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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. II.

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# RANK AND BEAUTY.

## CHAPTER I.

A STORMY day of sleet and rain succeeded the frost. The Duke rejoiced, because every drop of rain was so much nearer the resumption of hunting; but, in the meanwhile, the day was to be got through. A discussion upon guns did very well for some time. The duke produced some beautiful little pistols; he called upon the ladies to try them:—"They are such dear little things you cannot be afraid of them. Here, Lady Barnstaple,—you are a famous marks-woman, with the bow—let us see what you are with the pistol: you will not be afraid,



will you? I have put up the target against the hall-door."

Lady Barnstaple went, and all the ladies, except Evelyn, who, with Mr. Poynings, and Mr. Windham, were in the library. At the first report of the pistol in the hall, though aware it would come, she started.

"This is too bad!" cried Mr. Windham; "the duke should recollect that he has some peacefully-disposed guests."

"He is just a school-boy," said Mr. Poynings, "and will be so to the end of his days."

"The shooters seem to have left the hall," said Evelyn. "I have not heard the pistol for some time."

"They are gone to make a noise somewhere else," said Mr. Poynings; "to the billiard-room, I suppose."

The door was thrown open—"Mr. Clarke," said a servant, and, adding—"I thought his grace was here. I will let him know," withdrew.

Mr. Clarke was evidently not intended for the company in which he found himself, but Mr. Windham, who was nearest to him, addressed him with all the civility of a well-bred man.

“The duke will be here in a few minutes ; will you not sit down ? ” and he moved a chair towards him.

Mr. Clarke sat down, after replying by an awkward inclination to the mockingly-profound bow of Sir Luttrell, who then said to him, with a deferential air—“ We are in hopes you will give us your opinion, Mr. Clarke, upon —— Sisigambes. What is your real, unbiassed, unprejudiced opinion about her ? ”

“ Sir ! ” said Mr. Clarke, with a little start forward on his chair.

“ Oh, you have not quite made up your mind on that subject. But you will favour us, I am sure, with the result of your enquiries respecting the language spoken by the pre-Adamite kings ? Do you agree with Heisterhensius that it was Græco-Etruscan, or, with Vanderberg that it was rather Celto-Teutonic ? ”

“ I came, sir, to speak to the Duke of Plesingham about some puppies he has ; but, from what I see of one of them, I shall advise his grace to drown him, at least,” said Mr. Clarke, with such an air of serious simplicity that, had it not been for a slight sub-smile at the corner

of his mouth, he would have been supposed to be speaking in earnest of some Newfoundland or Pyrennean in the kennel : but he was well understood. Lady Umfraville smiled,—her father and Mr. Poynings laughed,—Sir Luttrell looked actually disconcerted. The duke entered. “ Oh, Clarke, you are come just in time—luncheon is ready, and then we will adjourn to the stables. Wet ride you have had. Lady Umfraville, Wycherley, will you not eat? We have had such diversion with the pistols, and Lady Barnstaple has been showing the steadiness of her nerves by making some famous canons since, not a shake in her hand. I wish you would try, Lady Umfraville.”

After luncheon, the duke and all the gentlemen but Mr. Poynings and Sir Luttrell went to the stables ; and Lady Barnstaple, obliged to postpone her triumphs at billiards, went into the drawing-room with the rest of the ladies. She was embroidering a superb velvet tabouret cover ; Evelyn was helping her to measure it on the tabouret.

“ Is that intended to adorn this room ? ” said Mr. Poynings.

"Yes; I promised to work it for the duke," said Lady Barnstaple. I never recollected to try it on until now."

"Happy duke!" cried Sir Luttrell, "to have two ladies so busily employed in his service. It is no wonder you look so melancholy, that bunch of grapes at the corners is *troppo*."

"It is a pity," said Evelyn, "it is too large."

The duke came in and exclaimed at the beauty of the work which was displayed on the tabouret; he tried to fit it. "But it was not meant for this, was it? It is too large."

It can be easily cut," said Mr. Poynings.

"Cut!—cut the work of Lady Barnstaple's fair hands! Not to be thought of. Is there no other that it will fit? Another must be made instantly. It would be the blackest ingratitude in me not to have a dozen tabourets made, rather than injure a piece of work done on purpose for me."

"Bravo! Plessingham," said Mr. Poynings. "Lady Barnstaple thought so humbly of her work, or so meanly of you, that she expected to have been obliged to exert her authority to

induce you to have a new tabouret made. She never contemplated your having eleven more unnecessarily. Even Lady Umfraville only answered for your ordering one. Lady Umfraville declared you would never think of spoiling the work: she defended your character."

"Thank you," said the duke to her, with more feeling than the occasion merited, but covered by a gay bow, which meant nothing, and which was all that was observed by the company in general. Sir Luttrell, indeed, heard the tone, and marked the look which accompanied it; but the gay indifference with which Evelyn smiled in return, was satisfactory. He sat down beside her, and while the duke and Lady Barnstaple were measuring and laughing, he began; and what he began with, she never could have foreseen.—

"Have you a school at Umfraville?"

"Yes," said she, smiling at the oddity of the question from Sir Luttrell Wycherley; "that is, there is a school there; it is not my making: it is a real old dame's school—honeysuckle porch, and all right, and a dear old woman in spectacles."

“You inspect it, however?”

“I have been there but very little as yet.”

“You will, though? You teach admirably, I am sure.”

“Of course,” said she, gaily.

“It is not of course in real life. In a novel, the heroine, in a picturesque attitude, bending over a spelling-book, with a curly-headed and equally picturesque child, is all in rule. But in reality, I never saw a young and beautiful, and fashionable person attempt the task with the least power or intention of success. You could not show how to thread a needle without doing it rightly.”

“I must say that the ingenuity would be to do it wrong. To go ingeniously wrong requires more ability, does it not, than to go stupidly right?”

“The stupidly is what I declare to be impossible—to do the commonest things with uncommon aptitude is the very essential of grace and genius! Knowledge of character is the first thing necessary for a teacher—and that you possess, by intuition, as all knowledge of character is. Those who know the

world, old, experienced, and all that, judge by a number of examples, and take the result: the probable, common, general to all the world; the intuition of genius in the young and inexperienced perceives the individual peculiarities, and, because it has no experience, is not lost in confusing generalities."

"In short, young people who have never seen anything of the world, know more than old people who have seen a great deal."

"The world makes just the difference; people get used to the world and its conventional ways; but knowledge of character is a gift—one of the thousand gifts of nature and fortune, which you possess."

"Because I said that a very good-natured, civil person, like the Duke of Plessingham, would do what was civil of his own accord! that was a stretch of intuitive knowledge of character indeed! I do not wonder it amazes you!"

"To take the good and leave the bad in all we meet of people, or of events, is a talisman I wish you would, as you teach so well, teach me."

“ ‘ Little skilled in fairy lore ’ you must be to ask me to teach you a talisman ! Do not you know that talismans are a most peculiar bounty from one’s own particular godmother fairy ; or if acquired, it is ‘ by labour and care and pain.’ I should rather ask you, by what mysterious arts a talisman is to be acquired by your necromantic powers ? ”

“ I believe,” said he—wishing to see once more, for he had seen it but once given to himself, the beaming smile with which she had heard his praise of her father’s skill as a musician—“ I believe, after all, I must apply to Mr. Windham ; it must have been from his teaching, or inherited from him, that you acquired this gift of temper—this power of happiness.”

The effect was instantaneous ; Lady Umfraville gave him a smile so enchanting, that he forgot the sort of trick by which he had won it. But while he was wrapt in ecstasy gazing on her beautiful countenance, its expression changed to an arch, almost sarcastic look. She was thinking how unwelcome to her father would be anything addressed to



him by a person he disliked so thoroughly as he did Sir Luttrell.

“ I used to think myself a good physiognomist,” said he, “ but in your countenance I am sometimes completely at fault.”

Evelyn coloured as she felt how much her looks must have expressed her thoughts, and how unpleasing they would be to the physiognomist.

“ The study is seldom worth while,” said she, “ few countenances interest one enough to care for the meaning of the expression.”

“ On the contrary,” said he, “ I find I can read the thoughts of everybody else in this room, because I do not care about them : I am so much interested in yours, that I forget my craft —— ”

Evelyn coloured more deeply.

“ The diamond streams run clear,” continued he, “ as one looks at their surface ; one sees even the crystal pebbles as it flows : but the diamond treasures lie in hidden recesses—deep gulfs ; the darkness of whose waters the human eye has never penetrated. Dangerous

to search these still profounds : but who would not dare it for the prize beneath !”

“After all, the clear stream where you see the pebbles is far prettier—certainly more practical—Sir Luttrell, than a poor little bit of clarified charcoal, whose value is merely conventional.”

“A leaf of laurel, a sprig of parsley, has been the object of the triumphs of heroes—because they had rivals. Whatever the prize may be, the dread that others may attain it, enhances the value.”

“Makes it altogether,” said she : “the winning the prize is nothing ; it is the triumph over others that is the pleasure and the pride ; and a mean pride I cannot but think it. If I was to take the trouble to run a race, it should be for a prize I should value when I had it.”

“It is not yours to be a competitor—you sit supreme, and smile in calm contempt on the struggles beneath you ; only, perhaps, you now and then condescend to stoop from your cloud, and assist, like Minerva, the favoured among mortals. Will you ?”

“Would you be satisfied to be handed about that way by a superior power? Would you not rather be in an independent difficulty than roll smoothly on in a go-cart even Goddess-led?”

“I might perhaps have formerly asserted my freedom, but I have become wiser. I do not hug my chains, for I do not feel them to be chains, only a silken rein by which I would fain be guided.”

“Taking the bit in your teeth whenever it suited you,” said she, laughing, as she rose at the ringing of the dressing-bell. And as she dressed she wondered at the inconsistency of Sir Luttrell, whose ill-temper or irresistible love of sarcasm, led him so continually to contradict in company the flattering speeches which he made in a *tête-a-tête*. When he addressed such sneering expressions to her in public, was it to disguise his admiration? No; for, at other times, as in his hateful dedication, he seemed to wish his to *afficher* his devotion. Was it caprice or affectation, or mere ill-breeding? He was entertaining; he was rousing in what he said; he was flattering, not only in his expressions, but in the style of his conversation;

at least she felt her vanity more gratified by his taking the trouble to exert his abilities in talking to her, than by his extravagant compliments which might be addressed, and probably were addressed, to every pretty woman he met.

“This is twelfth-day,” cried the duke, next morning, “let us all be something to-night—what can we be? I have a lot of old dresses in the archives of the family—would do capitally for a Sir Charles Grandison’s party. I will not have anything more ancient. We must not have our tournament, Lady Barnstaple, made ridiculous by anticipation—I shall appear as my great grandfather; I beg to tell everybody before hand for fear they should not know it.”

“Have you any hereditary ghosts, Plessingham?” said Sir Luttrell, “for here are the Miss Fanshaws, would like to do the ghostesses very much. Were there not some murdered nuns here? Could they not appear with ‘bleeding bosoms gored?’”

“No, indeed! we will not have any tragedies.”

“And it might be dangerous the duke thinks,”

said Mr. Poynings, "to let ghosts begin here, he might not be able to lay them afterwards. Though they began in jest, they might keep it up in solemn earnest; and I do not know a more troublesome thing in a house."

"Are you so well acquainted with them, Poynings," said Sir Luttrell. "Have they had the run of Linwood, that you speak so feelingly?"

"Alas! Linwood was built by my father—he pulled down the old house, and banished, I fear, some very respectable old spectres with the rats. I have no hope of any such horrors. But have you not a Banshee, Wycherley?"

"Do they go in the female line, Mr. Windham? perhaps you can inform us on that as well as on every other point of genealogical etiquette? Do the Banshees attend the descendants of the heiresses in families?"

Lady Umfraville did not smile upon this speech, but said "You must tell us first if you have a Banshee."

"Yes!" said Mr. Poynings, "it is necessary in speaking of an Irish inheritance, to be sure there is something to be inherited"

“What will you be?” said the duke to Evelyn, “I will order all the old silks and brocades to be brought out.”

“I shall ask Lady Barnstaple’s advice,” said she.

The gentlemen went to enjoy the first hunt after the frost, and Lady Barnstaple employed herself till luncheon in the examination of the dresses; and about the time the gentlemen might be expected home, she asked the Miss Fanshaws to come and play battledore and shuttlecock in the hall. Her plan was successful in part; but Mr. Poynings who had not been of the hunting party, came in and asked Evelyn to play with him, so that when Sir Luttrell appeared from his room soon after, where he had been sitting all the morning, he stood to admire not Lady Barnstaple, as a glance, which had nearly lost her her game, shewed her, but Lady Umfraville, his eyes were fixed on her. It is one of those games which are more satisfactory to an admirer, as a looker on, than a party concerned. The player, if he plays at all, must look at the shuttlecock. It is tantalizing to feel that the

loveliest and dearest face is opposite to one, but that one cannot gaze at it. While the looker on has all the advantage of being able to study, unobserved, a moving picture. Sir Luttrell had come in behind, and Evelyn was unconscious of his presence, and how beautiful she looked! so perfectly graceful—so much at ease—her eyes upturned—her lips apart—her colour raised. Sir Luttrell was entranced; he only wondered how Mr. Poynings could be so perseveringly attentive to the game. The looker on can have no jealousy in the case, for the antagonist is unseen; the feathered cock is the only thing on which the lady looks.

Lady Barnstaple was attitudinizing so prettily, and dropping the shuttlecock so continually, but in vain; Sir Luttrell never made an attempt to pick it up, or ever took his eyes for one instant from Evelyn.

“Come, Sir Luttrell,” cried Lady Barnstaple, “the Miss Fanshaws are tired; have a game with me.”

“I never play, thank you. The Miss Fanshaws can relieve each other.”

“Victory!” said Mr. Poynings, as Lady

Umfraville, surprised at Sir Luttrell's voice so near her, missed her blow, and lost the game.

"Catch it," cried Lady Barnstaple, throwing the shuttlecock to Evelyn. She sent it back; and they were in the midst of an animated game, and Lady Barnstaple in a charming attitude when the rest of the gentlemen appeared. She was almost satisfied; for, splashed, tired, and full of their hunt, as they were, they stood still to admire. That all their admiration was for her, she could not flatter herself; but she had an audience, and she came forward eagerly—and backward deprecatingly—and bent, now to the right, and now to the left, waving her battledore so prettily, it was wonderful how she could play, after playing so much, but she kept it up. Miss Fanshaw, at last, let it fall, but Lady Barnstaple instantly picked it up, and throwing it to Mr. Poynings, had the field to herself. But she had the mortification to perceive that Sir Luttrell ceased to look on, and that the duke joined Lady Umfraville, as she seceded; who, though he did not always recollect his admiration of Lady Umfraville, unless something



brought her directly before him, was so struck by her unaffected charms, that he followed her into the recessed window, where she was looking at the setting sun—its last rays lighted up her countenance. His gaze expressed his feelings.

“How fortunate I was to return while you were still playing,” said he; “I am not going to ask you to play with me, for then I could not see you; but will you not play again with some one else?”

“Oh, no; I have been playing a long time; it is a delightful winter game; it is such good exercise. But it is cruel to talk of our comfortable sports in this warm room, when you must be so cold after your ride home. I should think the cold ride back, after the hunt, always spoilt the whole thing—all the amusement, and the speed, and the life over, to crawl back tired and cold.”

“Not the least: we have to talk of all we have done, and laugh at all the falls, and that is very warming work.”

“Were there many falls to-day?”

“Yes, some excellent. The fellows got up

such figures, out of the mud : soft falling, too ; no one could be hurt—but, in fact, hunting here is just a farce—we ride about, but there is no good running.”

“ It is better than nothing—better than not hunting at all.”

“ Just so. It keeps ourselves and our horses in the right condition.”

“ We shall soon see you in Leicestershire, then ?”

“ I am so sorry you go to-morrow,” said he ; “ I shall not be able to be at Melton for ten days, at least ; and in February, Parliament meets, and, I dare say, I shall be forced to attend.”

“ You will not though, unless you are desired ?” said she.

“ No, indeed ; but ten to one they will have one of their ‘ vital importance questions,’ about which nobody really cares.”

“ Did you ever speak in the Lords ?” asked Evelyn.

“ Beyond ‘ Aye’ and ‘ No ?’—Yes, I once seconded the ‘ Address,’ and I said—‘ I second the noble lord,’ or whatever it is. I said whatever I was bid. And once again I appeared

in the papers, in—‘ Here a conversation ensued across the table, between the Duke of Plessingham and Lord Duddingstone, but in so low a tone that we could not catch its purport.’ The fact was, Lord Duddingstone said something against the landholders of Kent, and I just asked him what he meant, and he said he meant nothing, and there the matter ended.”

“ It was cruel of the newspapers not to have made more of it : skilfully handled, you might have got up a duel, or, at least, a correspondence between principals and seconds, that would have filled three columns a-day, at least.”

“ Catch me corresponding in the newspapers !” cried he, laughing, “ or anywhere else, indeed. The idea of a correspondence in print ! I think it bore enough to write even to my brother, for whom I would do anything else in the world.”

At dinner Lady Barnstaple said to the duke, “ Well, what do you think of that attack on your friend Lord Rupert ?”

“ In your opposition paper ? I see you flatter yourself that I could read it ; why I never read

my own paper which only praises my friends—why in the world should I bore myself with the double trouble of reading, and reading what is unpleasant?”

“Have you no pleasure in the abuse of your best friend?” said Mr. Poynings, “in general it is considered the most piquant study,—I have known people who read nothing else, indulging themselves on a Sunday, by way of a treat, with seeing their particular friends shown up in the ‘John Bull’ or ‘Observer.’”

“Deliver me from such friends!” cried the duke.

“But if you are to defend your party,” said Lady Barnstaple, “you should know what is said against them. Now, here is a very serious ill conduct of affairs ascribed—and in my opinion, justly ascribed to Lord Rupert Conway as minister, and you call yourself his friend and will not take the trouble to know how you are to defend him.”

Evelyn reddened with indignation at the words ‘serious ill conduct,’ and Sir Luttrell, who sat on one side, said to the duke—who was at the other,—“Here is Lady Umfraville

blushing for your want of chivalrous friendship."

She smiled to herself at Sir Luttrell, with all his penetration, so entirely mistaking the cause of her heightened colour, though she coloured still more deeply at the notice that was called to it. But in spite of her embarrassment she would not allow herself to be supposed even to imply blame to the goodnatured duke, and she said to him, "No one could for a moment really suspect you, I am sure, of wanting in zeal for your friend."

"Thank you," said he, turning to her, "you agree with me that reading abuse of them is no great proof of affection, and as to defence; talking of my defending Conway is ridiculous, I give him my vote always, because I believe he is always right, and that is what I consider being a friend,—never doubting or debating about his conduct. I know Conway, and have known him since he was two years old, to be a brave, honest, honourable fellow, stuff to the back bone, and everybody knows he has first-rate ability, and why should I trouble my head with anything more?"

"He could not have a better defence, I de-

clare, my dear Plessingham, than you have just made him," cried Mr. Poynings.

"General praise does not answer a particular accusation," said Lady Barnstaple, pertinaciously.

"But what signifies talking in either house," said the Duke, "The vote is the thing, everybody knows, and all the speeches are just a bore."

"Or an amusement," said Sir Luttrell, "many go to the House as they would to a play, just to hear what such a fellow will say to such another, *comment il se tirera d'affaires*. Go to a word-fight as they would to a boxing-match, and cheer the combatants on at every round."

"I have got the knack of it now so completely," said the duke, "that when I have to sit out a debate, I can cheer in my sleep as well as the best of the wide-awake."

"Are you sure you are not sometimes cheering your enemies instead of your friends," said Mr. Poynings.

"Yes, yes!—that is what I pique myself upon. I know the quarter they come from so

well, I chime in so cleverly, just with the right men, just at the right place."

"Take care, Plessingham!" said Sir Luttrell, "that you do not break into a view halloo some night, and cry 'well done, Jackson!'—think you are cheering your own Prime Minister instead of the Queen's, and come out with 'go it, Smiler—keep up, Tanfoot!'"

