rupert had not been considered to be in that line, till the report of his marriage with Lady Maria Ongley, and that nobody thought of as anything but a political arrangement. However, Mrs. Bowen kept her wonderings to herself, and affected to have been diplomatically keeping the secret all the time.

Evelyn had asked her lover what had become of his intended marriage with Lady Maria. He laughed, and replied that it had been

thought of only by the newspapers, and that he had as much idea of proposing for her as she had of his doing so ; but that, as Lord Dudley said—it is an awkward thing to appear in a great hurry to contradict such a statement, and seems hardly civil to the young lady concerned.

The lawyers were tolerably expeditious, the preparations were rapidly proceeding. The numerous admirers who had followed Lady Umfraville so unsuccessfully during two seasons were disappointed, some of them, that there was not to be a third, in which they might be more fortunate. Some were satisfied that their rejection was not entirely from her want of regard for them.

The Duke of Plessingham rode over from Melton. He chose an unlucky day, for Lord Rupert had only arrived from town that morning, and receiving the unsuccessful lover in the presence of the successful is rather an embarrassing affair.

“The Duke of Plessingham” was announced, and Lady Umfraville rose and went forward to meet him, with such a friendly manner that,



though the least sentimental of men, he was quite moved. However, he turned hastily to Lord Rupert, whom he had not met since his return, and shook his hand with a warmth that said how strong his friendship remained, in spite of their rivalry, and was not long in recovering himself so completely, that Mr. Windham was rather displeased at his careless gaiety, though he had really felt more than he had probably ever felt in his whole life before.

“How is the Halcyon, duke,” said she, “and my excellent friend, Mr. Tomkins?”

“Oh, the poor dear Halcyon—she is in dock—not that it was the least fault of hers, nor of Tomkins; but we had as many trials of her as if we had really gone round the world. You did not know of that plan, perhaps, Conway. I wanted Lady Umfraville and Mr. Windham to go round the world in the Halcyon. Mr. Windham thought it quite nonsense; and Lady Umfraville, though she did not deny its feasibility, would not accede to the idea of being a whole year and more, perhaps, away from England. She had her reasons; but as

I did not know them at the time, I was surprised that she was so insensible to the honour and glory of the thing."

"The honour and glory of being food<sup>d</sup> for fishes," said Lord Rupert. "Going round the world in a yacht, my dear Plessingham—what an idea!"

"That was the beauty of it—such a thing as it would have been: we should have been such lions when we came back. To be sure, Lady Umfraville is used to be stared at; but to me it would have been quite a novelty, and the only chance of being at all notorious."

"Would not the glory of this tournament satisfy you?" said Lord Rupert? "Is that not fame enough for one year?"

"But this was such an opportunity: we had got as far as Gibraltar so well."

"You can go next year, cannot you?" said Evelyn; "the *Halcyon* is not irreparably injured, I hope?"

"By no means; she will be as well as ever in a few months."

"What adventures did you meet with after

we left you? The newspapers said you were gone to the Azores."

"So we did; and pretty well that was —— Skottow; you know Skottow, Conway—young Skottow, who was in the third form: he is a lieutenant now, and was at Gibraltar in the Madagascar, but dying, poor fellow, and on sick leave; and the doctors had ordered the Azores for the winter for him; so that put it into my head; and he was our pilot, and we had a splendid passage till we got there; but the brute who came off to steer us in, knew no more about the harbour than the figure-head, and so souse she came against a rock, and we had all the work in the world to get her off; and then to have her patched up there. Skottow wanted me to leave her, and go home in a trader; but I knew she would do, though the fellows there are such bunglers; but Dilson—I do not know whether my carpenter ever came under your notice, Lady Umfraville?"

"Mr. Dilson, certainly: he was particularly kind. Do not you remember all the trouble he took in making my sofa higher?"

"Dilson is a very clever fellow; but he was

nearly helpless there, because neither he nor any of us could speak the lingo of those stupid half-Portuguese. You see how essential Mr. Windham would have been there; but these lubbers and Dilson, between them, one way or another, made out the repairs; but it kept us so late in the season."

"I wonder you escaped making a splendid series of paragraphs in the papers," said Lord Rupert, "only you would not have had the satisfaction of seeing the sensation the 'awful calamity at sea' was making in the world; and poor Philip, you know, in such an awkward predicament—not sure whether he was duke or not."

"Could not you have been half drowned," said Evelyn, "and picked up at the last extremity; and, just when all England had given you up, re-appear quite safe? I think it would have had nearly as fine an effect as a circumnavigation?"

"And would you have the poor dear Halcyon lost?" said the duke.

"Not for the world. She should have stood the storm and drifted away—a mere ball—

drifted away to—I do not know where, but an incalculable distance, and have been seen by a steamer coming home in latitude and longitude, I shall not mention what, a mere hulk on the waters—put down in their log; and then another vessel to pick up a boat with ‘Halcyon’ on it. And, all these things together, there would have been no doubt of her fate; and then, you arrive in England!—the sensation is immense!—the Halcyon has been taken in tow by a homeward-bound, just when you were reduced to the last crumb of the last biscuit, and when you would have given Plessy Canons for a drop of water!”

“Do not you regret, Plessingham, that you did not contrive it so?” said Lord Rupert: “to come home quite safe and unstarved, is rather flat.”

“We had enough to do to keep afloat, I assure you, and no superfluity of food either; for, at those confounded Azores we could not get things rightly done, and we were leaking the whole way almost; and then, one night—tremendously dark, and a pretty smart gale too—some blundering vessel, that must needs

be coming along exactly in our track—the wind against us, and for her going nine knots an hour, she was, I am sure—smash she came, without the slightest preparation, against us, carried off the bowsprit clean, and dashed on without so much as ‘I beg your pardon, I hope I have not hurt you’—and there we were, in a pretty way! I know I thought it was all up, or rather down, with us, and it was the longest night I ever passed; and when day came we were quite frightened at the figure we cut; and I suppose that happy fate which Lady Umfraville has been inventing for us would have been worse, perhaps; but a sail came in sight, and while we were struggling there, only the breeze was gone down, we should never have got through: and, trying to repair our damages, up came H.M.S. Curlew, and she settled everything, and was going home, too—so we just kept her company.”

“She kept you company, I fancy,” said Lord Rupert. “I think I shall have an enquiry made—a note to the Admiralty Secretary—to enquire why the Curlew was so long in her passage home.”

"We did not delay her half a day, I am sure."

"All this is not very favourable to your Round-the-World project: I think Mr. Windham, at least, will not be sorry that he did not accept your kind invitation: I do not venture to answer for Lady Umfraville."

"Lady Umfraville would have been as brave as a lion, I am sure. You know I have seen you tried in our fog adventure, off Chatham. By-the-bye, Conway, it was you that helped us out of that scrape; and I had always set it down as all friendship for me, and now, I suppose, you would have left us all to perish only for Lady Umfraville's being on board."

"Common humanity, only," said Lord Rupert, laughing. "Fellow creatures in distress."

"You knew she was on board, though?"

"General benevolence merely!"

"Universal philanthropy, with a particular object in view, as usual," said Evelyn.

"Capital diversion it was," said the duke, laughing at the recollection. "Those delicate

dear Miss Fanshaws, their downcast and defeated air when they got into the carriage, looking so white and unplumed. They had set out so amazingly spirited, you know ; and a more disastrous spectacle of fine ladies in distress I never saw, huddled up in boat cloaks, and delighted to have them ; their teeth almost chattering with cold ; and what was worst of all, Lady Barnstaple triumphing over us when we got home."

"It was rather silly of us all, I must say, at such a time of year going such a long drive, and attempting a boating party."

"Poynings did his best to prevent you—his conscience was clear. He neither aided nor abetted the plot."

"He was disappointed, though, rather, I think," said Lady Umfraville, "because none of us had rheumatic fevers next day—not even a sore throat was got up by the whole party."

"The Barnstaples are gone to Italy, for the winter, are they not ?" said the duke.

"Yes ; they were here for a day or two, on their way."



“I am glad they are away,” said the duke, “it saves me a great deal of trouble. She is so very kind in assisting me with her advice, so cousinly in her conduct, it is somewhat trying. By-the-bye, she wants me to join them at Naples, I think, now; I found a note from her in town, which she very obligingly left me; it was the greatest chance that I ever read it. I brought all my letters here, to try and get through them;” and he pulled out a bundle of unopened letters. “Did you ever see anything more awful? But it is so good—my steward at Plessingham House, knowing my nature pretty well by this time, took care to sort out the most attractive looking of my correspondence.”

“All the lady-like looking directions, I suppose,” said Lord Rupert.

“Upon my soul, I believe so; he very wisely left out only three or four apart from the rest, not to alarm my weak nerves at first; and I really believe the rascal knew your hand, Lady Umfraville, for your letter was carefully selected and laid by itself, and only three small notes beside it,” said he, colouring.