"Capital!" cried the duke, laughing with all his heart, "what a joke it would be? I have a mind to make the mistake on purpose. Fancy calling out 'well done, Buckle!' to the Lord Chancellor; or, 'go it, my hearty!' to the Archbishop of Canterbury."

"It would be like an 'H. B' caricature made alive," said Sir Luttrell to Evelyn, "the beasts with human faces which sometimes figure there—alive, and without any labels in their mouths, speaking just in character—would you be startled to see a picture alive?"

"It would startle one, certainly," said she.

"What would be your first thought?" continued he, looking up at a picture of Actæon devoured by the dogs, which, according to the

English taste, which thinks an eating room can never have eating enough, adorned the walls with other carnivorous scenes of wild beasts devouring each other—"What would be your first thought if you saw that dog rise from his feast on Actæon's shoulder, and look at you?"

"I should think I was going into a fever—I should not believe what I saw, I suppose—one's second thought would be this is some trick."

"It would have a fine effect, I think, I could continue it; flat sorts of puppets, or fantoccini to appear a picture, and then move before your eyes. It would be curious to see the effect on the company."

"How very ingenious! would be the only exclamation, I think," said Evelyn.

"Do you count so on the anti-marvellous turn of the age? I wish I had thought of it in time—it would have just suited twelfth-night."

"It would not be much more than a *tableau vivant* after all," said she, "it would not have much effect; people are so used to such sights it would not do for a horrification now."



Indeed I am afraid the days for Radcliffian mysteries are quite over. Even in this old abbey, the duke declares he has never heard the slightest rumour of a ghost."

"Yes, Plessingham's laugh would put to flight a whole legion of spectres, I think."

"It would be rather a dangerous service doing ghost to him," said Evelyn, smiling, "he would run the spectres through, or blow their brains out, in a minute, and convince himself of their materiality most effectually."

"People never do justice to ghost actors for their courage: quite independent of such dangers, as he runs from many sceptics like Plessingham. The personifying of a ghost must require a great deal of nerve."

"Not to be frightened at one's self," said Evelyn. "Yes, the whole getting up of the scene—the midnight hour, one's own appearance, the horrible images that must rise in one's mind."

"That you would run away from yourself," said she, laughing. But Sir Luttrell did not immediately laugh, and she looked with surprise on his excited countenance; it was the

most sincere expression she had ever seen it shew; it was a curious proof of the natural nervousness of temperament, inseparable perhaps from genius, and it served to account agreeably to his usual sneering denigrant manner, which she could fancy to be adopted in a sort of bravado to his own sensitive nature. While she was so thinking, he said in a low voice, "Would you like to promise or be promised to re-visit, or be re-visited after death?"

"I should not like to promise, or to ask for a promise, which there could be no certainty of fulfilling."

"Without any promise would you like it to be done?—would you like to see again in the spirit, one who had been a friend?"

"It would be quite unnecessary—if one had been really attached to a person their thoughts and feelings are always with one, perhaps more vividly than if they were still alive."

"Are you so constant? Absent or dead, is your friend still so dear that you never require to be reminded of him? Is the absent present to you always? Can you at this moment

bring before your mind's eye the —— the absent person you would most wish to see?"

How present the living vision of her fancy ever was to her! And conscious of Lord Rupert being at that instant almost in his reality in her mind's eye: in that reality which is in our heart of hearts, she felt disgusted at Sir Luttrell with his unhallowed presence, seeming to put himself near such an image, he was of course utterly ignorant of her thoughts, and dared to attribute the consciousness visible in her countenance to his own presence, dared to flatter himself that she needed no aid from fancy to bring before her the object of her heart—that it was present, that he was it himself, as she perceived from his saying 'As you think you would remember the thoughts and feelings of one dead better than of one living—perhaps the present is not present, when seen in the reality—not in the fancy.' He smiled so self-sufficiently as he said this, that she coloured with vexation, but he went on "What truth there is in Waverley's feeling, when seated beside Flora, that though he would not for worlds have been

anywhere else, yet he longed for solitude to be able to feel his own feelings. To have the reality of memory, to convince him of a happiness so great that it seemed unreal."

"I do not know that Flora would have taken it as a particular compliment," said Evelyn. "I do not think it natural, when one is pleased with a companion, when displeased indeed, we long for solitude, or anything to get rid of it."

"Have not you the power to fly away, and be at rest even in the most uncongenial society? Till within these few months, till I was

—— "In the magic circle, free  
From every stern reality."

I could, at will, retire to my esoteric self, and leave the exoteric to the world."

"Perhaps the world was not always aware of any change; you should have put up an advertisement—'This is a man turned outside in,' and then people would have been aware of all they lost."

"You laugh, Lady Umfraville, and yet I am certain that you not only have the power,

but continually avail yourself of it—the power of bringing your sail to some bright and flowery isle of happiness, far off in the vast ocean of thought, ever sunny, ever calm, undisturbed by one surge from troubled life.”

“Come, ladies and gentlemen,” cried the duke, as Lady Barnstaple rose. “To dress—dress for your parts. We must all meet at ten in the hall.”

Lady Barnstaple had wisely settled that she would not attempt any character, and Lady Umfraville was delighted to be only a well-dressed lady of a hundred years since. The rest of the ladies were shepherdesses and Queen Elizabeths, and nuns, as their fancy or their wardrobes and the stores of Plessy Canons suggested.

## CHAPTER II.

THE party assembled : some wore masks. The duke, in a wig and William-the-Third suit, laughed at himself, and everybody joined. The usual question from the unmasked of "Who am I" had been asked, but not answered, when one loud, sudden, powerful stroke upon the gong, startled the company. An instantaneous silence—all stood still. "Ah, gracious Heaven!" exclaimed one of the young ladies. A shriek from the whole bevy of waiting-maids on the stairs above. "Look, look!" cried Mrs. Fanshaw, "the armour is moving!"

All eyes followed hers. The armour which stood on high moved its truncheon. Another shriek—another stroke on the gong. The ladies in the hall, the maids in the gallery,

shrunk into a startled heap. The masks sprang back. The armour raised its leg. "Oh! oh! oh" was shrieked in every accent.

The armour raised its other arm—its other leg—and in an instant sprang to the ground with a clang that was re-echoed by the gong. The masks recoiled with a cry. The audience, in an ecstasy of terror, seemed inclined to leap out of the gallery.

The figure, with the step of the Ghost in 'Hamlet,' advanced direct to Lady Barnstaple, shaking his truncheon. Her dignity and her grace, and her affectation and all, gave way at once: she fairly turned round and ran. She made for the nearest door; it was fastened; all the ladies but Evelyn followed. Stopped by the door, and too much terrified to recollect she should faint, Lady Barnstaple turned again, and the armour and its truncheon was before her. Round she wheeled, and pell mell, like chickens before a hawk, the fine ladies, in all the vulgarity of a thorough fright, flew hither and thither, they knew not where; but whenever Lady Barnstaple turned, the armour and its truncheon was in her path, till,

in the ecstasy of alarm, actually seizing on Lord Banstaple with "Save me, save me!" and he brought the scene to a crisis. In the crowd that instantly surrounded her, the moving armour disappeared, and a cry of "It's gone—it's a ghost!" brought forth a peal of laughter from the duke. Lord Barnstaple joined. She looked up. "Well done," cried the duke. "By Jove, you ran well! I never saw a better race. The light armed and the heavy armed; I never saw a better *melée*—what a leap he took!"

The gentlemen, to show they had not been startled, all laughed too, and the ladies had not time for hysterics; for the duke, seizing Lady Barnstaple's hand, exclaimed—"My dear great grandmother, let us have a gallop together: as you do it so well alone, I am sure you will be delightful as a partner."

The music played, and the runners were eager to hide their folly in the dance.

"How well you stood your ground, Evelyn," said her father.

"I was in the secret, I must tell you—at



least I had had a hint which made me know what it was."

"Sir Luttrell, I suppose," said Mr. Windham. "You are in his confidence, then," continued he, in a displeased tone, and looking very well his part, in a black velvet suit and sword, like an angry father of the old school in a comedy.

"No—I did not know that he was going to do anything of the sort, nor did he, I believe; I think he must have arranged it since dinner; but he was talking of pictures moving, so that, as soon as I saw the truncheon raised, I guessed it must be him."

Scarcely had Lady Barnstaple seated herself after the dance, than she was addressed by a figure in the habit of a conjuror—the furred cloak, the high cap with planetary signs, and a long rod, and masked. "Would Lady Barnstaple like to have her fortune told?" said a solemn voice.

"Oh, no more horrifications, I beg," cried she, angrily.

"The letter has reached its destination," said the figure. "The count has received it."

As red as she had been pale at the moving armour, and scarcely less terrified, she cast a glance round. Lord Barnstaple and the duke were at a distance, but there was a crowd about her: she rose. "As I know so much, you see I can tell you more," continued the magician. "Beware of an imperial city! Beware of a river party—a second boating may be fatal to you—perhaps to him."

Lady Barnstaple turned abruptly away, and the conjuror, taking Miss Fanshaw's hand, and drawing her suddenly from her companions, described a circle round her with his rod:—"And now, lady, from that charmed ring you cannot stir, till it may be my pleasure that you should."

"Oh, tell me my fortune, by all means!" cried she, delighted.

"You are a nun now: you will exchange your vestal veil for a bridal one. The aspect of the stars bodes good fortune between your twentieth and your thirtieth year; but, between thirty and thirty-five, beware!"

"Good heavens!" cried she, terrified at the exactness of the prophecy. "Beware of what?"

"Beware of what you do; beware of what you say; above all, beware of how you look!"

He waved his wand—"The charm is done: you are free."

Her sister, struck with the sublime of this prophetic warning, stepped forward next. The magician traced his round with the rod:—"From this enchanted spot you cannot move without my leave."

The young lady stood fixed.

"You are younger than your sister. You have a turquoise ring on the middle finger of your right hand. Remember to take it off before a ring is put on the ring finger of the left hand—remember, I say, to take it off."

Miss Jemima looked aghast.

"But take care not to lose it. If you lose that turquoise ring, or if you put it upon any other finger than that on which it now is, perhaps the gold ring will never be placed on your other hand! One, two, three,—beware of a fourth!"

"A fourth!" cried she—"a fourth what?"

"He waved his hand—"You are free."

The duke came up. "Well, Sir Conjuror,

you need not trouble yourself with any fortune-telling for me, for I am perfectly happy as it is; and I do not care about dying, so you need not waste your time to tell me when it is to be."

"Death goes by destiny!" cried the enchanter, "and all must die. Marriage is by destiny too, but all are not doomed to marry. Your thread of life is spun; the fates have twined it strong and fair: but the marriage strand in it, though golden, is not strong—it strains—it tries to join another golden strand in another thread of life—it strains, it breaks. The fates refuse the union. You are 'perfectly happy now.' Tempt not your fate; be warned by me, or your perfect happiness will cease."

The duke laughed, but it was a forced laugh.

"Young gentleman," said the magician, waving his rod over a young cousin of the duke's, who was standing lost in admiration of Lady Umfraville—"Young gentleman, fall not into idolatry: take your heart back to Christ Church with you, or your head will not make much figure there. If you gaze too long at the sun, you can see nothing else. If you look

so high, you may break your neck, and your heart too."

The youth, abashed, drew back.

The magician turned to Lady Umfraville—  
"The stars themselves have their appointed times, and, bright and unapproachable though they may be, yet even they must be obedient to their destiny. The seer of old knew of the past as well as of the future. Not long past is the day,"—he lowered his voice to a whisper, perfectly audible to Evelyn, but unheard by the curious surrounders.

"Not long since, early in the day—a bright morning in Kensington Gardens—an aspirant—a favoured aspirant was met, but so accompanied as to lose all favour at once and for ever. For the future"—and he raised his voice—"For the future fate's dark book has been unrolled before me, and, set in brilliants, dazzling bright among the dim and melancholy words recorded on its leaves, is your name, your fate, brightening in its halo of happiness all within its reach. And beside it I have seen the destinies inscribe the name that is to be beside it ever—a name not unknown to fame—the

name is set, the threads are wove. — 'Tis destiny."

"'Tis supper!" cried the duke. "Barnstaple, take Lady Umfraville."

Lord Barnstaple could not obey, as the magician had stopped him by saying, "The highest is not the most dangerous; beware of foreigners. The love of rule may end in being ruled." Lord Barnstaple laughed, but uneasily; and the conjuror was now surrounded by all the rest of the company, frantic with folly and curiosity, and so spell-bound by the nonsense of his predictions that they forgot even supper, at which Lady Barnstaple appeared thoroughly out of sorts; indeed, she was, in plain English, exceedingly cross. She was mortified at having been so foolish about the armour, and angry at the conjuror's attack; she "did not like that sort of thing: she did not understand it."

Lord Barnstaple was annoyed at his share in her ridiculous fright; Mr. Poynings was tired; Mr. Windham was indignant at the enchanter's audacity; the duke was hurt at what he had said of him; and Evelyn, perfectly confounded at the mention of her meet-

ing Mr. Vernon—a circumstance she had never thought of since ; but, as she had no idea who his companion was, half the effect of the marvellous communication was lost. She recollected that her father had never mentioned the circumstance, and that she had felt, as they walked on, that he did not mean to be asked about it. But how it could have come to Sir Luttrell Wycherley's knowledge she could not imagine. No one was near them at the time, and that Mr. Windham should have mentioned so slight and unconnected an occurrence to one with whom he never voluntarily exchanged a word, seemed most improbable. She determined to ask her father during their drive next day.

The dancing was resumed after supper, and everybody continued to think they were all very much amused by seeing themselves and their companions in different clothes from what they generally wore, except Lady Barnstaple, who never recovered her spirits, and whose only consolation was looking at herself, and her beautiful dress in every mirror she could meet with. The conjuror had disappeared ; but the

audience were vociferous in his praises: he had discovered all the masks instantly; he knew everybody's history, and made such wonderful prophecies; the future must surely be right when the past was so well known.

The duke, though the most placable of mortals, had so vivid a recollection of the conjuror's attack, that he looked almost sulky when Sir Luttrell appeared at breakfast, and he made no allusion whatever to either of his characters of the evening before; and Lady Barnstaple, determined that nobody else should, began in a high tone, as if to preclude all other attempts at speech. "Here is one of these everlasting requisitions for subscriptions to a new church. Who will subscribe to it? You will, I suppose, Lady Umfraville, as your friend Lady Amery is at the head of the list."

Evelyn felt herself blush, because she saw Sir Luttrell's eyes fixed upon her; but Lady Amery was her friend, and evermore would be her friend, she was sure, let what would happen to her son.

"You will subscribe, Lady Umfraville," said Lady Barnstaple.



“Will you show me the paper?” said she, and, while she looked at it, Sir Luttrell, who had secured his place beside her, said, “Had you lived in the days of such things, would you have founded monasteries and so forth, and been canonized as Saint Evelyn?”

“It was a finer thing, certainly,” said she, “at least there was more imagination in thinking one would be after one’s death in red letters in the calendar, than as people now do, delight in seeing their actual live name in plain black and white in a list of subscribers; but we are, at all events, humbler now, and less selfish. It is a more generous desire of doing good now, to assist in building a church, because a church should be built, than formerly, when there was a notion of one’s own reward at last.”

“That is a new view of the matter, that were to scrutinise motives too closely. Do you admit no hope, no wish for oneself in a good action? Because one wishes to please another, does it destroy all one’s own merit in your eyes? Because one would die to save you, would you despise the sacrifice because it was made for your approbation?”

“I should not be pleased either way,” said she, gaily; “it would be excessively distressing to have people killed on my account. I had much rather they would die in any other way, I assure you.”

“But would you call it selfish?”

“Is not all cruelty selfish? It would be cruel to me. Nobody could like to sacrifice the most indifferent person for their own sake, and a friend one had rather have alive, of course.”

“Then you admire Lord Neville for not jumping into the sea, to save the drowning child, for fear his death should distress Corinne.”

“No, indeed; it was the basest selfishness. It was just what I think so despicable, thinking of what others will think, instead of doing what was right, at once, merely because it was right.”

“But if he had thought ‘I shall please Corinne by my gallantry and courage,’ you would have thought all his merit in the action lost?”

Evelyn smiled. “That would be rather hard, certainly; but a generous person would

have jumped in easily, without any consideration, but 'there is a person drowning, I will save him.' If he had expected my admiration when he came back, I should have forgiven him, I acknowledge, and admired him with all my heart."

"Do you remember the French game of *les batteaux*? The query, if you were in a boat with so and so, and so and so, which of the so and soes would you save, if you were wrecked, and could save one?"

"Nobody would be so foolish as to answer that query, I suppose," said she.

"If I were to wreck you then, now, with the duke and Mr. Poynings, you would not tell me which you would save."

"Save them! but I should expect them to save me."

"You do not think it a fair game, I see. Are you as fond of *les petits jeux*, as Lady Louisa Darrell is? Do you know the Spanish one of the Stool of Repentance? Each person is placed before the company, and told their faults. You might surely place yourself safely there. The accusers only would be at fault."

“I should not be the least flattered by their silence; it would only shew they knew nothing about me. But I must say I should not at all like them to speak; no one likes to be told of their faults, if it were done ever so good-humouredly, one would feel hurt afterwards, and, however one might put a good face on the matter at the time, I think one would feel rather displeased with the answer.”

“You would have it done by ballot—black and white balls. Can you fear you would have any but white?”

Evelyn thought Sir Luttrell might well fear he would have none but black.

“It is done for ever,” continued he, “with the dead. The disputed characters of past times—how constantly they are black and white balled by posterity! yet no one would hesitate to go to posterity even on those terms. Canonized or condemned—anything is better than indifference—one must have something to idolize; I have sought it all my life.” He stopped for a moment. “To adore the beautiful in a vague generality can never satisfy the heart; it seeks its realization, its

actual living breathing form. I thought I would be a sculptor at one time; I studied the art as an artist; I fancied that I could reverse the old fable, and instead of falling in love with the ideal of my statue form, the statue from my ideal, that I could think so vivid an image of beauty in my mind, that it would, as it were, force itself into a reality; that I had but to touch the clay or the marble and it must become what I pleased."

"But you soon gave it up in disgust, I am sure: I cannot fancy a poet being a sculptor—the miserable performances of the hands must always mock the bright ideal."

"Yes," cried he eagerly, "exactly. I flung away the unmanageable stone, and retreated to my own imagination."

"You had Michael Angelo for an example to be sure——"

"And it was exactly his example that reconciled me to my failure. His intention—his poetry of thought is never equalled by the zeal of his execution. I regretted my failure as a statuary; and I tried to inspire some artists with the same system, but in vain. I

wanted to establish a northern style—an Ossianic gray of colouring—I tried to have a series of British sculptoring done like that Tam o'Shanter by Toms, in our native granite or gray free stone; so much more suited to our foggy light, than the cold, dead white of marble so natural to the glare and heat of a Southern atmosphere; but nobody would take to it; and yet I still think our houses of the north, in their giant forms, in stern granitic grey, would be more suited to us, and more worthy of England, than the polish of exotic marble."

"It would be so if our climate was formed for statues being in the open air: but would not even granite soon grow mossy? A weather-beaten Alfred, and the Black Prince, grew so lichen-covered, and rain-furrowed, that you would not know one from the other. As our statues, if we have any, must be under cover, they may as well be of marble, which certainly suits a room better than our coarser material. And you have very fine marble in Ireland, have you not? You may console yourself for the loss of your British grenadiers

in granite, by the patronage of your Irish quarries."

"Well, Sir Luttrell," cried Lady Barnstaple, "have you given Lady Umfraville enough of your opinion upon the case of Bransby Church? May we be allowed to have her answer now?"

"Oh yes! I shall subscribe, of course," said Evelyn, carelessly, as they rose from breakfast.

"Will you grant my request?" said the duke, 'of course' too! The Rector of Maxley is dead, and I have received a letter this morning from my old tutor, asking me to ask you for it for his son. It is in your gift, is it not? I suppose you will find a dozen applicants for it at Umfraville, as your letters have not come to-day; but, remember, I have asked first."

"What is your friend's name? Do you know him?"

"His name is Brooke; but that is all I know of him. His father was, and is, an excellent old man. You may not think his having been my tutor any great proof of his learning; but he was Rupert Conway's, too,

for a short time, which was more to the purpose, especially as he gave him a very good living for himself."

"He should be contented with a Prime-Minister's patronage, I think," said Mr. Windham, unconscious that the Minister's name had gone far to secure the living of Maxley to young Mr. Brooke.

"I have done my duty," said the duke; "I have asked, and asked very honestly; for I have not said my candidate had every virtue under heaven, and a wife and nine children besides, as I might easily have said at a venture, for I dare say it is all true."

"I hope I may be able to give it to your friend—or rather, to the son of your friend's friend," said Lady Umfraville, smiling.

"Does that satisfy you, Plessingham," said Sir Luttrell. "A conditional promise in favour of a friend's friend? Do you think that is granting your request?"

"It is quite enough," said the duke. "I was requested to ask Lady Umfraville, and so I did, which was all I could do, or cared to do in the matter."



“Would you be satisfied, had you made a request of the duke, had he so answered?” continued Sir Luttrell. I am sure I should not have been, had I been in his place. The slightest hesitation would have cut me to the heart—I should have felt it an annihilation of every hope—tearing up by the roots, the idea of the smallest interest, the slightest regard for me.”

“Because, when you made a request, you were told it would be done, if possible, would you feel more expectation of its being really done, if the answer was, ‘it shall be done, though it is impossible?’”

“Surely! not in those words, because they contradict themselves. But if I asked the slightest service, where I hoped I had excited an interest—or from a friend even—I should expect instantaneous, unhesitating compliance, or there is an end of the interest and the friendship.”

“You must think that your friends are not very wise, then,” said she, turning from the window where they stood.

“Would not every one rather be loved too

well than too wisely? Had you made such a request of me, your friend should have had the living by this day's post."

"You like to job, and be jobbed for," said Mr. Poynings—"that is the plain English of it. Love and Friendship, too, stripped of their wings, just bring these high-flown notions to the level of electioneering gifts—you give your place and I give my vote—a thorough-going partisan in fact."

"That is vulgarizing the sentiment with a vengeance," said Sir Luttrell, vexed at the turn given to his speech; "But to most people, the idea of giving all is as incomprehensible as expecting all. Those who give but half a heart, or have no heart to give, may be satisfied with half compliances."

"Thoroughly selfish hearts may expect, and give, in such a manner," said she; "but in a case, like the present, other people's happiness is concerned. We have no right to gratify our own likings and dislikings at the expense of others."

"Others!" exclaimed Sir Luttrell, "If a favour was asked of me, and I recollected that

there was another human being in the world than ——, her who asked it, I should consider myself worthy of everlasting contempt—utter and final rejection.”

“It is well you are not Grand Seignior,” said Mr. Poynings; what holocausts of heads, and provinces of slaves, you would sacrifice for the Signora of the day.”

“Yes; of the day,” said Lady Umfraville, as she left the room; “constancy is not a necessary part of these unhesitating compliances—they may be granted to the fancy of to-day, and recalled for the fancy of to-morrow.”

As she entered the sitting-room Lady Barnstaple was saying: “I am so glad no one made any allusion to either of Sir Luttrell’s parts; it must have thoroughly mortified him.”

“And he deserved to be mortified,” said Mrs. Fanshaw.

“Yes,” said Lady Barnstaple, “It was so rude of him taking the armour, when the duke especially forbade anybody wearing any armour, making a mockery of the tournament, when so particularly requested not,—it was surprisingly ill-bred!”

“Not surprising in Sir Luttrell Wycherley,” said Evelyn, “he is always ill-bred.”

“Lady Umfraville’s carriage is at the door,” said a footman. And she went to prepare for departure, leaving Lady Barnstaple and her friends to comment on her condemnation of one, who was so professedly her admirer, and whom, as such, though disliking the man, Lady Barnstaple envied her.

“I shall see you, I hope, in Leicestershire, but if not, in town—and then at your tournament,” said the duke, as he handed Lady Umfraville to her carriage, “I may call it yours, now that we are out of hearing.”

She laughed as they drove off, and Sir Luttrell was satisfied. She could not care for the duke, or they would not have laughed at parting, even for a few weeks.

As soon as they were on the road, Evelyn said “Did not you see Prior Vernon and a lady in Kensington Gardens the other morning? as we were going to my Aunt’s.”

“I saw him,” said Mr. Windham,

“I thought you must have seen him, but you looked as if you had not; who was he

with? Did you speak of it to Sir Luttrell? he alluded to it in his conjuring last night."

"Just like him! I never told him about it, of course,—such bad taste to speak of it to you, poor Lord Amery is so annoyed at it. That lady was Mrs. Rawson, a notorious person, quite,—you may remember seeing her at the opera, and Sir Luttrell with her,—so audacious of him to allude to it to you.—How poor Prior came into her clutches I really cannot imagine, but he is perfectly infatuated by her—he has not been at Amery for months. His mother thinks he is abroad on some pious mission,—I did not like to speak of it, I thought you must have seen who he was with, and that you must be grieved at such a turn in him, with all his sanctity—and all his love for you."

Grieved and shocked she was indeed,—it was a circumstance which, except brought out by accident which this had been, she would never have heard of—and which in fashionable life, would, in any other young man, have been thought nothing of,—but there was an *eclât* in a saint intriguing with Mrs. Rawson. Evelyn,

however, felt no triumph in his fall, though it justified her, in her dislike of his canting interference, and in her distrust of such professions ; she felt mortified and disappointed, disappointed at no longer being able to respect a character, which, in the midst of his tiresome parade, she had always looked up to for its virtue and purity. And mortified, too, at a professed lover,—even though rejected,—so soon adoring another object. This accounted for his extraordinary letter ; she supposed ‘that the other’ who took the interest in him, which Evelyn refused, was this notorious Mrs. Rawson.

## CHAPTER III.

IN the solitude and silence of her castle, Lady Umfraville thought over what she had heard of Prior Vernon, not only with pain, but with some remorse. She did not, indeed, regret that she had so decidedly refused him; but she feared she had done so too harshly—that she had torn away the veil too rudely—had shown him too contemptuously the real of his own character; she feared that, smarting with the wounds her haughty truth had inflicted, he had been the more easily caught by flattery and art. She recollected the extraordinary letter he had shown to her; she had been, as he was, struck by its eloquence, and touched by its feeling, which she had then thought genuine; she was now inclined to believe it must have been from Mrs. Rawson, and written

only to deceive and win this weak young man. But to what purpose? Had not the lady lovers enough, who could be secured with less trouble, and without such a quantity of impious treachery. Or was the pleasure of entrapping one so conspicuously good, so very piquant? Was it only the vanity of showing off the preacher, the missionary—the rigid contemner of every amusement; the virtuous pattern young man, as unable to resist her fascination; and as being, in short, no better than the rest of the world?

She had succeeded, at all events. That letter from Mr. Vernon, which she had received at Stanton, recurred painfully to her mind. How coldly and haughtily she had replied to it! It was friendly—it was meant in kindness, certainly, and she had taken no notice of his admonitions, and had meant to express that she had desired no more of them. While he had probably found this sinner, pretending to be saved—always ready, not only to hear but to admire what he said, to appear to be convinced, and touched, and converted. But to a person of the talents this lady was said to



possess, it must have been hard work, for poor Prior was, at best, but a dull companion, and, except for the pleasure of tricking, it must have been a weary job. But what had Sir Luttrell Wycherley to do with it? How had he known of the meeting in Kensington Gardens?

Winter was over—it was March: Mr. Windham had fixed the day for their return to town; the time of quiet—of as much retirement as can be had with a large acquaintance—was over, and Evelyn would have regretted it, but that in London only could she now expect to see Lord Rupert. She was alone one morning—her father having ridden over to Leicester, to a county-meeting, when “Sir Luttrell Wycherley” was announced. She rose, and came forward, coldly enough, and without any expression of satisfaction at receiving him there; he was disconcerted, and they sat down in a silence, which she seemed determined not to break.

“I saw Plessingham in town yesterday?”

“Are you at Melton?” said she, in the hope that he had met her father, and that Mr.

Windham would put an end to their *tête-a-tête*, by returning as soon as possible.

"No; I am direct from town, and came to the George at —— last night, and walked over here?"

"You are on your way to Melton, I suppose; my father has gone this morning to ——"

"I know," interrupted Sir Luttrell; "I came here knowing it. I came——Oh, Lady Umfraville, do not say you can doubt why I came! Oh, do not look so grave, so cold, so unapproachable!"

He gazed upon her with an intensity of passion, burning in his dark and fiery eyes, that suffused Lady Umfraville's cheek with the deepest crimson. He had called her unapproachable, but he approached her that instant, with a hesitation of manner, however, and a real agitation; and, as he gently took her hand, his voice faltered, while he passionately exclaimed:—

"I came to adore you ——. I came to pour out the fervour, the passion, the frenzy of my love—my heart, my soul, my very life devoted—so fondly, wildly, madly yours. Idol of

every thought! All that I have ever thought, or felt, or been, concentrated in one wild whirl of ecstasy. How every word, each silent look, and—oh! your smile, oh! how, through my heart, through every fibre of my frame, it has throbbed in very agony of passion. Existence is only in your presence—absent, I am without. Absent! I never am; I never can be absent from you. Absent from my dearest, fondest, inmost thought! No: out of your presence, the sunshine and the light of life are gone, indeed!—and I live but in the past on every look. From the first hour in which I beheld you—I did not behold—I did not, I could not, say I looked at you—it was instantaneous, it possessed me instantly, wholly, and for my life. Dazzled beyond the power of sight in that first glance. But since—oh, how I have looked, and loved, and lived but in those looks—lived in the brightness of your angel beauty—angel of purity and truth! How your light laugh has thrilled into my soul—those fair tresses, that bright blush—how all spoke the youth, the innocence, the freshness of the heart within! Who might hope to be

the first to touch it? Who could dare—who would not wish to be the first—the FIRST to wake that heart? Oh! could I be the first to break that profound calm ——. May I hope that one so bright, so pure, might ever, into that untouched heart, admit an erring mortal like myself? If the fondest love, the most frenzied passion could touch that heart ——”

His voice faltered; he stopped.

Evelyn was more agitated, more moved, than she had ever felt in her life at the vehemence of her lover's passionate address. It was the language of true feeling; his usual presumption, his wonted selfism—all had disappeared in the extremity of his emotion.

She could not speak; she drew her hand from his. He started.

She forced herself to speak:—“No, no; never—I never can return your attachment. Gratified, flattered, touched, I am deeply sensible of the honour of your addresses; but I can never ——”

“Oh! stop, stop—hear me, hear me!—hear the passionate adoration of an existence. Others may, must, love—must adore you; but

it is not, cannot be like mine—as a devouring, quenchless flame of fire. To gain one smile from you—how have I lived upon a look! You are so gay, you have always laughed at each attempt I dared to make to express the fervour of my adoration.”

“I thought you meant it to be laughed at, it seemed such flattery as could only be meant to laugh at me—the most exaggerated flattery, and then the most unnecessary sarcasms. Till this moment, I always thought you were only trying to make me ridiculous.”

“Oh! wretch that I am!—You could not—Oh! no, so pure and passionless as you are—you could not—how can I make you comprehend the state of irritation and of madness in which I lived in your presence: and yet, out of it, such annihilation! I rushed to it again: I gazed at you from afar: you smiled—smiled upon some blest being. Stung to the quick, all was bitterness; and when I spoke even of you, or to you, it was in such an agony of jealousy, that all I said was bitterness. My existence was on your looks; and to try from hour to hour, from

moment to moment, what those looks would be to me, wrapt all the unrestricted energy of my soul. I have dared it at last. I have poured out before you all the faith, the fond, fond——”

He stopped for an instant: she would have spoken, but he hurried on——

“My lot has been to see so much ; to have been in such varied scenes. I had so read the world——so read it, through and through, and was so weary of its worthlessness; all characters, all hearts, were such nothingness: seen, comprehended, and forgotten, as I saw them: till yours——that freshness——that dignity of soul, and yet that youth and joyousness. I saw you dancing in all the innocence and gaiety of your heart: and then, again, when I spoke to you, I felt as if you looked me through——that instinct of appreciating——and yet you did not see: you did not, because you are so totally devoid of all vanity: you did not see the passion you had raised: you thought me flattering: and now, even now, perhaps, you doubt me: you distrust: perhaps, at this moment, you are unconvinced that this is truth: can you doubt that——”

Oh! no, no!" she interrupted, with much emotion, "how could I doubt? It grieves, it wrings my heart to answer such. It is better, however, to do it at once. I must say, I never can return your love. Cold, heartless, unfeeling you must think me not to be won by such a passion. I feel—I do most deeply feel—the fervour of your words,"—she spoke with much agitation. "It grieves me to speak (as I know you must feel it now,) so cruelly; but at once, for ever, irrevocably, I must, Sir Luttrell, refuse the honour of your addresses ——"

"You are engaged then—your heart is not untouched—it is true then," cried he, rage sparkling in his eyes. And still, after all; can you still keep faith with that faithless Vernon? Did you not see him? Are you not aware—Good Heavens! do you still prefer that hypocrite to me? He, who after being in the heaven of your presence, could look at another. The first moment I saw him, I saw in him my rival: you defended him against me at the Opera: from that instant I vowed his ruin: I thought I had accomplished it ——"

Evelyn started. She would have spoken;

but, in the deaf fury of his jealousy, he could not stop. "I made Mrs. Rawson write to him pretending to be converted by his speeches at a Bible meeting. His vanity and folly made him believe her converted by a speech she never heard. She besought an interview: the rest followed, of course. Chance so favoured me in that meeting of yours in the gardens, I thought all was done. When I went to Plessy Canons, I looked on you as free: I thought my revenge complete: my triumph secure ——"

He stopped at the proud indignant glance of Lady Umfraville. The living lightning really did flash from her eyes; he had once wished to see the softness of those eyes exchanged for a sterner expression—now he absolutely recoiled from her look!

"And you boast of your mean treachery!—I am not, I never was, I never shall be, engaged to Mr. Vernon; but did you imagine—could you for one instant fancy that such conduct as yours would win me? You profess such admiration in words—how insulting is your conduct—glorying in such a cruel——"



“Oh do not tell me by such terrible looks!” cried he, in the humblest and softest tone, again approaching her, “I wished once to see such a look. Oh, never! never may I have never again can I meet such a look, and live!”

She scarcely heard what he said; all her agitation, every softer feeling was gone, nerved by her indignant contempt, she went on—“It was really what you had done; not an expression in jest, when you said the punishment of your victim should be the tortures of the mind! And you could so long, so coolly plan cruelly to deceive one. Mr. Vernon is not, and never can be more than my friend: but he was my friend, my earliest companion! And you ——”

“You see your power,” said he. “I had never intended you should know my share in the business—it burst from me in the agony of my disappointment—it was done in the madness of passion. I would —— what would I not do to succeed! There is nothing that ever yet dismayed mortality that I would not brave, had I hope! Bid me to any extremity of danger—to any extent of penance! Years on years could I endure anything, every-

thing, that could expiate my offences, if I might hope at the end."

"Hope nothing ever from me, Sir Luttrell Wycherley," said she, calmly and haughtily.

He looked in vain for the gentle agitated expression—the tearful eye, the quivering lip, which had shown such sorrow to wound, that in all the consciousness of her beauty and her power, had shrunk at the pain she must inflict ; all was gone.

"You cast me out then to despair, to destruction ! You cannot pardon the errors—crimes if you will—to which your own charms led me. In the headlong frenzy of my love, I would have destroyed all that I thought was in its way. You caused, and yet you will not pardon, you will not believe in my repentance. You see your power and you will not use it to save me ! Bid me be what you please—only say, I pardon you, and I shall be whatever you ordain."

"I have nothing to pardon : you have not injured me, nor have I been the cause of your wrong. There is no madness of passion in deliberate cunning ; as you regret, it is to be

hoped you will repent." And she rose as she spoke "I have given you my answer."

"You regret, you despise, you dismiss me stricken, broken-hearted, reckless—to become I know not what! You have sometimes praised my powers, sometimes allowed me to believe you thought I had ability, genius: command them—it is your's to make me what you please, to mould—to guide; to be a guiding star to all that is virtuous and pure, and good. Oh! be it—oh you will, you will! You cannot so implacably reject, so sternly fling me away to writhe, your victim, for ever in an abyss of despair!"

"I have admired your powers,—at present I feel only disgust at your degrading them to such base ends.—Direct so mean a heart! no, I trust I am incapable of comprehending its purposes——"

"And then despair!" cried he, and he rushed from the room.

Evelyn sunk upon a seat in the extremest agitation. Exceedingly moved by his passionate words, disgusted at his conduct, and shocked at his audacity, she endeavoured, as she walked

out, to think it all over. Several expressions of Sir Luttrell's at different times, occurred to her,—his asking her if she considered revenge a crime; and she remembered his look of mortification when she treated it as more despicable than criminal; his saying in the billiard-room at Stanton, that she might find herself mistaken in her estimate of characters. And he was all this time rejoicing in the downfall of that poor weak young man, and using his very piety as his snare. She had little doubt that Sir Luttrell had written, or assisted in the writing of that letter which had so turned poor Vernon's vain mind. She felt insulted by Sir Luttrell's audacious avowal of his plot, by the very naming to her of such a person as Mrs. Rawson. How angry her father would be, he had told her that Sir Luttrell was very much in love with her; she had always thought him too self-occupied, and too mocking to feel any real passion: but real passion he surely felt, and the deadly pallor which had succeeded her emotion, turned again crimson as she thought of the vehemence of his love, and a deeper crimson followed as she thought of his words

“to be the first to touch that heart.” Was it all untouched? When he said those words, the idea of Lord Rupert rose before her,—was it a reality, or a mere imagination! at this instant what did she behold? She started, stopped—was it a reality, or a mere imagination?

She had strolled on in a profound reverie, unconscious whither, till she was within a wild plantation, some distance from the castle; she had reached an open spot where the trees had been cleared away, and there, upon the dank and tangled grass, lay stretched,—Sir Luttrell Wycherley!

His dark hair dishevelled and matted in wild disorder over his brow: his cheeks pale and stained with traces as of torrents of tears: his eyes were closed and his lips compressed, as if his teeth were set in agony; and in his hands he clenched the wet and yellow grass as if torn away in the convulsion of his grief.

Unutterably shocked she stood rooted to the spot.—The daring spirit, the sneering superiority, the strength of manhood, the gay gallantry, the pride of intellect, the height of genius,—all wrecked, all shattered, all abased,

lay grovelling on the earth as if the veriest outcast of his kind.

“And this is my doing” shot through her heart a pang of agony. She feared she might insult his misery ; she moved to go ; his eyes opened, and even then in his extremity of wretchedness, the first expression was a sun-beam of instinctive joy at the sight of the woman he adored ; the next was shame, he started to his feet,—she would have turned away but he sprang towards her—

“You see what you have made me, you come to triumph over your victim——”

“Oh no, no ! believe me, I did not dream of seeing you, I thought you far away, I was wandering I knew not where, for worlds I would not have thus surprised you.”

Shame, rage, despair, were struggling in his countenance. “Oh, Sir Luttrell, when you feel what agony it is, think, think what you have inflicted on another ; in your agony, you must, you will repent ——”

She turned instantly, hastily, decidedly down another path. He sprang into the wood, and she hurried back to the castle in a tumult

of feeling. She succeeded at last in attaining a degree of composure that enabled her to receive Mr. Windham on his return from Melton, without any alarming traces of agitation ; but he remarked that she was pale ; and the moment the servant had withdrawn after dinner, she told him all ; but as she did not attempt to repeat Sir Luttrell's words, and as she did not describe, as vividly as she felt it, the meeting in the wood, Mr. Windham had not the slightest concern in any pain suffered by the rejected lover, and was only delighted that he was rejected.

“And now, my dear father, the only good that can be made out of all this, is for you to write to Mr. Vernon, and, without the slightest allusion to Sir Luttrell, could you not manage to tell him how he has been tricked. Tell him that the letter has been written to deceive him ; that the person who wrote it never was at the Bible meeting ; tell him how wretchedly he has been duped, and perhaps—how I should rejoice—the misery of this morning would be almost repaid to me, if we could make poor Lord Amery happy again in his son : such a

poor weak creature is not worth doing much for; but for his own sake even, I wish him well. Could not you write to him?"