“And have you left the rest unopened, all these three days that you have been in England?”

“Only three days, my dear fellow: it is only wonderful that I went so far as to bring them down with me, that I thought of doing such a virtuous action as ever opening them; I was very near throwing them all into the fire, without more ado. I cannot fancy what possesses so many people to write to me, boring about what I neither know or care about. And at Melton, you know, it was out of the question, thinking of opening them. I took these out of my writing-case, however, and seeing them this morning, as I was coming away, I thought I would bring them. I knew I should find you here, Conway; and you are so used to letters, I wish you would just help me through them; you will do it in five minutes;” and he began tearing off the covers.

## CHAPTER XI.

“WILL you come and look at this young horse now, duke?” said Mr. Windham, who come in, thinking the *tête-à-tête* had been interrupted too long.

“Oh, yes! with the greatest pleasure,” cried the duke, jumping up. “There, Conway, I am sure you have nothing better to do,” said he, with a smile at Evelyn; “and you would feel quite at a loss without some dozen letters to open in a morning. What stuff!” continued he, as he pulled off an envelope,—“asking me to support a Bill about malt, as if I ever supported anything.”

He left the room with Mr. Windham.

“Are you not sorry that I did not go on in the *Halcyon* to the Azores? It would have saved you all these journies up and

down, and all the torment of these lawyers, and the secret would have died with me, as there can be little doubt that, in the passage across the Atlantic, we should have foundered at once —— ”

“My own Evelyn, do not talk of this horrible nonsense. I am astonished that Mr. Windham could ever have risked your life with such a scatter-brain as Plessingham.”

“You would not trust me with him—jealous !”

“No, no ; the very personification of jealousy could hardly condescend to feel, far less to show it, about poor, giddy Plessingham.”

“For want of better, you were once able to put up with him ?”

“I cannot imagine the man to exist, of whom I could feel jealous, now. I never was jealous of Plessingham.”

“Not at Mrs. Bowen’s party, when you came prepared with a charge, which you fired at me, and then went off without waiting for a reply ! Do you know I was very near fainting, in that corner where you left me—near making a scene !”

“My dearest love!—and I thought you were scorning me and my chivalry.”

“Just simple jealousy!—and at the palace, when you looked so grim; and at the print-seller’s, where you thought he was ‘privileged,’ because he happened to call when my father was going there, and went with him. ‘Is not this man jealous?’”

“Still, I assure you it was not jealousy—it was regret. I really believe I should have felt nearly as much if I had had no pretensions to your regard myself—if I had been no more than your friend, or even acquaintance. I should have regretted that you should throw yourself away for a dukedom, which you did not want.”

“It was very generous; but I am sorry to say, scarcely credible. You think you could have stood by, quite calmly, to see Portia’s lovers choosing the caskets, and have been perfectly satisfied if you thought the right one had come to the right person—even though you did not happen to be he?”

“But as you are pleased to consider me to be the right person, I have no more care of

who the others were than if they had never been. Retrospective jealousy is too absurd ! and as to my feeling a doubt of you—past, present, or future—it is impossible.”

“ That will do, I think : the most unreasonable of *exigeants*, from a lover, could demand no more than this : and now, had you not better act secretary, or, at least, reader to the duke, and open his letters for him ? ”

“ Lazy fellow ! ” said Lord Rupert, as he tore off the covers, and looked over some of the packets ; “ and such nonsense, as if he could escape answering them after all ; and really too impertinent, as if I had nothing else to do.”

“ He saw you were not particularly busy.”

“ Because he was preventing my business, which is to talk to you.”

“ Which you are doing, I am sure, and not minding that letter in the least.”

“ But I wanted to ask you what you have done about the Amerys—put them off till the day when —— ? ”

“ Yes,” said Lady Umfraville, blushing ; “ my father has asked them to delay their visit

till then, as you had no objection : we thought it due to such old friends."

"And as Prior Vernon is married out of the way, I suppose even you do not suspect me of having any retrospective jealousy about him."

"Not retrospective, but just for curiosity, I should like to know, merely as a metaphysical conundrum, what sort of regret—friendly-acquaintance-like regret, you felt at the reports which you told me you heard about him? Perhaps it had not come even to regret at that time. But you could not be so much ashamed for my throwing myself away there: no, dukedom, which I did not want in the case, and such a very renowned-for-excellence person."