And Mr. Windham wrote.

Mr. Windham looked anxiously at his daughter's countenance, when they met next morning: it bore evident traces of agitation. I wrote to Prior, without mentioning you, of course, or hinting at Sir Luttrell, but in such a manner, that he must be a greater blockhead than he has shown himself, in forming the connection, if he does not break it off instantly."

"Thank you," said Evelyn, but in an absent manner; for, as her father spoke, he was taking the letters from the post-bag, and he had thrown one among the rest upon the table, the seal uppermost, which arrested all her attention, for that seal bore the Conway arms. What was the direction? It was to herself. Her father ascribed the deep blush which dyed her cheeks as she opened the letter, to what he had said of Mr. Vernon. She gazed for an instant upon "faithfully your obliged, Rupert Conway." It was as uninteresting a communication as could well be.



“DEAR LADY UMFRAVILLE,—

“The Rev. Henry Brooke has applied to me for a recommendation to you. He is anxious to obtain the living of Maxley. He is the son of my tutor; but, as I know nothing of this gentleman myself, I have inquired into his character at his late curacy, and enclose the report I have received, and hope you will pardon my venturing to add another to the number of applicants with which you have probably been already troubled.

“With best regards to Mr. Windham,

“Faithfully your obliged,

“RUPERT CONWAY.”

It was the first letter she had received from him—would it be the last?

There can be no doubt that Mr. Henry Brooke became rector of Maxley, “on the presentation of Lady Umfraville.” His testimonials were excellent, but so were those of eleven other applicants; one of these was patronized by Lady Amery, who had no doubt that her candidate must be preferred. And Evelyn would have delighted to oblige her, but the young gentleman who presented himself

did not particularly please her, and she was glad to be able to say—"it was already promised." Lady Amery seemed, in her reply, rather annoyed; and there appeared in one of the papers—"We see the appointment of a Mr. Brooke to one of the best livings in Leicestershire. If we cannot say, 'this is as it should be,' it certainly is as it would be; for the living in question is in the gift of a young and lovely baroness in her own right, and the new rector is son of the tutor of a young unmarried duke, of Melton and yachting celebrity."

Evelyn was sitting in one of the deep windows of the saloon, in the now lengthening twilight, gazing on the evening mist girdling round the base of the distant trees, and meditating on the business-like style of the letter. It had flattered her father, because it was from the Prime-Minister to the head of the Umfravilles. His daughter was treated with, on "affairs" by the same person who was treating with emperors and kings. She felt that it proved more than ever that she could never be more to him than she was; that he liked to

talk to her as well—perhaps better—than to any one else, during the hours which he must pass in society ; but that ambition—no, it was not what is vulgarly called ambition—the love of place, and the wish to rise, for he was at the height ; but the duties of his office—the great objects which occupied his mind, must occupy it, and heart and soul, and to the exclusion of all other thoughts. “Be it so,” was her conclusion ; “I can admire, worship, idolize, and be happier, perhaps, in this romance, than in any reality. I have all that wealth and power can give for myself ; all that is outward, worldly—within, my treasure is ——”

“Dear Lady Umfraville,” exclaimed a voice in the hall—a voice, which seemed the very reality she was endeavouring to banish ! The hangings were pushed aside, and Lord Rupert—no, it was not ! though, in the dim light it seemed to be ; and, with a conscious blush, she had risen and come forward. It was so like, and yet so different. It was Lord Cornbury !

“Dear Lady Umfraville, say I was first,”

was his exclamation, followed by the Duke of Plessingham, laughing as usual, and Lord St. Leonard: all three heated and splashed from head to foot.

## CHAPTER III.

“CORNBURY is first, I acknowledge,” cried the duke. “We have ridden a cross steeple-chase from Dirleton, fifteen miles, right a-head. What do you think?—we started with the train at the station there, and beat it the first five minutes ; we left it at Storeham-end, or we should have had a fine race of it. We were on the old road below, and we saw the fellows all poking over at us, and whipping up their steam at such a rate : they would have been an hour before their time to beat us. We left them puffing it up to sixty an hour, at least. They expected to see us come out under Eggly Arch, and they will fancy they have beaten us so. I betted two to one with

Darrell we could beat them with ease, and to spare : and so we did. But then we had such a glorious run of it—exactly forty-five minutes from Dirleston-gate to this room. Whichever spoke first to you, the winner—I was sure of it till that stick-fast of a lane near the old mill—poor Bobadil could not —— Oh ! Mr. Windham, how d' ye do ? Thank you, no—thank you, Lady Umfraville, should be delighted, but we must be at Melton ;” and he re-commenced the story of their ride to Mr Windham ; while Evelyn asked Lord Cornbury if he came from town to Dirleton.

“ Yes ; I drove down with Plessingham last night.”

“ Lord Rupert is in town ? ”

“ Yes. He would have been so glad to have had a run down, but he cannot stir,” colouring, as if he had made such an effort to speak.

“ You are more fortunate,” said she to Lord St. Leonard. “ Are you on leave ? ”

“ I have ten days, by chance ; and the frost, yesterday, frightened me so much, but it is quite soft to-day.”

“ Is your attendance commanded at the

opening of the session?" said Evelyn to the duke.

"No. I went, like a good boy, to Conway, yesterday, and he, in the handsomest manner, said my proxy would do."

"He was in hopes, before," said Lord St. Leonard, "to coax you into business, but he has given it up as quite hopeless. Has he not, Cornbury?"

Lord Cornbury stood blushing, and looking as if he wished to speak; but so very like a fool, that Evelyn wondered how the same features, the same complexion, the same coloured eyes and hair, could be so totally different in the variety of expression.

"I was so surprised," said the duke, laughing, "when I heard Cornbury call out, 'Lady Umfraville,' when he got into the room. I thought we might have made a drawn bet of it,—at least, from his incapacity for speech! But he is capital, as a knight, I assure you. We have been practising might and main. Oh! we had the Unknown one morning, quite early. He has certainly a spy in the camp, for we had fixed on eight; and were so sur-

prised to find our Knight of the Lily visor down, and all right, and all wrong too, it was near being with me—he as nearly unhorsed me as possible, and that is more than I thought any one man on earth could do. It is a thousand pities we did not all settle to be unknowns—all visors down, we should have been so much more interesting.”

“We must be contented with you as you are,” said Evelyn.

“Come, Plessingham,” cried Lord St. Leonard, “we should be off. Bognor will be rowing us all for being late.”

“I must go,” said the duke, and, for the first time, he had leisure, since he had come into the house, to look at its mistress. “Is it this bad light, Lady Umfraville?—I hope it is—but you do not look so blooming as you did in Kent. I think you have a headache, and I am sure our noise is making it worse. Good bye: we will disturb you no longer,” and they were gone.

Prior Vernon’s answer to Mr. Windham did not arrive for sometime, and when it did it was from Amery, and a very few lines, saying he was going to Jersey on a mission, but hoped



to be at his post in the House before very long, when he would have the honour of calling on Mr. Windham in town. Lord Amery wrote, however, most warmly thanking Mr. Windham with all his heart for thus unmasking the artful entangler of his son, who had reproached her with her duplicity, and his reproach had been received with a burst of laughter; in fact she was delighted to have done with him, considering it a happy riddance, she had been tired to death of him; the piquancy of winning a saint had amused her at first, and she had her reasons for wishing to obey Sir Luttrell, but his object had been attained, and she had no scruple in acknowledging that her conversion was not likely to be accomplished by their present connection, and that it had better be dissolved forthwith.

The season had commenced; Evelyn was anxious to remain at Umfraville, but Mr. Windham had not the least idea of foregoing the pleasures of town, and the glory of Lady Umfraville's fashion. He liked town, he liked to go to the opera and the concerts, and he liked to superintend all the paraphernalia of

the establishment : but to have it all perfect, and never to appear to have thought or to think about it, was his great ambition ; his daughter succeeded better in the appearance, because in her it was reality too.

Mr. Windham arranged a dinner party—he suggested the propriety of inviting Lord Rupert Conway ; Lady Umfraville blushed and agreed. It was the first time she had ever met him, not unexpectedly ; the first time she had received him as her guest. A formal dinner to a prime minister, had as little in its nature that could be thought interesting as possible, and yet what will not a willing mind effect in the romantic line, if so disposed ? And how lovely she looked, as with a conscious grace, she welcomed as her guest the man she loved. To the spectators, it was only a lady of fashion receiving a courtier ; to her it was enchantment to secure even for a few hours, the presence of him on whom her heart for ever dwelt. And he—what did he think ? He ! if the company were totally without suspicion of what was, under her easy courtesy, in her heart, it would have been marvellous

indeed, if they or she even could form a guess at a diplomatist's feelings !

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“Has Lord Ipswich had any new botanical discoveries sent to him ?”

“Yes, I was fortunate enough to be the means of procuring some seeds from Odessa, for him, which have succeeded uncommonly well ; but there came with them, it is supposed, some insect that has been doing such destruction and making my father so unhappy that we have all been at our wit's end to discover some cure for it, and I, as the guilty cause of this destroyer's presence, felt myself bound to try and get rid of it.”

“And have you ?”

“I hope so—I wrote to my friend at Odessa, of course to enquire into the *secundum artem* Odessa method of destroying the Odessa plague, but before I could have got the answer, every plant in my father's hot-house might have been eaten up. My sister advised an advertisement of a reward for killing Odessa ants, but I went to the ambassador's, and enquired among all his suite ; no one could give me the least in-

formation. I went to the consul, he could tell nothing; but just as I was leaving him, he said he believed an old Jew picture dealer, that he knew, was from Odessa: I went for him instantly, and by great luck the Odessa ant being an enemy to pictures as well as to plants he knew all about it, and shewed a philanthropic zeal in the destruction of the common enemy that was delightful, and what was more to the purpose, perfectly successful."

"How very glad you must have been!"

"Delighted; and so was the Jew, for we all made a point of buying some of his pictures."

"Whether they were worth buying or not?"

"They were worth buying to me, because I was so obliged to him."

"But would not the price of the picture, without encumbering yourself with it, be enough to satisfy the man?"

"Oh, my father paid him, of course, ten times more than he deserved, but ours was the compliment. You do not put yourself into the situation of a picture dealer? You do not enter into his feelings. Picture dealers have feelings, I assure you. To have offered the

price and not taken the piece, would have been a most cutting insult."

"And if it had been an old clothes man, instead of an old picture man, would you and Lady Matlock have bought his old clothes just the same? You would not have hurt his feelings by giving the money, and leaving the contents of the nice green bag where they were?" said Evelyn, laughing.

Lord Rupert laughed too. "Not quite a parallel case—not in any way fair. You show such a heartless indifference to the scale of human feeling: you place an old clothes man in the same class as a picture dealer! A picture dealer is so far removed!—quite a refined branch."

"Perhaps they would not speak," said she, "I suppose they are not even upon visiting terms. A picture seller would not have his name on the visiting list of the clothes man, for anything, I suppose?"

"You see the misapprehension under which you have been labouring! To confound their businesses would be to put a stock-broker on 'Change on the same level as a pawnbroker in Thames-street; to put an East Indian merchant,

a Leadenhall king, in the same category as a cheesemonger, or a chandlery huckster."

"I am rebuked. I am afraid one often does hurt such feelings from not being aware of such distinctions?"

"No," said he, "I do not think you would hurt the feelings even of an old clothes-man."

"I would not, of course, nor anybody, intentionally; but how many times one must hurt others—others with as fine feelings as your picture dealer; so unconscious as one is of what may touch some jarred nerve, and quiver to the very soul."

"It would be endless to look about for all the broken strings in the harmony of society; one can only pass on, if one sounds a jangling note, to the rest, and never mind."

"If one could help minding! But one thrills from sympathy, and it is perceived: altogether it is always seen and felt, and is so painful," said Evelyn.

"I dare say you often feel more than the occasion requires; for, whatever I may think about the fine feelings of Jew dealers, I think there is in polished christian society much less

feeling than you give them credit for," said Lord Rupert.

"But when it does come out, how it startles one," said she, colouring at her own thoughts.

"At the moment; but it is really gratifying afterwards, to know that there are feelings that one is not living merely as a set of automata."

"Even in the automata of the world you could not be quite sure which string to pull to make them move. All cut out on apparently the same pattern; still there is a difference in each: every leaf of a tree, though all look so nearly alike, is said to be distinctly marked in some variety."

"Yes," said Lord Rupert, "I have seen shepherds on the Downs look out an individual sheep, and know who he was, though to me precisely alike. He had a character in his master's eyes; and if one was well instructed, perhaps, one could cull from out the herd of dames and damsels in a ball-room an actual individual."

"Not one, but each; if it was worth the trouble of examining. After all, though we

may think them all ditto ditto, over and over again, they have all their own memories and particular histories, that you could not, with all your automaton notions, invent or suppose in the least."

"Yes; that must puzzle a transmigrator so very much, which is to be at the end, unless, like Indur, the individual story was to be clear in one's head of each change, one would be exceedingly puzzled, at the end, to know who one was. And, for additional people, put a Malthusian and a Metempsychosian to fight it out together. A Malthusian, in all his terror of the ever-increasing sum of human beings, and a Brahmin, who thinks we have been ringing the changes on some million of souls, ever since the creation."

"It was a notion so suited to a country of castes," said she; "it gives one an idea of such very confined notions."

"And yet," said Lord Rupert, "there is something very satisfactory in the thorough reciprocity of suffering; the making a human brute really go through, in a really brute form, what he had made mere animals suffer before."



"But it is a brute idea of punishment, is it not — mere bodily suffering? one fancies the most hardened mind is a mind after all, and can only really suffer mentally," said Lady Umfraville. But as she spoke, she recollected Sir Luttrell's mental inquisition, and her own allusion to it, in their last conversation, and she coloured so deeply, that Lord Rupert observed it, and seeing that he did, increased her confusion, and she turned to her other neighbour, and asked if he had been riding that day: and the conversation lasted for a long time; but he asked her if she had seen the Expedition vessel at Chatham."

"No. We were there some weeks ago, and we saw nothing of it."

"It only came round last week, and everybody is going to see it now. It will be there for some time."

"You rescued a large party from Plessy Canons, that day, at Chatham, from a very unpleasant, fog-bound situation," said she to Lord Rupert.

"You were of the party," said he.

"I was. How did you know of our difficulty?"

“I heard of it at a vile dinner I was at. At least that was vile, till an officer mentioned Plessingham’s yacht, and then I was glad I was there, and saved you from a disagreeable night. But, perhaps, you were sorry to have the adventure closed so early.”

“Oh, no! we had quite enough of it. It was very entertaining so far, and very curious, picking our way in that desert of fog; but we were too large and helpless a company for any real danger, or even difficulty. And the duke’s steward had forgotten to bring candles, or oil for the lamps; and it would have been rather melancholy spending a Polar night with Mrs. Fanshaw and her daughters!”

“Plessingham was delighted, I dare say?”

“He was very happy himself, and would have enjoyed burning bits of paper all night for lights vastly, but he was disturbed about his passengers; for Lady Barnstaple had refused to come, and told us all how foolish it was to go, and so he had all the guilt to bear, and nobody at all inclined to laugh but himself.”

“And you? You weathered it gallantly, he told me.”

“In these melancholy days of non-romance one likes anything of an adventure.”

“You had plenty of gallant knights attending you.”

“But you only were destined to put an end to the difficulty,” said she, with a slight blush, “though, perhaps, you thought you were only saving a ship load of fools.”

“No, no; the ringleader only bears the guilt in these cases; and Plessingham only could be blamed, if blame there was.”

“He is so fond of the sea, he would be always upon it. He must have been, in his former existence, some amiable sailor or fisherman, or fish, perhaps—a benevolent fish—and is rewarded by living on his favorite element, and having everything this world can give besides.”

“Has he?” said Lord Rupert, with increased gravity.

“Has he not all that are considered the world’s blessings—rank, and wealth, and good looks, and, what does not always accompany them—good health, and good spirits? And, besides, he has that which belonged to his

fishy former self, and, which is not considered a gift of fortune—an excellent heart, if fishes have hearts.”

Lord Rupert smiled. “I fear he will have some worse existence to go through next time. Consider all the foxes he has hunted, and all the horses he has ridden to death; either a fox or an over-ridden horse is to be his next state: he would choose to be a horse, even over-ridden, in preference to any of his other states. When he sees the different bodies, do you think he would recognize his own?”

“That is a curious question, which does not seem to have occurred to transmigrators before,” said she.

“One would be sorry to lose all recollection of the perfection of the human form,” said he, as he gazed upon her animated beauty, “in even the most spiritualized existence one cannot fancy the mind, however heavenly, entirely without the countenance which it inspired.”

“There must be some mental impression of form,” said she; “one can hardly fancy individuality without some recollection of face and

figure—recollection is as mental as possible, but, unluckily, it will not always recollect the right way: an old beauty is very likely herself to remember perfectly how lovely she looked on earth; but her admirers, that had been, might be so ill-bred, or so unlucky, as to be able to see her in their minds'-eye, only, as she last appeared to them—gray, wrinkled, haggard, toothless, and bent.”

“What a horrible picture!”

“I leave you to reflect on the moral,” said she, gaily, as she rose from the table.

## CHAPTER V.

“HERE are Lord Amery and Mr. Vernon, my love,” said her father, one morning, to Lady Umfraville.

Prior followed his father with an embarrassed air, “as if he wished something might be forgotten,” and yet doubtful of how much was known. Lady Umfraville held out her hand to him, with a look which at once re-assured him. She received him with a kindness and frankness of manner, which seemed to pass over all that had been since they had parted in that room before. The proposal and rejection, and his presumptuous persistence, and the letter from the unknown, and the meeting at Kensington which made her known—all was put into oblivion, as she said, unheard by any one but himself,—“Let us go on from where we

stopped before the election," and continued, aloud, as she saw the embarrassment of his countenance instantly clear away: "What did you think of Jersey? Had you ever been there before? Is it not very pretty, and wild, and damp?"

He could not immediately speak, and she turned to his father: "Still good accounts from Lady Amery? She did not mention that you were coming so soon. Is she quite determined not to be in town till after Easter?"

While Lord Amery spoke, Prior had, been intently examining a print, of which he saw not one trace, sufficiently recovered himself to command his voice. He had looked as if—besides the embarrassment of his position—he had rather a mind to be a reclaimed prodigal, a penitent sinner; but Evelyn's address put an end to that design, and, as he was not quite sure how far she knew, or might like to be supposed to know, of his guilt, it saved that difficulty, and he went on upon Jersey, and told of how pretty it was, even in the leafless spring; its lanes, and endless hedgerows, and nice cottages, and *genteel* population;

and added, "I was fortunate to be with some very pious friends." But there was something in Lady Umfraville's eye that showed him that "pious" seemed not just then suited to him, and he stopped.

"Do you take your seat to-night?"

"There is to be a debate on the Church Extension Bill, and I shall think it my duty to be present at the first opportunity."

"The Penitentiary Bill comes first," said Lord Amery.

"That, indeed, I am bound to attend to," said Prior, with such a sanctified humility that Evelyn, feeling a strong disposition to smile, turned quite from him, and talked to his father all the rest of the visit; while Mr. Windham was left to Mr. Vernon, whom he thought a very great bore; and, when they departed, Lady Umfraville felt that, whatever charm a reformed rake may have for some people, a reformed sinnered saint was a vastly disagreeable personage.

Mr. Vernon took his seat, and made his speech; he spoke rather well. Lady Umfraville read it every word. It was not a style of



thing that she could ever like, or even think suited to the time or place ; but it was in character, and was immensely thought of by the small party to which he belonged, who are so little listened to, that they are quite flattered when one of them, from novelty or any other cause, obtains a tolerable hearing.

It was not the season yet, so Evelyn had some time to herself, and people could still call a few hours of the day their own. Mr.—— the painter, introduced a young sculptor, who was anxious to model her bust ; it was a bore, but Mr. Windham liked these things. They went to the Artist's studio to see his performances.

"I am proud of this," said he, pointing to a head of Lord Rupert Conway : it was just finished, and it stood on a table by itself where the sculptor had just been giving his last caress to its polish.

"Very fine,—very good,—very like is it not?" said Mr. Windham, turning to look for some female face ; the artist followed him, and Evelyn stood in a trance of happiness, gazing on the beautifully chiselled perfectly like features. How she wished to have it! If she

could have it in a secluded oratory, like a forbidden idol, where she could in secret worship it. But she could not venture to order it for herself. She was so lost in the intensity of her own thoughts, that she was insensible to an unusual noise ; she had heard a raised voice, but was not aware of any words till a loud stamp close to her, made her start, and she looked up ; opposite to her was the sculptor with a countenance of patient annoyance ; Mr. Windham with one of extreme surprise, and turning, she saw beside her a gentleman in a fury.

“You said it should be ready on Friday last,—you told me I should have it yesterday, and here I am to day,—and where is it? I am always used so. I bear these things I suppose, as well as most men, but there is a point beyond which, human endurance will not go. It is always the same,—you are all alike,—all sorts of artists are just the same. It is the same with everybody,—nothing is ever done that one wants. I am not particularly *exigent*,—I only ask to have what I want. I tell you, Sir, I *will* have that cast,—I will, I

say. What signifies your standing there with that made-up humility face,—stuff,—staring resignation there, as if you were the sufferer! get me my cast, and if ever I set foot in this room again—! Will you speak, Sir. Good heavens, am I to be kept here hour after hour, from one day's end to another, waiting for you, with your mock sanctification. I know you are laughing,—laughing in your sleeve all the while; laughing indeed: very well, Sir, laugh, but I will teach you to laugh another tune if you don't—! By Jove, Sir, why don't you speak, why don't you answer me; I mind being laughed at, I suppose as little as any man in England, but there is a point at which human endurance will give way.—Good Heaven, Sir, will you give me my cast,—you will not? I will get it myself, I will, it is the only way; I will go to the cast-room, I will I say, if you were to talk from this to Christmas, I will go——”

And with another stamp, he rushed off to the cast-room.

“Who is that extraordinary person?” said Mr. Windham.

“Mr. Mortlake: he is one of the best men

in the world, except for his unlucky temper. I owe everything to him; he is immensely rich; he is an old bachelor of an old Norfolk family, and having no relations, he spends his benevolence and his whimsical temper, on any object of his charity, that he can find. He paid my expenses in Italy, he has set me up here, he has given me the most splendid orders, and the last thing he would wish, would be to reproach me with his kindness; but he whips himself up into one of these furies, and then he does not know what he says. He is the most disinterested of mortals, but if he thought you had promised him the head of a corking-pin, and had not given it to him, he would get into a mad fit, and be ready to tear you to pieces. An old uncle of his, left him a great fortune some time ago, and he had never courted the man, or indeed cared a straw about his great property. But there was an old shaving-brush, an unfortunate footman took possession of; you would have thought his life depended upon it; he scolded the man till his hair stood on end, and frightened him into a catalepsy, and then he had all the physicians

in Norfolk attending him. And now you see he will come back here the most kind hearted of men, for he will have found that the delay of his cast was from my brother's illness, as I should have told him, if he could have let me speak, but the drollest part of it is, he is quite unconscious of his own weakness ; he thinks himself a model of patience all the time, like a delirium, when his fury is over, it leaves no trace."

Mr. Mortlake at this moment re-entered the room. "I have sent your brother to take a drive in my carriage ; he is quite unfit for work ; he was there, looking more dead than alive ; he has had a very severe attack. I begged him not to work any more till he is quite strong. I am sure you will not, a drive in the fresh air will ——"

But he stopped short, for just then he perceived that Lady Umfraville was looking at him with surprise. She could hardly believe that the quiet gentleman-like person, with such a singularly benevolent countenance, could be the same individual as the furious being, like a man on the stage, who had been there so short a time before. He turned to the sculptor.

“You are fortunate, if that is your subject! Such a head does not often fall to your share! But he will do you justice—he will do her justice,” continued he, addressing Mr. Windham; “he will give you your daughter, as nearly as marble can, in one unmoving form, convey the life of beautiful expression.”

Mr. Windham was so well pleased with Mr. Mortlake's admiration of Evelyn, and with what he had heard of his character, that he begged to be introduced to him; and, as he presented him to his daughter, Mr. Mortlake said—“I am so proud that you are employing my friend; you may see how good his likenesses are—at least that of myself, I liked amazingly. I thought myself a most engaging old man, by my reflected face. It is not here.” continued he, as Lady Umfraville looked round. “I was not vain enough to leave my portrait beside such heads as these,” putting his hand on that of Lord Rupert's bust. “You know all these great people, I suppose, and can judge of the resemblance—I live out of the world. In Lord Rupert I have always felt a peculiar interest. I do not think I ever saw a face that

answered more to my pre-conceived idea of a great man. Perhaps, after all, it was rather having too much, than too little vanity, that made me withdraw my bust to the shades of Croombe, in Norfolk, where, at least, it was known, rather than to have it here for people to look at, 'Mr. Mortlake—oh! good old gentleman, who is he; what made him stick himself here among all the beauties and wits of the day?' I could not stand the idea of that, though I suppose there are few men in the world, more indifferent than I am as to what might be thought of me, but there are limits to all human patience."

"Why should you anticipate evil, and foresee such bad taste in all Mr. ——'s visitors," said Mr. Windham. "Could not you have heard them say—'what a benevolent countenance—what a noble head!' and then found them wishing so to be acquainted with the original."

"No; a picture," said Mr. Mortlake, smiling, "one does not, even at sixty, like to be made allowance for, and talked of as a fine old gentleman, 'already hear the horrid things

they say.' No, no ; we are better in retirement after ——"

"Do not fix any limit, if you please," said Mr. Windham, "you may be banishing me, you know."

"You have such a motive for remaining in, and enjoying the admiration of the world," said Mr. Mortlake, looking at Evelyn, "that one could not be surprised at your preferring it with all its troubles to the unmeaning, uninteresting routine of country retirement, in which I have been all my life."

"Visiting London every year, be it understood my dear sir," said the sculptor, who was busily employed in helping his assistants to place a figure which he had just brought out from the block room, and to which he was going to give the master touches.

It was being done to order for one of the American states, Columbus on his first landing, a beautiful figure ; martial and yet with a humility and piety in his kneeling attitude, that almost told its story, but it did not entirely.

"No, that is the absurdity of a figure in action, even an action of repose, if one may



use such a paradoxical expression, but without other figures it is hardly possible to tell one's meaning, and even here with other figures, what could one do? These are our misfortunes, obliged to do as we are bid," said the artist.

"You could have his followers armed like himself, behind him," said Mr. Mortlake, "and savages beyond contrasted in their feathers."

"In a painting that might tolerably well express the story, the Indians would be shadowy outlines in the far-off distance, just expressing that it was a savage island, but in a piece of sculpture you cannot have a distance, there is no shadowing off; if I were to put a group of feathered men here, it would seem as if Columbus was adoring them, instead of returning thanks to Heaven."

"It limits you so very much then," said Evelyn, "how few single figures tell anything, except portraits of gods and goddesses, who are rather out of date, and besides they cannot be original now-a-days."

"We must be humble," said the artist, "and only attempt what suits this age, and this climate, busts and monumental effigies. "This,"

continued he, taking a design from his portfolio, "this is a sketch of a work I have thought of executing, I have shewn it to some visitors and they have flattered me by guessing, or knowing I should say, at once what it meant; you perceive, I trust, what it is," said he, as he laid it before Lady Umfraville.

"Yes," said she, "there is no mistaking the cross on the boy's doublet—it is the child's crusade;" and recollecting Sir Luttrell Wycherley's ingenious theory of gray granite for English designs, she asked the sculptor "what he thought of Thom's works?"

"I never saw but one performance of his—'Tam O'Shanter'—which was an excellent figure; but it seemed to me, perhaps from professional prejudice or pride, that it was a waste of time, and of stone, to perpetuate what is after all only a good portrait of a Scotch farmer getting drunk."

"I meant, what did you think of the material."

"It suited the subject certainly, and a very celebrated countryman of ours, Sir Luttrell Wycherley, whom you, perhaps, are not aware,

once tried sculpture among the versatility of his genius, suggested to me at Rome, the adopting granite or free stone for my material when I returned to England, but ————”

An influx of visitors put a stop to the conversation, and after arranging the hours for the sittings, and taking leave of Mr. Mortlake, with a wish to see him again, Lady Umfraville and Mr. Windham departed.

## CHAPTER VI.

“At last, I have met you,” cried the duke, riding up to Lady Umfraville in the park. “I have been calling upon you for ever, and never saw you—that is to say, I came up the day before yesterday, and I called yesterday and to-day. But I was wishing to tell you we have got another Unknown!—only he is pretty well guessed to be Wycherley. He has disappeared from our regular practice altogether; in fact, I have never seen him since he left Plessy Canons: have you? He is lost in his laboratory, some say. Have you never seen him? If you know nothing of him, who does?”

“He called one morning at Umfraville,” said Mr. Windham; “but we have neither seen nor heard of him since.”

“Not to see him is common enough, but not to hear of him is new : he generally gets reported up and down, or puts himself in the newspaper, or does some extravaganza to get himself put there. I am almost sure he is the third Unknown, though.”

“What is the device he wears ? ” said Mr. Mr. Windham.

“It is like him ; nobody can fancy what it means ; perhaps you can : a scorpion stinging itself to death. But we all called him Wycherley, and we asked where was his old shield, which was a world with *todo es poco* as the motto, and his old armour ; for he has got new now, beautifully inlaid ; and his shield, splendidly bright. However, he would not answer, or take the least notice. It is just his height and powerful make, a low, strong man. The only thing against it is, that he has not taken his name from the roll of your knights ; and this Knight of the Scorpion has put himself down among our enemies—and an enemy he seemed indeed, at least, to me ; for he ran a tilt like mad, *à l'outrance*, as you say, Mr. Windham ; is not that right ? We had three

very fine tilts, and the fourth I disarmed him, but that was all ; he made most gallant fight,—quite serious, I assure you ; and when I laughed, of course—when I knocked the spear out of his hand—he drew his sword, and was driving at me, when his horse fell ; and I said we had had enough.”

“I should not have thought he could have held out against you,” said Evelyn.

“I am flattered at your high opinion of my prowess ; but the fact is, that his skill is fully a match for my size ; he is a capital horseman, and he has monstrous good use of his lance.”

“You have, however, always the advantage in keeping your temper,” said she.

“Oh, yes ! I am not easily vexed ; and the least thing puts him quite out—at least, if this is Wycherley : only it seems so odd to fight on both sides, hedging with a vengeance. Is it allowable, Lord-Marshall—may a knight fight double in this way ?”

“As you cannot prove that the two are one, I suppose you must leave them un-rebuked ; but I really do not know a case in point ; my reading does not supply me with an instance.

Does yours, Evelyn? Is there any romance where the knight appears in two persons?"

"I do not know of one: it seems a new event in the annals of jousting."

"I am glad of it," said the duke. "I should have been very sorry, if our warden had interfered and taken away one of our characters—for the more, the merrier. And these mysteries will 'set all the ladies frantic to find them out.' I must say it is to their credit, that two of those against us are ashamed, and come against you in disguise. Only I am sure the other Unknown on that side—I cannot make out, for the life of me, who our friend of the Lily is; but the 'Champion of Sylvia,' as he has enrolled himself, is St. Leonard. You do not know; indeed, is is a great secret, of course, and really is—that is, it has not got into the newspapers yet. Poor St. Leonard is desperately in love with a French beauty—lovely girl she is. Mlle. de Melanie—Gabrielle de Melanie—pretty name, is it not?—so romantic sounding; but it is all too romantic for poor St. Leonard. Neither set of fathers and mothers will consent; and

the Droitwicks are not rich, and Gabrielle—though her descent is fine enough to satisfy even you, Mr. Windham—has not a sous; and so she is just going to be married to a Russian prince, with millions of roubles, and some thousands of serfs; while poor St. Leonard, true to the lady of his love, upholds her against all the world, even against you.”

“If he conquers in the tournament, it should really break of the Russian match: no fathers could stand such devotion,” said Evelyn.

“But I shall take every care that he does not win, I assure you; I wish St. Leonard well, with all my heart; but I cannot fancy his *belle* Gabrielle triumphing over you. Alfred de Rheinfels, too, is against us: just like his bad taste, is it not? but they always have somebody to be in love with, exactly the very person they should not, you know, those Germans—somebody that writes verses in their confounded Stammbücher. I have seen such strings of lines to them, and from them, in the fellow’s album at Königsberg, and by the time I had got to an idea of who the ladies were, I found they



were quite another thing—all changed to somebody else, and that is so tiresome.”

“It would be much more tiresome, would it not, to go on always with the same?”

“Do you think so?” said the duke, earnestly.

“Single heartedness,” said she, “is so very uncommon, one must suppose it must be very tiresome.”

“Well, really, I should have thought it so much more troublesome, confusing oneself with different people.”

“Lord St. Leonard is more respectable, certainly, with his indomitable constancy.”

“Poor fellow. Is there no hope for him? Is Gabrielle really going to marry the Russian? Does she not care for Lord St. Leonard?”

“Oh, yes. I suppose, of course, young ladies always do care for the man they are desired not to think of; but she is a dutiful daughter, I suppose, and does as papa bids. Right, is she not, Mr. Windham?”

“It is a pity Lord Droitwich should not be able to afford it, for I suppose M. de Melanie would as lief his daughter was an English countess as a Russian princess. If he has the

least idea of their real relative consequence, he would choose the Englishman."

"Here is Lady Pouncefort with her ponies, Evelyn," said Mr. Windham.

Lady Pouncefort, in her phaeton, drew up, and the conversation was then changed.

As Evelyn and her father were riding home, they met Mr. Mortlake.

"I have been calling in Spring Gardens."

"Will you call again now?" said she.

"I will, for I only left my card that I might not appear ungrateful of the honour of your permission to do so; but I knew you were out. I saw you in the park, and a very pretty sight you were: a fine day and a fine woman, on a fine horse, in such a fine park, is a glorious sight."

Evelyn laughed as Mr. Windham helped her from her horse, and she led the way into the house.

"I am sorry we have left the glorious scene so soon," said she; "we must seem quite humdrum and ugly merely sitting in a room."

"You were glorious in yourselves, but I was struck with your party as a contrast to an

old woman, a poor old body, who was toddling along by the side of the rails, on the other side of Park-lane, very old, infirm, and poor; she seemed the one extreme, and you the other, of the human lot. You and your cavalier, in the very spring of youth and strength, and ease, and she at the very end of everything."

"She is near the end," said Evelyn; "she has, if nothing more to hope, little more to fear. She is really superior to fate, more than we are. To look forward to old age is more terrible than to have reached it: the one idea, the journey is nearly over, must console her so much."

"It is a melancholy consolation at best," said Mr. Mortlake.

"It is, and one is too apt to stifle one's painful feelings for the suffering of those whose lot is less fortunate than our own by saying, 'they have enjoyments that we have not, and they are used to it,' and so forth; but, in reality, how little satisfaction they can have had in this life."

"That they may have some in another is the best, because it is the only true consolation we can have in the knowledge of sufferings

that we cannot remedy. But you have little need of such consolation, Lady Umfraville," continued Mr. Mortlake; "you think your good deeds are entirely hid; but I met yesterday, an old almoner of yours—I am always, when in town, poking about in out-of-the-way places—and from him I learned not only of the munificence, but the judiciousness of your charities. You need not 'blush to find it fame.' I am not going to put it in the newspaper, but what I heard from Mr. Watson determined me to lose no time in making further acquaintance with you; and when I spoke of the two extremes of the human lot, I was thinking how you contrived to make them meet."

"A very conscientious, worthy person, is Watson," said Mr. Windham.

"You feel, I am sure—or, perhaps, you may think it childish in me to feel it so," said Evelyn; "but I have so little satisfaction in anything one can do for distress, in London. It is so hopeless; and one cannot help being vexed at the tricks played upon one."

"Vexed!" cried Mr. Mortlake, his eyes

sparkling with actual fury. "Vexed! it is maddening! I am as hard to be disturbed in temper as any man alive; but these traitors to their kind!—they used to irritate me certainly: I do not mind them now: I am so well aware of their tricks: I countermine them upon all occasions. And Watson is very sharp too, and so really kind. But those blood-suckers—those mind-corroders—I call them so, for that is what I hate them for, worst of all—they harden one's heart. After one has been cheated two or three times, it makes us perfectly callous. I care as little about money as any man in England, but I do not like to be cheated."

"Who does?" said Mr. Windham.

"They divert me, too, very often," said Evelyn; "those impostors, they are so very ingenious."

"There is the effect of it," continued Mr. Mortlake, still all bristled with irritation. "You have been so cheated, that at last you are come to consider it a good joke, instead of lamenting the horrible state of an overgrown capital, like this, where men of such ingenuity

can find no more profitable way of employing themselves, than by taking in the unwary benevolent."

"But I am wary benevolent, I assure you," said Lady Umfraville.

"Yes: just so. <sup>4</sup> That is just what I say—premature hardness of heart!"

Both Evelyn and her father laughed at the idea of her premature hardness——

"Just so! just so! exactly so!" continued he, exceedingly disturbed. "The confiding, trusting, unhesitating generosity of youth; the spontaneous, involuntary kindness which 'gives ere charity begins;' all that is gone, lost, seared over, obliterated. Every touch to the finer issues of feeling blunted; and all this from the barbarous state of this hot-bed of corruption; all, because people will come to this Babylon, instead of staying in their own rational country houses. Where there are the rich, there are the vultures in their train, putting on poverty, and apeing misfortune, and acting suffering. And, all the time, what becomes of the really wretched? All human sympathy is totally depraved: gone; extinct!"

"So it seems," said Evelyn. You are in this shocking place, and have been here, I think, generally, every year of your life, and yet, you can still be sorry for the suffering, and indignant at the wicked. So I may hope, if I live a few years, I may recover from this premature hardening of the heart, and, instead of laughing, be as indignant at it as you are."

Her sweet voice, and engaging smile tamed him (and, as it was always with him,) instantly; and he smiled, too, and said, "I do not give so readily now. I am, as I told you, hardened—cruelled: and I fly from London, always, as soon as I can, to my books and my boors, in Norfolk; for there I can do some good, as I can love somebody."

"You would not like your books or your boors so well if you did not come up here yearly and make out the contrast: come into the world to be misanthropic, and go back to solitude to be benevolent."

"Sad satire on the world, Lady Umfraville."

"Fine compliment to you though—that you are more generous where there are none to admire you, than in London, where you might

be known to everybody as that 'distinguished philanthropist, that well-known friend of humanity,' and might figure at all the benevolent meetings, and in all the subscriptions in all the newspapers."

"How all that kind of thing disgusts me," said Mr. Mortlake.

"But is it not better than being altogether heartless? Is it not better to be a little ostentatious in charity, than not to be charitable at all? When one thinks of the good that is done by these societies, we should not quarrel with the means, because we do not like to do it the same way. Instead of the *Gazette des Spectacles*, at Paris, there might be in London, a Gazette of meetings for different charitable institutions. I do not think even Lady Barnstaple could quarrel with me for that piece of patriotism," said Evelyn to her father.

"It would be a fine compliment to our national character certainly, and as people will be admired, it is well when they are admired for what is good," said Mr. Mortlake.

He went away soon after this satisfactory conclusion.



The Easter holidays were at hand—everybody was looking forward to the tournament, but no one knew any of the particulars but the duke and Mr. Windham, for the duke with all his good humour, had a great notion of having his own way. He gave Lady Barnstaple her programme of what she was to do, and he gave her a *carte blanche*—as to her maids-of-honour and anything connected with her own state, but he admitted not the slightest interference in his own arrangements.

Lady Barnstaple was satisfied, she chose her own and Lady Umfraville's dresses, and fixed upon the prettiest young ladies and gentlemen she could find, for her ladies of honour, pages, and train-bearers; and having nearly broken the hearts of both her London and Paris dress-makers, by her repeated alterations and her minute directions, and having spent the greater part of every day, for the last week, in looking at herself in the glass, in each particular of her dresses, and in the grand whole with increasing complacency at every look, till, it is said—we will not vouch for the truth of the scandal—that she was three quarters of an hour in her

full costume, before her mirror, in fixed admiration of herself.