"Perhaps I had not come to regret; I went no further than surprise. I wondered a little at your taste; but that was easily accounted for: I thought it was an old—from childhood—engagement; and that it had long been a settled thing. I considered you at first as quite an engaged person, and it made me very unjust to you once. One day, at the Ancient Concerts, where I went with my sister, and

where we met Mr. Windham alone, and he said you were gone with the little Vernons to a childrens' *fête* at Wandsworth, I, instead of admiring your good-nature to the children, considered it merely a duty to the Vernons—the part of the betrothed sister-in-law.”

“It was horribly unjust, indeed; for it was really very good-natured: it was such a sacrifice. I knew you were to be at the concert, and I thought I acted heroically.”

“How little I dreamed that you were at that moment thinking of me. But is not this curious,” continued he, as he took off a cover, and glancing at the direction of the enclosure, began to break the seal. “Is not this curious, coming by chance to the person for whom it was intended—enclosed to Plessingham—‘For the Knight of the Lily.’”

But hardly had he glanced at the signature, and the contents, than the whole expression of his countenance—the very features of his face seemed to change! He flung it from him, and pushing aside the table at which he sat, he struck it with his clenched fist as he sprung on his feet, exclaiming—



"Abandoned liar ! and he is beyond my reach !"

At the first change of his countenance the thought—"It is the letter Sir Luttrell wrote," darted into Evelyn's mind, and she cried out, impetuously—

"Oh, don't read it !"

She seized the letter, as Lord Rupert flung it from him. One moment's look showed her the hideous words—

"You are the favoured lover, but I have seen the cross : she wears it next her heart ; all could see the chain ; I saw the cross on her bosom in her ——"

The very foundations of the earth seemed to rock beneath her, as Evelyn read these words.

"Avenged, indeed ! at last he has struck the blow ! I am undone—it is all over," thought she, as Lord Rupert bent upon her such a look as she had never thought that face could wear ; a look, which, innocent as she was, thrilled through every fibre. His habitual self-command had been recovered after that first burst of uncontrollable rage, and he said, with haughty calm—

“What matter what lies he can invent—but the cross!” as the words recurred to him—  
“How could he invent that?”

A dark suspicion began to curdle the clear expanse of his speaking countenance, and the sound of what she had said came back upon his ear—“You said ‘don’t read it,’—how could you know what it contained? Did you know of it?—Knew that he had seen that cross—my cross—my gift, which I thought no human eye had ever beheld, till you drew it out for me—for me, in my happiness——” his voice faltered—“Seen!—Seen by Sir Luttrell Wycherley! BOASTED of by him!” and his eyes sparkled with fury; then, struggling for calm—“Impossible—impossible—foul falsehood——”

Even in her agony—even in this terrible moment, when all seemed lost—even in this extremity her high courage returned, and, strong in conscious innocence, she met her lover’s eye, as she pronounced the words “It is true!” though, as she said it, the crimson blood mounted to her very brow; but, from his cheeks, every drop of blood disappeared,

at once ; his very lips grew white, and, in the hoarse voice of concentrated wrath, he repeated " True ! " as if his very heart was rending in the effort of that one word, and with a look from which, even in her innocence, she shrank.

But instantly recovering—" It is true ; he saw it ; he saw me : but how ? by a treachery so base—but——"

" But you **knew** it ! "

" I **knew** it ! I say so ! By his fell treachery he came disguised—disguised as a physician ! my aunt sent for him as Doctor Venn ; she never knew who he was.—He meant to disguise his voice ! I heard it ! He wrote some words for my aunt ; I saw them ! I called my servants ;—he fled ! "

" Unhanged traitor ! "—and he drove the heel of his boot against the floor, as if crushing some foul reptile.

" He came ! How could I—helpless, and almost senseless as I was—how could I prevent him ? and practising, as he did, upon my aunt—He came, unknown, unsuspected ; but, the instant I knew him, I had sense and power to banish him : my servants thought

him only a quack; my father only in the world knew who it was——”

Lord Rupert seized the letter, and, tearing it to atoms, thrust it into the fire: then, taking her hand——“My own spotless angel! my own Evelyn!” said he, in the gentlest and fondest of tones.

She burst into tears.