Mr. Windham went down to Plessy Canons, several times, to superintend; and he and Lady Umfraville joined the party on the eve of the 8th of April, which was the appointed day.

## CHAPTER VII.

LADY UMFRAVILLE arrived only in time to be ready for dinner. The duke was waiting for her when she came down. "Now you are come all is complete," said he, drawing her arm under his, and giving it a slight pressure.

The first person she saw in the gallant and gay assemblage was Sir Luttrell Wycherley. He came up with the greatest nonchalance, offering his hand, but she passed him with a careless "How d'ye do?" and gave her hand to George Beamish, who was near him. To be exceedingly gay was, she found, Sir Luttrell's cue on the present occasion. Attaching himself principally to Lady Barnstaple, but having an air of general courtesy, and to Lady Umfraville that *dégage* manner, which

was to tell the world there was not, nor never could be, any thing between them. And though she was, of course, as easy and indifferent to him as possible, she was still young enough to wonder at people meeting again in the common intercourse of society, and going on with as much ease as ever, who had parted in the wildest emotion! That the man whom she had dismissed with such scorn and contumely, and who was aware that she knew that of him, which fixed him in her opinion as equally mean and audacious, and whose last appearance she could not yet think calmly of: that he should meet her as gaily, more gaily than ever, and that they should move as two individuals in a fashionable circle, and no more, each to play their part in the approaching pageant, as a part, and no more.

“No chance of Lord Rupert,” cried the duke to Lord Cornbury, at dinner.

Lord Cornbury, as he always did, when addressed in public, and an answer was expected from him, reddened all over, and stammering as if he neither knew his own or his brother's name: “Oh—he—he is too busy—

he never has time—he would come, I am sure, if ——”

“But in the Recess? Cannot he be got into the Recess with the rest of the world, and be hid from official cares for a week at least?” said Mr. Poynings.

“Humbug!” said the duke, “Do you remember the Easter Recess and old Brooksby?”

Lord Cornbury laughed, but grew redder and redder, and the duke went on.

“Old Brooksby was an unhappy writing-master at Harrow—you may suppose how unfortunate the writing-master there must be; but this poor man was a formal fantastic old pedant, always looking in ‘Johnson’s Dictionary;’ and if we sported any slang to him, he used to say, ‘he feared, he would not be positive, but he feared that word was not English.’ Then we used to get up some out of the way strange words, up and down in the dictionary, and bring them in with some of our own dialect, and then swear he would find them, and confound him so when he saw them. But, however, one day he heard some one say, ‘The Easter Recess commences on the 9th?’ ‘Re-

cess,' says he; 'very odd use of the word recess:' so we seized on him, and brought him to a niche there was, and is I suppose still, in a passage, high up, and fifteen feet from the ground, at lest, and over this we put a paper, printed, you know, in large letters—'EASTER RECESS', a ladder ready and all; and into the recess we popped the old ass, whipped off the ladder, and there he was, and we all shouting, 'Now you know what the Easter Recess is—I hope you enjoy it—that is the Easter Recess'—and he, bawling, and screaming, and half dead with fright. Capital fun to be sure it was!"

"What nonsense, my dear duke," said Lady Barnstaple; "I wonder you can tell such things of yourself, now that you have arrived at years of discretion."

"Happy days," said Evelyn, "do you not regret they ever came to an end?"

"They were happy days, and these are happy days, I do not regret them when I have these."

"Were you ever unhappy for five minutes in your life?" said Evelyn.

“Yes, for fifteen at least, when the doctor was down upon me! I was a melancholy object on those occasions.”

“But you rejoice that he was down on you—if it had not been for his fostering care, what might you not have been!”

“Upon my life I think I might have been exactly what I am. I doubt he did me any good or any harm.”

“The natural excellence of your disposition required no improvement, and could not be perverted.”

“Just so! You state the matter flatteringly but the fact, I fear, is that I was hopelessly unteachable—I only wonder how I ever learned to read and write, but I did: they never came in the form of a lecture, to that I am impassive.”

There was music in the evening, and as Lady Umfraville was singing with Lady Louisa as she paused for her part, looking from the music book, she saw Sir Luttrell gazing on her with that fixed, yet wild melancholy expression which she had sometimes seen to soften his countenance, the sneering look was

totally gone : it was affection, passion, regret, grief, but fervent admiration. She was out in her part, she begged pardon and Lady Louisa recommenced, but this unlucky air was destined never to be finished, for the door hastily opened ; and “ Oh, Philip,” from the duke, introduced the magnificent young giant, who entered, as his brother.

“ Philip, my dear boy, how capital ! How did you get away ? How glorious of you ! Just in time.”

“ I am in time, I find—it was all I asked as I jumped out of the chaise. Bage hardly knew me. Tournament not begun. The welcome word ‘not till to-morrow,’ was all I wanted, and in I dashed.”

“ How fast you must have come—I never thought you really could,” cried the affectionate duke, shaking his brother’s hand, as if he would shake it off.

“ Never thought I could myself, till I received your last, when I determined to make a bold push—went up—asked leave, granted—on board the packet that minute—landed this morning and here I am !”



There were bows and smiles and hand-shaking with those who knew Lord Philip, and then the duke, with rather an *empresé* manner, presented him to Lady Umfraville. He was nearly as tall as his brother, but not like, except in his rattling way of speaking; not so good-looking, in any sense of the word; more of a *roué*, and not at all a more intellectual expression.

“Did you order dinner? You have not eaten much since you left Gibraltar.”

“I ordered nothing, but pray do, I am ravenous, and thirsty to the last degree.”

“Is it not kind of him?” said the duke to Evelyn. “He suffers so immensely at sea—a most unworthy brother of a true sailor like me; and yet, to do me a pleasure, and be at my tournament, he went through all that.”

“It was not thrown away,” said Evelyn.

“Crossed the Bay of Biscay!” cried Mr. Poynings; “and at this season, and to have to cross it again so soon! I never heard of such fraternal devotion. Dying for you would be nothing, being shot at once: but you have been all the way from Gibraltar dying for your

brother. What heroism ! It is only a pity you began so early with such a splendid effort; you will find it hard to keep up to your own reputation in future."

"That passive sort of heroism does not gain much applause, in general," said Evelyn to Mr. Poynings.

"Of course not : it is just not unsuccessful, at least, it has none of the glory of success; making others suffer, killing and wounding so many in a battle, and not being killed one's self,—how it is applauded !"

"And justly," said she, "you are in danger all the time, and may be killed yourself every minute: you must allow it is really more heroic than any mere endurance."

"I mean to try tomorrow, I assure you, as your knight, Lady Umfraville, if Plessingham has a suit for me," said Lord Philip.

"But will you be able to wear it at once, and move about in that weight, without any practice ?"

"It is very daring of him, is it not ?" said the duke, looking at his brother with admiration.

“He must win his spurs,” said Mr. Windham, “he is to carry a plain shield as a neophyte knight.”

“It is the only shield I have for him,” said the duke, laughing, “so it is lucky it is the right thing,—come, Philip, come and eat.”

“He will find it hard work, I can tell you,” said Mr. Windham, “to carry his armour of chain mail—it is the only suit left; to carry it—and manage his horse—and hold his shield—and use his lance, all at once, he will find it as much as he can do, if do it he can, without practice.”

“With all the practice in the world,” said Mr. Poynings, “I can hardly understand how it is done; indeed I have hitherto been exceedingly sceptical about the ‘deedes of armes’ done by our ancestors. It seemed to me as if they must have had, instead of the Montboddo theory of tails, three hands, for how else could they manage to hold three things; a shield, a spear, and a horse at the same time; and one of those three, the horse, quite enough to occupy all the strength, and all the attention one has.”

“To-morrow all these mean heresies will be

done away with," said Evelyn, "you will see your contemporaries exceed your ancestors."

"Except Lord Philip, I am sorry he came," said Mr. Windham, "he must trust to his horse. I am afraid he may cause some confusion. I do not even know what his skill as a horse-man is,—he is not even a dragoon, he is in the foot,—if he had been a lancer, there might have been some chance for him, but now—" and the perplexed Marshal looked exceedingly discomfited.

"You will allow me to be one of your knights?" said Lord Philip, on his return, and addressing Lady Umfraville.

"I have no power whatever," said she: "the duke and my father have the whole arrangement in their hands. You will do your devoir as becomes a soldier, I am sure. And I think we should be flattered at a real knight-errant like you coming from beyond the sea to assist our sports."

"Is old Cust very severe still?" said Colonel Darrell to the young soldier.

"Yes; he is such a bore—old Crusty we call him. He has nothing else for it there,

you know, stuck up on a rock, and so many of us: he keeps such a tight hand, I assure you, even now I hardly dare to breathe, except the exact way he commands."

"And how did he grant you leave so readily?"

"For my exemplary conduct, to be sure! I suppose not another fellow of 'ours' could have got it at all, but he gave it to me instantly."

"Such a bad example, Philip," said the duke, "he was glad to send you off."

"On the contrary, he points me out as a pattern—quite a pattern. I suppose he has said twenty times since I went, 'What a want we have of that excellent Lord Philip! Take example by him, young men,' says he, address his aides-de-camp, 'follow the pattern set to you by him, and then I shall be pleased.'"

"I wonder you think him so harsh, and such a bore, then," said Lady Barnstaple.

"Sympathy for others altogether! It hurts my feelings to see others so rated, when I am always in such favour."

"Always out of one scrape and into another,

I believe, is the fact, Lady Barnstaple," said the duke.

"Such eyes as that old fellow has!" said the colonel; "he roused me once for half-an-hour about an unregimental heel to my boot. I laid it all on the boot-maker, and thought I was out of the scrape; but he was going to have the poor dog before him, and show him up; and then I gave in."

"So, like him," said Lord Philip, "'I'll get to the bottom of this,' he says; and so he does, he is the very deuce for finding out a thing."

"You think him now quite right, colonel, do you not?" said Mr. Poynings. "You have ceased to be fag now; you are fagger, and sympathize with the master. Look how George Beamish listens at the word fag. You feel with Darrell now, do you not? You are in the active, not the passive, form of that powerful word."

"If I am over you, Lord Philip, whenever I am on service again," said the colonel, "you will see how I will out-crusty old Crusty himself."

“ Oh, do not speak of being on service again, Charles, pray ; you make me quite nervous,” said Lady Louisa.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE 8th of April was as fine as fine could be : bright, and soft, and calm. There had been rain two days before, so that the turf in the lists was in the most perfect state—not wet, and yet not hard, and no danger of there being dust enough to require the two hundred barrels of water to lay it, which it is recorded that Charles VI. of France had poured upon his tilting ground.

It had been arranged that all the party were to breakfast in their own rooms, and to meet in the great hall, before the hour appointed for the commencement of the sports.

To-day was destined for “running at the ring,” and playing the “djerid :” the performers to be in a peaceful costume. The morrow was to be the jousting in armour. So that to-day



only the known were to appear: the unknown were to wait till the next, when the visored armour allowed of their concealment.

The folding-doors of the hall were thrown open, and Lady Barnstaple and her train entered. The duke advanced to receive her at the head of his train. And it certainly looked what it was meant to represent—a gallant young nobleman at the head of his cavaliers, receiving in his castle the lady and her attendant damsels. The duke and his cavaliers were in splendid doublets of silk, or satin, or velvet, as the fancy of the wearer chose—with slashed hose, and open boots, and falling collars, after the Vandyke fashion—with the short cloak, depending from one shoulder of velvet, generally edged with ermine; and as they were all of the gayest colours, and of every hue, in satin sheen and velvet rich, and splendid plumes in every Henri Quatre hat. Right gallantly they showed as every hat was doffed at the entrance of the Queen of Love and Beauty.

The cavaliers were divided into two bands, on each side of the hall; those led by the duke

were distinguished by white and gold scarfs, worn from the right shoulder; and at the sword-hilt, and their plumes all white and yellow—Lady Umfraville's colours.

Those, on the other hand, of whom the young Lord Ashton was the leader, were distinguished by sky-blue scarfs and plumes, while each wore beside some individual favour, as the colours of the lady whose charms he undertook to defend.

As the knights retired on each side, the canopy, under which the Queen was to walk, was brought forward, and borne over her head by George Beamish and three other youths, too young for knights, but old enough for squires, dressed in scarlet and white—Lady Barnstaple's colours—scarlet and satin doublet and hose, slashed with white, and bare-headed.

Forth she paced, the Queen in all her state ! Before her, borne on a satin cushion, by her little son in a fanciful dress of the same colours, were the prizes for the day—a coronet or circlet of silver leaves, and a splendidly wrought gold chain. Her train was borne behind by two little girls—Lady Louisa's

daughters—their long hair floating on their shoulders, but confined above by wreaths of red and white roses.

While after her followed, two and two, her long-extending suite—Lady Umfraville and Lady Emma Ashton first; and all the rest, in all the splendour which the imagination of Lady Barnstaple could devise, so as to heighten and not eclipse her own gorgeous apparel.

The way from the house to the tilting-ground was just long enough to display the magnificence of this bright array of beauty and of rank, as they paced slowly forth.

Stage above stage had been erected, and were crowded from the topmost tier to the lowest, as full as they could hold, with the admiring multitude. But so excellent had been the arrangement of the tickets at the gates, that there was no confusion, no disturbance; and when the burst of music from the band announced the arrival of the procession, there was a hush of the profoundest silence.

And when it appeared—when the Queen of Love and Beauty was in sight,—when the Earl-Marshall stood ready to hand her to her throne,

a shout arose which rent the very skies, it seemed instinctive homage to beauty and magnificence.

As the train stopped, and as the Earl-Marshal took the hand of the Queen, Evelyn found the duke at her side. "Now," said he, taking her hand, and leading her away, "Now for your place. I knew nothing would satisfy Lady Barnstaple but to have you in her train, but you are the real object of it all—here is your seat;" and he led her to a beautiful pavilion, all gold and white, opposite to the throne of Love and Beauty, which was placed exactly in the centre of one side of the lists—both seats were canopied, and exalted a little above the rest of the spectators. The throne all scarlet and white; and behind sat the maids-of-honour; and below the footstool, the pages and the little train-bearers. And as the Queens seated themselves, a renewed thunder of applause burst from the spectators. The mature magnificence of charm—the dark hair, the superb Sultana-Oriental gorgeousness of the one—the youth, the grace, the lovely features, the fair tresses, the tall figure, the

blushing dignity, the infinite sweetness of expression in the other, seemed to represent the perfection of eastern and western beauty.

The thunder of applause died away, the music ceased, and all was expectation.

At each end of the lists were superb tents : from the northern streamed the white and gold colours, and from the other the blue. And in a spot, conspicuous from both sides, was placed the pillar, with its suspended ring, the business of the day.

The knights, who mounted and made ready behind or within their pavilion, appeared almost at once, in front, splendidly mounted, and each bearing a light spear or lance in his hand, and from each there fluttered and danced the little flag or pennoncel, all of each party of the same colour. And the music played as the knights arranged themselves within the barriers. They were thrown down, and a herald, in the duke's livery, and decked with tabard, and all the insignia of his office, marched out, and behind him paced forth, mounted on a superb white charger, the Earl Marshal, dressed in purple velvet, and long flowing robes, which hung

upon the horse in rich folds, but did not in the least embarrass the rider, who managed his stead with the most perfect ease, and looked around on the assembled multitude with all the dignity and gravity that beseemed his office and his age. One involuntary smile of pride and pleasure lighted up his countenance as he approached the thrones, and there beheld, in all the radiance of her loveliness, his daughter—the idol of the pageant.

He halted in the centre of the lists, and the herald before him,—

“Who when he saw the people of noise all still  
Thus shewed he the mighty duke’s will.”

“To-day, the knights will ride at the ring.

Whoever does best, and is judged to have most fairly earned the prize, shall be crowned by the hands of Love and Beauty, with the crown, or first prize.

Whoever shall come next in the game, and be judged to be most worthy of it, shall receive from the Queen of Love and Beauty a chain of gold, the second prize.

Before the games begin, the knights shall

draw lots who shall begin, and in what order they shall follow.

And, as soon as the prizes for the running at the ring have been bestowed, the knights will play at throwing the javelin, or djerid, which will conclude the sports of the first day. On the second, and last day, the knights will ride forth at sound of trumpet—the knights of the white and gold on their part, all armed, and the knights of the sky-blue, on their part, and each in their respective places ; and they shall, on a signal given, all go forward to the attack, and each knight, on either side, endeavour to do his devoir.

And when the first tilt is over, whoever has been disarmed, or unhorsed, may withdraw or resume the fight, as his own pleasure and the decision of the judges of the field shall resolve.

And, after the first tilt, each knight on the different sides may call out whatever antagonist he pleases to single combat, and the judges shall decide who conquers.

No knight is to attack another knight of the same colour as himself.

When a knight is disarmed or has broken his spear, he may be supplied with another or he may use his sword, either against the sword or lance of his antagonist, unless the warders, throwing down their truncheons, should stay the combat.

When two knights shall remain upon the field, being of opposite colours, they shall run a tilt to try their superiority; but if of the same colour, that colour shall be adjudged to have won the day. And whichever the judges shall decide on as the most worthy, shall then advance to the foot of the throne, on horseback, followed by his captives, (such knights as he shall have conquered,) and, there, alighting and kneeling, he shall receive, from the Queen of Love and Beauty, a crown of laurels, and a squire shall put into his hand, the bridle of a charger, caparisoned—The First Prize.

The Second Prize shall be a suit of armour and a shield.

The Third Prize shall be a sword.

All knights shall be called by their devices; and such as choose to keep their vizors



down, and remain unknown, shall, at their pleasure, do so.

All knights shall do their devoir to God and their lady.

God save the Queen !”

A prolonged flourish of trumpets concluded this announcement.

The warders or judges—Lord Barnstaple and Colonel Darrell—took their station on either side of the lists, opposite the ring.

The Earl Marshal rode from one end of the ground to the other, and back again, to see that all was correct; and his distinguished bearing, and admirable horsemanship elicited shouts of applause.

Meanwhile, the Herald held the lots; the warders presided; the knights drew, and then, marshalled by the Herald in their order, the two trains, in bright array, paraded all round the lists, each colour keeping its own side, and each knight, as he passed the thrones, lowering the point of his lance, and doffing his plumed hat; the duke performing his homage to Lady Umfraville with gallantry—nay, devotion: Sir Luttrell with looks in which

the desire to brave it out in a sneer, struggled strangely with his uncontrollable admiration.

Lord Ashton was the first who ran at the ring. All were so skilled, most of them so handsome, so tall and slight, and so well mounted, that it was impossible to behold a gallanter sport. Sir Luttrell was the least, and the least graceful of the riders ; but he was so good a horseman, and so skilful in his play, that he came off second in the game. The duke himself was beyond all comparison the best ; but when he had received the crown, on the point of his lance, he backed his horse with as much skill as Ivanhoe himself, and laid his trophy at the feet of Lady Umfraville.

Sir Luttrell kneeled, and the Queen of Love and Beauty flung the chain over his neck.

And now the knights once more separating, re-paced the lists, amid the acclamations, and waving of handkerchiefs, and tumultuous applause of the whole assembly, who stood up with one accord. "The Duke! the Duke! the Victor! the Victor! Sir Luttrell! Sir Luttrell! the second prize! Sir Luttrell Wycherley! " shouted the heralds. The trumpets

sounded, and the knights retired to their respective pavilions, amid a storm of plaudits. The "largesse, largesse," which the heralds were by ancient custom allowed, was, by the duke's commands, dispensed with on this occasion.

While the horses where refreshing, or others preparing, the knights came round and conversed with the ladies. The duke, new mounted, rode by the seats, and stopped continually to address an acquaintance, or to speak to the humblest person in the crowd ; and hope that each was well placed and had a good view of the sport. And having with his kind and joyous air, shewn his attention, as master of the *fête*, he flung himself from his horse ; and, after paying his compliments to the queen, who was surrounded by men, he hurried to Lady Umfraville.

The trumpets sounded ; all were mounted, and having once more paraded in two lines around the enclosure ; they formed suddenly at either end into a clump of spears ; the points gleaming in the sun ; the pennoncel dancing in the breeze ; now they seem to rush on each other, then to break asunder ; now in twos and threes,

and now a single horseman ; their lances flung forward, upward, aside ; now they are caught, then flung again : now the horses rushed at full speed ; now curvetted in one spot, the javelin is caught, and flung again and re-caught ; now cast from one horseman at full speed and received by another ; now dashed quivering into the ground ; then two would dart at it at once, and he who snatched it was greeted with a shout of triumph. And again all re-uniting, all their darts were at once in the air, sparkling, dancing, gleaming, rising as a cloud, and then falling as a scattered shower, the gay flags floating as they fell.

The mark, or quintain, was set, and every horseman in his turn flung at it as he passed, and, wheeling round, recovered his javelin, and retreated.

The spectators rose as the Queen of Love and Beauty rose, and as she walked forth from her throne in the same state in which she had approached it, the shouts were even more vociferous than before ; then they were in anticipation ; now they were retrospective and congratulatory. In the morning there had

been doubt—anxiety to know who was who; how all would be conducted, and uncertainty whether to-day was to be all; now there was the glow of amusement which had lasted long enough—not too long—and the delightful anticipation of to-morrow's festivity.

As the Queen of Love and Beauty retraced her steps to the house, the gentlemen crowded round her and her suite—all was compliment and blushes, and gaiety; and, in the interval employed by the Queen and her train, and by the tilters in changing their costume, the spectators, who were invited to the banquet, had retired to two magnificent marquees, prepared for the purpose, to arrange their toilettes, and, at the sound of the trumpets playing the universal signal for English men and women to seat themselves at table, they repaired to the abbey, and the Seneschal marshalled them to their places. The invited occupied tables in the lower part of the eating-room; the Queen of Love and Beauty, her attendant ladies and the tilters, sat at a table of state, on a raised dais, and were still performers to the rest.

After as many toasts and speeches, and songs, as were possible, the Queen rose; the musicians played, and the whole party repaired to the ball-room.

“Do you remember our gay dance on new year’s morning?” said the duke to Evelyn. “I must dance first with Lady Barnstaple, but with you next.

She smiled assent, and Lord Ashton took her hand for the first quadrille.

“What a successful day you have had,” said she to the duke.

“Everybody seems pleased, I think, and not tired.”

“You must be rather tired,” said she.

“Tired! when I am dancing with you! Besides, I never am tired.”

“Or never acknowledge that you are. My father, however, does not scruple to acknowledge that he will be glad to rest.”

“So glad,” said Mr. Windham, who was close behind her, “that having seen you dance, everybody looks so happy. I shall wish you a merry time of it, and go to bed, and advise everybody to follow my example.”

“Wycherley has—or preceded you, I think,” said the duke.

“I do not know, I am sure,” said Mr. Windham, in that tone which implies four words more, and he departed.

“No, there is Wycherley,” cried the duke, “behind that pillar! Do you see him?”

Lady Umfraville looked unwillingly. Sir Luttrell was leaning, half hidden, against a pillar; but, instantaneous as her glance was, their eyes met: how could they escape, for his were intently fixed on her. He turned away, and disappeared.

“He did not do anything surprising to-day,” said the duke.

“He reserves himself for to-morrow, I suppose,” said Evelyn.

“He is in the right of it, if, as I suspect, he means to fight double—fight on both sides!”

Lady Umfraville was silent; and the duke, who seldom pursued any conversation long, of which himself or his brother was not the hero, turned to another subject. Though not very observant of countenances, he had, by the intuition of good nature, a sort of sense that a

subject was not agreeable ; and, besides, there is no one so dull as not to have, at least, a dim perception of a rival.



## CHAPTER IX.

THE morning was as bright and as calm as heart could desire.

The arrangements were so far different from those of yesterday that the knights did not appear in the Hall; they were to be ready on the tilting ground. But the Queen came forth as before; her attendants followed. The Seneschal, bare-headed, gray, and with his silver wand of office, led the way; her present-bearer followed; her canopy was borne, as before, by the four noble-looking youths; her train was held up by the same lovely children, and the bevy of high-born beauties closed the procession.

The Earl Marshal, as before, handed to her throne the Queen of Love and Beauty: while,

in the absence of the duke, the Seneschal shewed Lady Umfraville to her seat.

Again, the spectators stood up and shouted and cheered, and cheered again, and reseated at last, like tumultuous waves subsiding and subsiding by degrees, till all was hushed and still.

Lord Barnstaple and Colonel Darrell, as warders of the fight, clad in complete armour, and "motionless as two pillars of steel," sat at their post.

The Earl-Marshal, as before, on his splendid white charger, appeared, preceded by the herald, who repeated the ordinances for this day.

A long flourish from the trumpets, and the challengers appeared at the northern end of the lists, in front of their pavilion ; and having ranged themselves, remained perfectly still.

The trumpets sounded again ; and the opposing knights, all armed as the others, cap-à-pie, appeared at the southern extremity, in the front of their tent, and, like their rivals, remained perfectly still.

What a strange and startled thrill was that

sight ! It was as if the Tower had at last sent forth that long array of kings, and heroes, and princes, from its armoury ; and in this still hush of expectation, even the flutter of a pennoncel, or the pawing of a horse, or the ringing of a bridle was heard, as all gazed on at England's chivalry !

Except these slight stirs of unintended movement the two arrays sat as still as if they had been, indeed, the disembodied armour of the mighty dead : There they sat motionless, that proud array—and this their “ Battle Roll : ”—

As leader of the “ White and Gold ” the Challengers—

1. The Duke of Plessingham, bearing on his shield his own crest—

*A pilgrim's staff, and scallop shells.*

2. His device, taken from the Moorish wars—

*A world,*

with the Spanish motto—

*“ Todo es poco.”*

borne by Sir Luttrell Wycherley.

3. *A bleeding heart,*

borne by Lord Douglas Wilton ; which

he wore, as having a right to the  
“Douglas Heart,” and as an emblem  
of his silent and hopeless passion.

4. *A lily.*

The bearer of this device unknown.

5. *Three crescents.*

Borne by the Hon. Josceline Wardour.

6. *A staghound in his leash.*

Borne by Lord Cornbury.

7. and last. *A plain shield, without device.*

Borne by Lord Philip Dashwood, who  
was without the Golden Spurs worn by  
his companions.

Such were the challengers; each of whom  
wore over his armour a scarf of white and  
gold colours: their plumes and the pennons on  
their spears of the same.

While the six knights—seven were enrolled,  
but the seventh did not make his appearance  
at the first array—while the six opposing  
knights, who were to sustain the ladies of their  
fancy against the challengers were all scarfed,  
and plumed, and penoncelled in sky-blue, to

mark their party ; while each wore some peculiar badge on the left arm, as their fancy, or the favour of the lady of their love suggested.

The leader—Lord Ashton.

- 1.                   *A blazing sun,*  
and the proud motto, which became his  
post as chief—

“*Nulli Secundus.*”

His badge a jewelled ring, attached by a silver cord—the gift of Lady Gertrude de Belvoir, to whom he was engaged, and who was one of the attendants in the Queen of Beauty’s train.

2.                   *A lion*—his motto,  
and his badge—*A chained dove.*  
The name not given, but understood to  
be Lord St. Leonard.

3.                   *A burning torch.*  
Motto :—“*Ainsi mon cœur,*”  
and his badge—The miniature of the  
high-born beauty of his love.

Borne by Captain De Vere.

4. *A star.*  
Motto :—" *Au ciel,*"  
and his badge—The Lacy knot.  
Borne by Sir Charles De Lacy.
5. *A hooded hawk.*  
Motto :—" *I submit,*"  
and his badge—A hawk's jesses.  
Borne by Lord Henry Traherne.
6. *A sword bearing crowns.*  
And the motto—  
" ——— *From hilt unto the point,*  
*With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets.*"  
And his badge a purple knot, with  
silver lettering—  
" *For her I win them all.*"  
Borne by Lord Lauriston.

The trumpets sounded, and at once, as if at some enchanter's call, that broke the spell, and loosed them from the trance of ages—at once they moved—the whole array—on either side, and slowly, as if in part still restrained, they paced forth, and taking each a different side of the lists, made the complete circuit. Each knight, as he passed the throne of the Queen

of Love and Beauty, duly lowering his lance. But when the Challengers reached the canopy of Lady Umfraville, and as their leader—the Knight of the Pilgrim Staff and Scallop-shell, lowered his lance before her—a herald suddenly shouted—

“For the peerless Evelyn ye fight—be brave.” And he continued his cry while the knights of white and gold were thus passing their lady. Each knight, not only lowering the point of his spear, but clanging it on his shield, as if responsive of the herald’s call, while, from the trumpets, wild burst of sound seemed echoing the summons and its answering clang.

But, as the Knight of the Lily passed, he lowered his lance, it dropped from its point into Lady Umfraville’s hand—a tressured knot of gold and silver cord—and then, with a bend of his plumed helmet, he clanged his spear upon his shield, as did the rest.

When the knights of the sky-blue colours reached Lady Umfraville’s seat, the herald shouted—

“Pardon, lady—pardon those compelled by fate to fight against your colours.”

The two parties then returned to their stations and their motionless rest.

Much as Evelyn had dreaded the whole affair, and exceedingly as she had shunned its display, she had, the instant the knights appeared, forgotten herself, lost all individuality in this vivid realization of her fondest dreams. The scenes of Froissart, the romance of the Abencerrages, the fictions of Scott, were no longer an imagination—they were before her, so perfect was the pageant; and she had gazed in breathless ecstasy till the unknown knight, by his offering, startled her to self again. What a strange complication of feelings swelled her heart as she read the inscription on the badge—"If she will wear the token, how will her unknown, but devoted knight, fight in her cause, and if successful, at her feet he will kneel, to receive the hallowed token in exchange for one long long worn at his heart."

The letters were of a printed form—no clue to guess from whom. A gush of other sympathies—and the emotion of the unexpected occurrence, wonder, curiosity, all so blended, so confronting, that she knew not where she



was, till, she heard her father's voice: she looked round, and was instantly re-absorbed in the scene before her.

The Earl Marshal, with his raised baton, in the centre of the field, cried out—

“Forward, knights, and do your devoir!”

And instantly wheeling his horse with the most dignified dexterity, he withdrew.

And as he spoke, the trumpets sounded the charge, and the two motionless ranks, as if at once instinct with life, started forward, and, full tilt, met in the centre with a crash of arms.

The Knight of the Staff and Scallopshell and he of the Blazing Sun, the two leaders, struck their lances each so fairly in the centre of the shield, that neither could be said to surpass the other; and, wheeling their horses, they returned to their posts.

But the Knight of the Lion came on him, who bore the World and its boastful motto, with such a shock as almost to unhorse him; and before he could well recover his seat, he knocked the lance out of his hand, amid the shouts of the multitude, and as he stooped to

pick it up as his trophy, his ease and grace won renewed applause.

The Knight of the Bleeding Heart and of the Torch missed each other, and with some difficulty disentangled themselves from the rival parties, among which the violence of the rush had carried them, they retired unapplauded.

He of the Star fared worst of all, for the Knight of the Lily struck his shield so fair, and with such force, and bent him back so, even with his horse, that in his struggle to recover, he lost both shield and spear, which the Knight of the Lily carried off in triumph, and, instead of reining his steed directly back to his post, he turned aside, and laid his trophies at the feet of Lady Umfraville, and then regained his station.

The Hawk was unhooded—his helmet struck off by the Knight of the Three Crescents.

He of the Staghound and he of the Sword and Crowns, met so fair, and struck so true, that the spear of the one pierced his antagonist's shield, while the spear of the other was splintered to pieces.

Lord Philip, having no opposing knight, was obliged to wait till this, the *melée*, was over.

While fresh spears and shields were procured, and the knights had withdrawn to their tents, the music played, and a loud murmur of wonder and applause ran through the assembly, amazed at the ease with which, in their ponderous habiliments, these gallant young men could bear themselves, and manage their steeds. These, all the silken sons of high prosperity—all of that race said to be nursed in luxury—all of that high blood which is in other lands but the semblance of decay, the type of indolence and nothingness. Some actually wore the ancestral armour of their forefathers, and all wore it with a freedom and a power that showed what strength of limb, what hardihood of frame the early sports of Eton and of Harrow, and the manly training of the chase had brought them to.

The wind of a single bugle-horn, from the northern extremity, announced that one of the challengers was about to engage in single combat.

The Knight of the Plain Shield, the maiden

knight, rode forth to win his spurs, and boldly struck the device of the Lion; he who had been the most successful of the opposing party.

The device of each knight being duly suspended over each pavilion, every challenger was to touch that of him he should attack. And instantly, all armed, rode out the Knight of the Lion; while the spur-less cavalier withdrew to the other end to take a full career. And they met, but the inexperienced cavalier, in spite of his height and strength, and daring courage, paid the penalty of his rashness,—not only un-helmed, but disarmed; he was forced to retreat defeated, while the sky rang with the plaudits of the victor, who awaited another attack; nor had he long to wait before the leader, the Knight of the Staff and Scallop, appeared, and his challenge being sounded, rushed upon his antagonist with a vehemence that seemed indeed avenging for the insult sustained by his companion in arms.

He aimed at the helmet, but his stroke was so well parried, that it was aimed in vain; and now it was beautiful to see the masterly fencing on horseback. Each so perfect in the use of

his lance, each so daring to strike, each so skilful to defend ; so perfect in their horsemanship, turning and winding their fiery steeds as if actually part of themselves : and wielding their long lances as easily as a fencing-master would his foils.

Long was the combat sustained ; till at length the spear of the Knight of the Staff and Scallop-shell, broke in his hand ; but he, calling out “ draw,” wheeled round his steed, and they re-commenced with their swords, which struck fire as they closed ; but unwearied as were the combatants, their reeking steeds seemed tottering under them ; especially that of the leader, whose great weight, his horse seemed no longer equal to sustain, and at a signal from the Earl Marshal, the warders threw down their staffs, and the combat ceased.

“ A drawn battle, a drawn battle ! ” burst from the excited lookers-on, and each withdrew to his tent.

The Knight of the Blazing Sun, the leader of the opposite party, was now friendly called out to battle by the spurless cavalier, who, smarting under his defeat, and burning to

redeem his honour, rushed upon his antagonist with such violence, that horse and man rolled an undistinguished heap upon the ground.

“Hurra! Bravo!—shouts from every side hailed his success: and, high above the rest, the duke’s voice, regardless of all form, declared his triumph in his brother.

The Earl Marshal rode forward and pronounced “he has won his spurs. Let him kneel down and receive his knighthood, and let beauty bind on his spurs.”

He looked towards his daughter; but the Queen of Love and Beauty was so instantly and evidently ready, that he was obliged to place in her hands the golden spurs.

“Standard Bearer, advance your Standard;” and a magnificent standard, emblazoned with the Earl Marshal’s arms on one side, and the duke’s on the other, was planted and unrolled, and, kneeling beneath it, Lord Philip received the stroke from the Earl Marshal’s sword, while the Queen, descending from her throne, in all her state, bound on the gilt spurs, while Lady Umfraville fastened, over his shoulder, the scarf of her colours. The trumpets gave a

long, triumphant flourish, and the new knight retired to his tent in glory.

“At the same instant a knight of the Sky-blue colours rode into the lists. He was one who had not yet appeared; he, and his horse, (a dark roan,) and his device—a scorpion in a ring of fire, with the motto—

So do the dark in soul expire,  
Or live like Scorpion, girt by fire!

were not known. His armour was magnificent; but he wore, besides his blue scarf, no badge, except a black crape round his left arm. He was low of stature, and, though he rode well, he had not the stately appearance of the last combatant; and when he touched, with his spear, the shield bearing the Staff and Scallop-shell, and when its gigantic owner rode forth to meet him, a murmur ran through the crowd, as of surprise, that “one so smal of stature shoulde encounter with one so bigge of limb.”

. They met—the Knight of the Scorpion was shaken in his saddle; but, neither being disarmed, they wheeled round to renew the fight, when the horse of the Knight of the

Staff and Shell slipping on the well-trod ground, lost his footing, and fell ! and his rider beneath him.

A universal groan and shriek testified the sympathy for the gallant chief.

The attendants, with the Earl Marshal, were instantly at hand : he was stunned, but unhurt ; and, as he was led from the field, the Knight of the Lily appeared to take up the combat with him of the Scorpion, who had withdrawn to his own end of the lists, and had from the moment of his antagonist's fall, continued to gaze, intently, at the white and gold canopy.

His new combatant, though nearly as tall, was so much slighter than the former, that they did not appear so unequally matched.

They met: they each struck fair against the other's shield, and wheeled again, and met again, and then commenced a regular duel of fence. So determined did the combatants appear, it seemed as if more than the mere ambition of the joust was animating their strokes. At length an unwarded blow from the Knight of the Lily came with such a force as to pierce



the armour of the Knight of the Scorpion, and, as the lance was withdrawn, a streak of blood appeared upon the bright steel of the corslet. A shriek from the spectators! and the warders moved their batons, as if about to stop the fight. "It is nothing—nothing—never mind!" shouted the Knight of the Scorpion. "Come on!"

The Knight of the Lily, who had paused in courtesy, instantly wheeled round, and, defending the furious stroke aimed by his antagonist, he broke the spear to pieces.

"Draw!" cried he of the Scorpion, drawing his sword, which flashed in the sunshine.

The Knight of the Lily, flinging away his spear, drew his sword also; and, rising in their stirrups, the knights encountered as if in mortal close.

The whole multitude unconsciously arose at once,—and the involuntary, simultaneous rise of that vast multitude was almost sublime, in the intenseness of their eagerness; and every eye was fixed upon the foes, as though each individual existence in the mighty mass depended on the issue of each stroke. Every

knight on either side stood gazing on their comrades' blows. Not a shout, not a word, not a murmur, scarcely a breath was heard—such was the ecstasy of interest.

And it was long in suspense: such perfect masters of their weapons, and each so determined to be victor—striking, parrying, aiming, warding, now a blow seemed inevitable, and now it was arrested, now to guard that stroke—impossible, and it is struck aside. Now the shields receive the clattering blades; and now, aimed at the head, it seems as if it would cleave helmet, head and all, to atoms; but the Knight of the Lily, at whom it was aimed, received it on his upraised shield, and, rushing on the unguarded flank of his antagonist, he struck it with his sword so fierce and strong that the armour rent, and the sheer, descending blow unhorsed the rider, flinging him, stunned and breathless, to the ground.

A shout, a very roar of gratulating cries now rolled round and round the lists, that agony of interest over, it seemed as though each heart relieved itself in the outpouring of triumphant joy.

Who thought of ~~the~~ vanquished? who cared for the fallen? Not the attendants, not the Marshal; all wrapped in the completeness of the victory, even the wardens, animated from their still solemnity, added their shout to the universal acclamation.

Who cared for the vanquished? The victor only! He had sprung from his horse, he undid his visor, raised him from the ground, and, seeing his closed eyes and deadly paleness tore off the helmet, and was unbuckling the corslet, when the squires of the unfortunate hero ran up, and bore him from the field; while, at a signal from the Knight of the Lily, a page gathered his trophies from the ground and bore them before him; while, the ground being cleared, the Knight of the Bleeding Heart again called out the Knight of the Burning Torch, and they crossed their spears—each struck the other's shield. They wheeled round, and met again as equally as before; but, in the third encounter, the Knight of the Bleeding Heart, Lord Douglas Wilton, drove his lance through the shield of his antagonist, and bore it off in triumph.

The Knight of the Three Crescents, touched the shield of him of the Star, and the Crescent and Star were in the field. The Knight of the Star endeavoured to bring his horse to the necessary wheel round, but it was unruly : it had been alarmed in his first encounter with the Stag-hound, and was unwilling to come again to the shock. The Knight of the Three Crescents reined in his steed, and waited till his antagonist had subdued his struggling charger ; he succeeded, and wheeling round, at the first stroke, knocked the lance from the hand of the Knight of the Three Crescents, who instantly drew his sword, and exclaiming “for the white and gold and the peerless Evelyn,” attacked the Star with renewed spirit.