Overcome by the effort she had made, she wept from mere weakness, but with a sense of escape——

“My Evelyn! my love!——and there lives a being who could so basely—but he had not the power to injure you; he could not arrive at an idea of your truth——”

“I knew, I guessed what it must be when you opened the letter, because——”

“Forgive me for saying ‘you knew it’ for one moment. As your words returned to my ear, and the sound of your voice, as you said ‘don’t read it,’ a whole life of agony was in that moment—all my new happiness—Had you not been so true—had you not been yourself—had you faltered—had you faltered one instant—one word, one syllable—I was undone

—It had been despair ! And even in the horror of reading those words—that scoundrel boast—overwhelmed as you were—so terrible as it must have been to you to say that word, ‘TRUE,’ and to tell that hideous story—had you not told it like yourself—told it instantly and unhesitatingly, exactly what had happened——”

“Oh, do not go back to it,” cried she ;  
“that dreadful look of yours——”

“You tremble still, my love—that I should have terrified you, when I would give worlds to prevent a breath from touching you : but can you wonder at it, when I read the BOAST?——He is beneath our notice ; he could not injure us.”

“He is, I hope, safe out of England, forever. I must, however, tell you that he endeavoured to make all the reparation he could to me,” said she, rising, and taking out his letter—“He is, you will see, if you will take the trouble to read this, sincerely sorry. I ought not, perhaps, to show you such——but, in justice to him, you should read it. I received it when I returned here from Bowen

Court, too happy to feel angry with anybody—I never thought of it since. Had I received it now, perhaps, I might not have found it so easy to forgive. It was from this I knew of his having written that dreadful letter——”

She gave it to him, and left the room. It was long before she could still the tumult of her heart, or calm her universal tremor. The thunderbolt of dismay which had fallen from the cloudless summer sky of their happiness, and which with a word, a look, more or less, had blasted to atoms the whole fabric of their future! It seemed as if a gulf of perdition had suddenly opened at their feet, and that she still stood on the brink. But as she calmed, she felt such perfect trust in her lover's trust of her, that she was again happy—if she could forget that such horrible words had ever been said! It was no fault of her's; she was innocent, a passive victim till she discovered him; but that there lived a man who could, and who had BOASTED of where he had by such treachery intruded, was so horrible! He had addressed his boast to the Knight of the Lily, as the unknown possessor of her heart

—he had aimed the blow at last well—he might have been avenged, indeed—had there been a word more, a word less from her—she was undone—a word, a look more from her lover, and her pride had taken fire, and they had separated in anger, and—for ever!

But, by what a chance it had reached the person to whom it was addressed! Had the duke opened it, and had she been obliged to justify herself to him! She would have felt herself degraded: he might never have understood her: his was no high soul that would sympathise with the courage of her truth, even in that moment of agony. Strange that she should have seen those lips which had hardly closed after their declaration of undoubting immutable faith, whiten and quiver with passion—with doubt of her! She could hardly feel, however, that he had doubted, or suspected even for a moment; it had all passed so instantaneously, so like the changes of a hideous dream, that she could hardly interpret his look; it remained only as something terrible, as an expression she had never supposed his countenance could ever wear—so calm, so

gentle, so cheerful, as it usually was. She could not but feel that she must all her life have more awe of him than she had, before this unexpected scene, supposed possible.

She returned to the saloon: her lover was instantly by her side, with a look which seemed to ask pardon for the anguish he had given her; the duke, laughing, as usual, and talking to Mr. Windham, so unconscious of all that had passed in that room since he had left it: so utterly ignorant are half the actors in the drama of life of what the other half are thinking or suffering, even when on the stage together—of what a wall, a few stones or bricks, a door, a plank of wood, may have divided us from—of all that unseen agony there may be so near, so undreamt of.

“I am going,” said he, “as soon as Conway has finished instructing me in my own letters. I must say he has made a long job of opening them after all—I found half of them still in their covers.”

“These are the accumulation of months,” said Mr. Windham; I do not wonder that you were terrified at their number.”



"Luckily there is nothing very terrific in their contents," said the duke.

"You are not likely to meet anything very terrible in your letters, I should think," said Mr. Windham, so little dreaming of the terror one of them had just inflicted on his daughter.

"I don't think I was ever terrified in my life," said the duke. "Even at Harrow, when I have seen many a stout fellow shrink before the doctor, I used to manage to laugh: and so immensely as I have vexed him by laughing."

"He would have had you any other kind of philosopher but the laughing," said Mr. Windham.

"Indeed, he never thought of philosophizing with me. How he used to fire away about worthless good humour, and people who were never angry, because they had no feeling, and then I used to make him laugh in spite of himself."

"For which he always revenged himself afterwards, on the first opportunity," said Lord Rupert.

"And he was never very long without ——"

"Indeed, I led him a weary life. But he

would keep boring on, trying to make a scholar of me—trying to put things into brains, which he very kindly supposed I had ; but if he had come to the conviction that I had none, it would have saved him a great deal of trouble.’

“ But I am not going to save you so much trouble as you expected. These four you should answer by to-night’s post ; so sit down now manfully to it, for if you go back to Melton, you will never think of them,” said Lord Rupert.

“ So you are already disposing of Lady Umfraville’s property, and making over to me four sheets of paper and four envelopes,” said the duke, laughing, as he sat down to his task.

“ Let me do something for you,” said Evelyn, taking out the envelopes, and looking over the letters to find the directions. The duke gave a glance of so much gratitude, that she was almost sorry, but he rattled on gaily.

“ Thank you—you make a virtue of necessity : you see Conway will be obeyed. He could always make me do more than doctors or

tutors, or the dean himself, with all his terrors at Christchurch. You will have to promise to obey, and keep your promise too, I can tell you. He is a monstrous determined fellow, for all he is so gentle spoken."

"I shall keep my promises, I hope, whatever they are," said Evelyn, with a grave smile. An hour before she would have laughed; but now she was impressed with the idea of the wrath which Lord Rupert would feel.

"Lady Umfraville is rather serious at the word obey: it has not been her habit; she has had it all her own way hitherto," said the duke.

"I assure you she has been a very obedient, good girl as a daughter," said Mr. Windham.

"An obedient daughter is a very respectable character," said Lord Rupert gaily, and looking for the expression of Evelyn's countenance, as she stood at a table directing the letters. "'Obey' may have suited the notions of our ancestors who composed the Prayer-book; but it does not suit mine. I cannot imagine its necessity; where two people are

really happy together, there can be no difference of opinion or occasion for command."

"A very Utopian theory, my dear lord," said Mr. Windham; "by if any people are likely to find it true, you are."

"You need not be alarmed, you see," said the duke. "Conway seems NOW disposed to be pretty easy in his rule."

The day was fixed.

Lord and Lady Amery, her brother the Bishop, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon, Lord and Lady Ipswich, Lord Cornbury, and Lord and Lady Matlock, with the Duke of Plessingham, were the party: Lady Selina Conway and Georgiana Vernon, were the bride's-maids.

Mr. Windham had arranged that, contrary to the usual practice of departing in a chaise and four, the happy couple were to remain at Umfraville, and instead of leaving, should be left,—he was himself to depart with the Amerys; and this arrangement, besides being novel, marked that Lady Umfraville was the possessor as she remained in her own castle.

All the preparations were completed, and perfectly to his satisfaction; the carriages and

horses were superb, and the arms emblazoned too, in such a manner as might have been expected from as much care and attention as ever was bestowed on the quarterings of Royalty ; and the knotty point of the united liveries had been charmingly settled.

Mr. Windham had rather regretted the *eclât* of a wedding in town ; but the baronial state of having the ceremony performed in the Baroness of Umfraville's own chapel, at her own castle, and her remaining there,—altogether it was grander than any ordinary St. George's or St. James's ceremony which any body could have.

The day arrived, and was bright and mild for the season. The bride looked surpassingly lovely,—her consciousness, her agitation heightening every charm: the bridegroom looked very handsome, and very happy, and the Bishop performed his part with great dignity.

How much the duke, in spite of his friendship, and his *insouciance*, or Prior Vernon in spite of his sanctity, and his marriage, envied Lord Rupert as he received the hand and troth of Lady Umfraville, is not recorded, but they

and the bride's-maids, behaved with great propriety ; and there was a splendid banquet at the castle, and an ox, roasted whole for all the tenantry, in the park ; and everything was done in the most correct style.

The duke, and Lord Cornbury set off first, and the rest followed, as soon as possible, and the noble pair were left to the few days of uninterrupted retirement, that state affairs could allow Lord Rupert.

Here the history ends : it is not told how long Lord Rupert's spirit braved unbroken, that wear and tear of ministerial life, which has overthrown such iron frames, and wrecked so many a noble mind. Nor is it known how far their anticipations of supreme felicity were accomplished.—The vulgar opinion is, that happiness is incompatible with such high station, and that the man who serves his country, must necessarily be miserable.—Lady Umfraville and Lord Rupert Conway, thought differently ; they loved and with real affection, why should not the cares and anxieties of the rich and great be as lightly borne as the privations and toils of the poor and lowly ?

Happiness is not necessarily with the lowly born, nor is sorrow always golden.—Where there is real love, there must be real happiness: greater in proportion, as the objects and the sentiments are great.

THE END.

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