It was a beautiful exhibition of military art : the length and power of the spear, against the force and readiness of the sword. Now the spear seemed on the helmet at which it aimed, and now the sword had parried its stroke,—now the sword appeared as if within the ward of the spear, as if it must strike the corslet of the Starry knight, when by a sudden turn of his horse, he brought his spear again to bear,

and struck the sword aside in a well directed dart. Its length seemed to keep its wielder unapproachable; but, rising in his stirrups, the Knight of the Crescents waved his sword on high, and struck with such a force and truth of aim, it cut the spear right through, and the Knight of the Star, unprepared for the concussion, overbalanced, and fell to the ground.

The shouts of the spectators had hardly subsided, when the Knight of the Staghound appeared once more in the field, and challenged the Knight of the Crowned Sword, who struck the helmet of his challenger so well that he drove part of it in, and the severed plume floated down the lists; but in the second run the Knight of the Staghound drove his lance through the armour of his antagonist, piercing it just above the stud at the shoulder, and so completely through, that, as he withdrew it, the scarf was tinged with blood; and the warders, throwing down their batons, the combat was over,—the knights of the peerless Evelyn, the knights of the gold and white, remaining victors of the field.

.And now, the warders having flung down

their staffs, the herald advanced, and, having recited the combats, the Earl-Marshal declared that the white and gold challengers had triumphantly supported their field against all foes, and that, though their antagonists had done their devoir as good knights and true, and that all the challengers deserved the thanks and admiration of all good cavaliers, yet that he who had shown the fairest fight and won the chiefest honours of the day was

*The Knight of the Lily,*

whom the herald accordingly summoned to receive the crown of victory.

As he came forward, still clad in complete armour, and his visor closed, a universal whisper ran through the spectators—"Who is he? Who is he?" All asked, but none could answer.

The knight, whose noble form, and the martial-bearing with which he trod at ease in his heavy armour, after all the efforts of the fight, excited even new admiration, advanced to the front of the throne, and kneeled at the feet of the Queen of Love and Beauty.

"Will not our gallant champion unhelm,

and let us see the face of him whose deeds we have so admired ? ”

The knight remained silent and still, and, after a moment's pause, she placed the crown upon his helmet ; while a page placed in his hand the bridle of a superb charger, superbly caparisoned. But the clangour of the trumpets, and cries of the multitude, seemed unheeded by the victor, who rose and made a profound obeisance to the Queen ; while the Earl-Marshal, with much dignity, addressed him :—

“ Sir Knight of the Lily, you are by the laws of this tournament entitled to the crown of victory and to this charger, destined to be the first prize. It was purchased by the Duke of Plessingham for this tournament, and I am sure he could not have wished for a knight more worthy to wear the crown. Worthy by his brave deeds and by his noble courtesy, which in the fight towards his foe, and after the victory towards the vanquished, I only regret that we can know you by no other name than that of your cognizance in the field.”

“ The knight, with another profound obeisance, silently expressed his thanks, and, taking from

his page the spoils of his second triumph, he signed to him to bear away the prize to his pavilion ; while he, crossing the lists, carried his trophies to the canopy of white and gold, and laid them at the feet of Lady Umfraville. She rose as he approached, and presented to him the flowers ; and he placed in her hand a small Maltese cross, of exquisite workmanship, suspended to a curiously-wrought chain of antique form. As he gave it, her hand—her soft, small white hand—rested for an instant in the great gauntlet palm of the armed victor, who held the flowers to his heart, and, as if unwilling to leave her, he kneeled at her feet in an attitude of the deepest devotion ; and then, as if tearing himself by a violent effort away, he turned suddenly round, and was hastening from the scene, when the Seneschal stopped him with an entreaty from the duke that he would grace the banquet with his presence ; but, by a mute gesture, he declined the honour ; and, passing down the lists, he entered his tent, and was no more seen.



## CHAPTER X.

THIS short interview, so intensely interesting to the parties concerned, was scarcely observed by the numbers who surrounded them, whose attention had been quickly diverted from their curiosity about the Unknown Victor, by the coming of the other knights to receive the rest of the prizes—

A splendid suit of armour, and shield, bearing a knight, in full career, and the inscription :

“*In Memoriam of ye Jousts of Plessis Canons.*”

“To the Knight of the Lion.”

The third :—A Turkish scimitar, of rare device—to the Knight of the Bleeding Heart,

who had disarmed—the last effort of the day—the leader of the rival party, the Knight of the Blazing Sun.

All these were, with due state, presented by the Queen of Love and Beauty. The duke assisting, and the Earl-Marshal eulogizing each as he received his gift.

And now the young ladies of the Queen's train, having withdrawn for a space, attended by the Warders on foot, re-appeared, walking down the lists from the southern extremity, each of six young ladies, leading by a silver chain a captive knight—the six knights of the sky-blue colours—the conquered troop; and, pacing on, they advanced to the front of the throne, and presented their captive knights to the Queen of Love and Beauty.

The duke was at Evelyn's side:—"You did not know of this? This was poor Wycherley's fancy; he said it was done in some tournament in Froissart."

"Yes," said she, "at the famous one given by Richard II. in Smithfield; but I think the knights were so led, before—not after—the battle; they were only meant to be captives

to the ladies who led them. But this seems cruel."

"Wycherley never dreamed of being in that case himself, and you see he is not come."

The Queen surveyed her captives, who kneeled very correctly—their hands crossed on their breasts, and the young damsels standing beside them, holding the silver chain, with the prettiest air of arch-coquetry; while the Queen, all armed in awful beauty, exclaimed, with a regal severity of tone, well adapted, but in which, perhaps, there was some nature too: "Here are but six knights, where is the seventh?"

"He says, please your Majesty," said one of the Warders, "that he is badly hurt, and cannot appear."

"Go—we command our Warders of the Fight to go—and if, upon enquiry, they find he is not in extremity, we further command that they do bring him bodily here; and that this young damsel, with her dangling unemployed chain, accompany you, and bring him, like his comrades, chained into our presence!"

The Wardens smiled and obeyed; the young lady walking between them; her slight figure,

long fair hair, and white dress, contrasting prettily with the heavy-armed figures of her supporters.

“Spiteful of her to poor Wycherley,” said the duke. “You would not have done that! I declare, though I do not much like him, I declare I am sorry he was so thoroughly beat, and he fought gallantly.”

“He is not seriously hurt, I trust,” said she, so anxiously, that the benevolent expression of the duke’s face changed instantly and entirely, and he said almost sulkily—

“You must not be under any alarm, he was only scratched, and had not half so bad a fall as somebody has every day at Melton.”

“Then, I cannot say I sympathize in your regret at his being beaten: pride should have a fall!”

The duke’s countenance cleared, but he could not comprehend her anxiety. He never could have supposed her anxiety was for what the victor would feel, if he had turned jest to earnest, by a real injury to his antagonist; but he settled it to his satisfaction.

“Yes, to be sure; anything serious would

have been a bad job. I should have been most heartily sorry to have had our triumphs dashed by any disaster——Here he comes !”

“ I am glad,” said Lady Umfraville, “ that you think I should not have done this : I never could have wished to mortify any one so bitterly.”

“ This is well,” said the Queen of Love and Beauty, with great haughtiness. “ As all have now submitted to my power, I shall exercise the prerogative of mercy towards those who deserve mercy. Sir Knight of the Blazing Sun, Sir Knight of the Lion, Sir Knight of the Burning Torch, Sir Knight of the Star, Sir Knight of the Hooded Hawk, and you, Sir Knight of the Crowned Sword, I proclaim ye free, without price or ransom ; free, in consideration of your valour and your skill in your devoir ; and I am requested, by our noble host, to bid you to the banquet with which he entertains his guests this night. Warders ! unchain those captives ! Their only mark of disgrace shall be that their chains are to be hung under their banners in the Banquet Hall.”

“For you, Sir Knight of the Scorpion,” continued she, vengeance sparkling in her eyes. “For you I have also a pardon, but not before you have here, publicly, upon your knees, asked forgiveness of me, and of the leader of your party, for having quitted that party, and for having turned recreant to its cause; fighting, at the end of the day, against those with whom you fought at the beginning. Confess your guilt, and ask our pardon.”

“As to confessing, please your Majesty, the fact is now very well known: your pardon you may grant, or withhold, as your Majesty may please; but, your epithet of ‘recreant’ I must protest against. I appeal to my Lord Marshal if I did not well maintain my fight; and if I fell, it was by the chance of the combat. Reckless, if you please—as, by my sable badge, I bespeak myself—and, to one for whom there is no hope, there is no fear: and I am, therefore, perfectly indifferent to the vengeance your Majesty, in your own cause, may think fit to inflict upon me;” and he rose with an air of defiance as he spoke.

The Lord Marshal, (as beseemed his office,

superior to private prejudice,) exclaimed in a loud voice—"I pronounce Sir Knight of the Scorpion to have done his battle as became a gallant warrior; and having, both with lance and sword, approved himself a worthy knight, was conquered in fair fight, and is entitled to all the honours of war."

"Mercy is the privilege of Her Majesty," said the duke, "and I may not interfere. I can only hope she will exercise it now, and that Sir Knight of the World, or of the Scorpion will do me the honour of partaking of my banquet."

During the speeches of the Earl Marshal and of the Duke, the Queen of Beauty looking very little like the Queen of Love, continued with hard and haughty glance to confront the dark and defiant looks of the captive cavalier. But, as the duke ended, Lady Umfraville quitted her seat, and, crossing the lists, and passing the Queen, as she went to take up her station behind her, which she occupied in the procession, she stopped for one instant, and, without looking at the captive, said to her Majesty—"We all hope you will be merciful."

Her smile and her look of kindness might have touched a heart of stone ; but they would have little effect on the implacability of a woman who thought she had been scorned, who, with the insults of the magician fresh in her memory, had now the power to avenge them, little would the intercession of Lady Umfraville have availed, but for her resuming her place as her attendant : it seemed a resignation of all claim, as the object of the tournament, she had not attempted to grant forgiveness to the recreant from her cause, she had besought it in all humility from the Queen, who, at last relaxing from her sternness, smiled and said—

“We are merciful ; Sir Knight, we think, that remaining thus chained, in the gaze of the multitude, has been a sufficient punishment and expiation, and we grant you your freedom, and we bid you, in the name of our noble host, to his banquet. Warders, strike off his chains ! ”

The scene was all dumb-show to the spectators, who were set nearly opposite or beside the throne ; but it all went for something—it was perfectly comprehensible in pantomime.



The appearance of the captives, and their chains struck off, and then the one remaining, and the apparent debate and delay, and the intercession, evident from the gestures of the Lord Marshal and the duke, till at last all eyes were rivetted on Lady Umfraville, as unattended, and indeed, in the interest of the moment, unobserved by those about the throne, but most eagerly watched by the rest of the assembly, she left her canopied state, and walked with such grace and dignity across the lists, a murmur ran round—"How lovely;" "What a figure;" "What grace;" "How well she moves;" "How beautiful." Some were heard heretically to assert, "She should have been the Queen—she looks Love and Beauty, too, I am sure."

Luckily, the triumph of the Queen was uninterrupted by a rumour of these shameful hints reaching her, she remained in her own belief, undoubted, undisputed, in her right of royalty.

The trumpets sounded a recal. The Queen rose: the Earl Marshal handed her from her seat. The whole assembly rose, and with loud,

universal, and exulting plaudits, continued to cheer the Queen and her train till they disappeared from view.

The duke, still in armour, but bareheaded, flung himself on a horse, and, galloping down the line, shouted as he went: "Thanks, thanks, my friends, for your company, and I hope you have all been pleased; and I hope that all who graced our halls last night will do so again to-night. And now, farewell; and I hope you will all think sometimes with pleasure on the tournament days at Plessy Canons."

Shouts, cheers, waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and cries of gratitude, and expressions of the pleasure they had enjoyed, which seemed really heartfelt, were the tumultuous reply; and the duke, darting full speed down the lists, disappeared in his pavilion, and

#### THE TOURNAMENT WAS OVER.

But its sequel, the banquet, was superb. By the judicious advice of the Earl-Marshal, all the company retired, on their return from the tilting-ground, to their own apartments, where, being served with "some slight refec-tion," most of the party very wisely lay down

and went to sleep: so that by the time the great eating-room was lighted up, and the banquet served, everybody was ready, with renewed vigour, to play their parts, and resume their sports.

The duke had arranged that the Lord-Marshal should conduct the Queen to her seat of state at the centre table; he himself led Lady Umfraville, and they seated themselves opposite. The table on the right was appropriated to the Knights of the White and Gold, who in their peaceful garb, but each wearing his scarf, sat under a banner bearing his device, and, hung beneath, were all the trophies each had won. But, though there hung among the rest the banner of the Lily, and the dented shield, pierced armour, and broken lance, hacked sword, the trophies of his combat, the stall of the knight was vacant.

And over the stall where the Knight of the "World" should have sat, and which was left vacant, hung no banner, but the shield with his device reversed.

While at the table on the left sat the Knights of the Blue; and, beneath their banners, hung

their silver chains, the emblems of their defeat; but the stall of the Knight of the Scorpion was empty !

It was really a splendid scene, that banquet-hall ; it was literally as bright as day, and, beheld from the gallery, it looked the realization of an allegory of the two eras. The lower part of the hall was occupied by the several tables of the guests of the day. The gentlemen and ladies of the nineteenth century in their nineteenth century dresses ; but those at the upper tables sat in their doublets of satin and velvet, and all the gorgeousness of the male costume of the sixteenth century, with the two beautiful women, who graced the dais, magnificently attired, of course, with the helmets, and banners, and armour, and shields, hung above them. These martial trophies, and the gallant bearing of the knights who sat beneath, seemed no acted pageant ; it looked, as if the heroes of the Elizabethan age sat there ; it looked like what it was, the very flower of England's youth, who are now, as they were then, the very " choice and pick of all the world ;" it looked what it really was, some of

the first of the English nobles, now, as they were then, the pride of their country, the admiration of the universe: they were now, as they were then, the servants of a real, a great and glorious Queen; and now, as then, but waiting her commands "to peril all even unto the death for the Sovereign Lady of the Land."

Long and joyously the revel lasted. The dread of a scene, that ghost of ridicule which usually haunts English society, had been so entirely laid by the very undertaking of their parts, that none had the awkward air of men ashamed of what they wear. All were talking over their deeds, and their blows, and their falls, as gaily as if it had been a hunt, and they in their scarlet jackets.

The Earl Marshal, having given all the usual loyal toasts, and the Queen of Love and Beauty, who, in return, gave "The Duke, our noble host." He thanked as shortly as possible, and gave "The Lady of the White and Gold and her Knights, his gallant brothers in arms."

When Lady Umfraville began to speak, the noise of the reseating of the company, and the

roll of cheers had hardly ceased, but at the first sound of her voice, so low and so distinct in its cadences: the silence spread like the allaying lull of a storm, from those the nearest to her to the utmost end of that great hall, till the stillness was so complete, that every word was completely audible.

“In returning thanks for myself and the gallant knights, who fought under my colours, I rejoice to be able thus publicly to declare my gratitude for their services, and to express my admiration of their deeds of arms. And I am sure that, with the generosity becoming all true knights who rejoice in a worthy foe, they will join with me in proposing the health of these brave gentlemen, the “Knights of the Sky-blue Colours,” who proved themselves such brave and loyal supporters of their cause.”

It was grand to the spectator, looking from the gallery, to behold each time the simultaneous rising of the company, as each health was proposed; but there was more than a common enthusiasm now—all felt, all sympathized in the generous good taste of this proposal; and the Knights-Antagonist, who

remained seated, showed in their looks their feeling of its kindness, and their admiration of the beautiful proposer.

And Lord Ashton said—"As the Leader of the Knights of the Sky-blue, I return thanks in their name, and in my own, for the honour we have received; and I beg to declare, in their name, and in my own, that should the Fair Forgiveness ever want our services, we shall think it a proud and high privilege to be allowed to prove our gratitude by obeying her behests, or by fighting even to the death in her cause."

The banquet was over, and the ball-room was thrown open, and—for it is a wonderful what human nature can sometimes go through—the successful knights on the one hand, eager to show how little they felt their exertions in the field, and those on the other hand, feigned to prove themselves undispirited by defeat, and kept up the dance with such vigour, that the morning had almost dawned before they seemed to think of repose.

And so ended the princely and joyous revels of Plessy Canons.

## CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Evelyn awoke next morning, how confusedly the recollection of the past day rose in her mind! And, perhaps, all the performers and spectators felt the same uncertainty. Had it been real? Had she really seen live knights, all armed, all plumed, all meeting in actual joust? Was it real? Were those two men in armour on horseback, rushing full career, lance to lance, horse to horse, or rising in their stirrups, aiming with their swords, receiving the blows on shields of grand device, or letting them clang on their steel habiliments—Were they not pictures brought to life? No, they were not actors on a stage, but actual living men—Lord Rupert Conway and Sir Luttrell Wycherley!—Her lovers really contending before her!



She was roused by a message from Lady Barnstaple, "obliged to set off for town, and hoped to see Lady Umfraville before her departure."

Engagements of business, or pleasure, all that had been deferred till "after the tournament," were now to be fulfilled by everybody ; and many of the party were already gone before Evelyn appeared.

As soon as the Barnstaples and the Darrells were gone, Evelyn strolled out to enjoy the freshness of the spring air, and see something of the place, in the first greenness of the year. She was on her way back towards the house, when the duke met her.

"You need not hurry in, for Mr. Windham cannot be ready for some time."

"I am in no hurry ; I have had a pleasant walk ; how rich the view is here."

"I am glad you like it ; I wish you to like it more ; I wish you to like this place ; I wish you could like to live at it."

Evelyn started.

"You look surprised, dear Lady Umfraville, you know how I love you !"

She did not know it, indeed : she had long seen his admiration, and she had thought that he rather liked to look at her, but it had always appeared to be *par parenthèse*, when he happened to think of it, when unoccupied by a horse or a hunt, he chanced to recollect her existence, or to be suddenly sensible that she had a high colour. And she was so convinced of this that she smiled, as she answered :

“ I do not know it, indeed ; nor do I think you know it yourself. I do not think you care about me more than about anybody else in the world.”

“ How can you say so ? But you know the tournament was all yours—all for you. Though you would not be called Queen, yet you were in reality—you were the object of the whole. I thought it was not fair to take advantage of my brother knights before it was all over : I thought it but just all should fight before you on the same terms—but now I can delay no longer to declare myself. I was resolved you should not leave this place without my asking you to come back to it as your own.”

“ I think you mistake.”

“ But I do not mistake,” said he, smiling, “ I am no genius, as you are very well aware, but I declare I know my own mind perfectly well, and I know that I am not the least mistaken, in saying I love you with all my heart. I do not pretend to have any head, but an honest and true heart I have ; and if the entire affection of such a heart, and the fondest wish to please you, would make you happy, you have it, and would have it all my life. Because I am such a careless rattling fellow, you think I have no feeling ! And I am not a man of gallantry ; I do not know how to make speeches ; I never knew how to flutter and flirt about young ladies. I have seen many beauties that I have admired as very handsome, but none ever caught my fancy. Lady Barnstaple, as my cousin, and fond of managing in every way, has, several times, been so kind as to point out to me, persons whom she was good enough to choose for me, but it is a matter in which I was determined to choose for myself ; though, till I saw you, I never lost my heart, and you think I have none to lose ! ”

“On the contrary, I have always admired and valued the kindness of your heart. No one could be long in your company,—nobody who had any feeling—without perceiving that you had one of the best hearts in the world!”

“And it is your kind-heartedness, your power of making things pleasant, that I admire, even more than your beauty,” continued he with emotion; as, leaning on the park-paling, before which they stood, he gazed affectionately on her countenance with all its blushing loveliness; “it is your unselfishness, your unaffected manners that I so love; in short it is your not being in the least a ‘fine lady,’ that with all your fortune and fashion, and all your admirers, you are not spoiled.”

“And that is what I value so much in you, Duke; taught as you must have been from your childhood, of all that your rank and your fortune could command, and having the command so young, so entirely your own master, that you do not think only of your own happiness.”

“But I do now!” said he with great eagerness, “I do now; I am thinking of my own

happiness, you will think of it too, will you not? you gratify, you delight me unspeakably by what you say of me,—you think I have a heart, you say of me just what I should have most wished to hear from you; you will trust then to my heart? you will trust me with yours?”

While the duke was speaking, Evelyn thought how happy any person, less romantic than herself, might be with such a man. She felt how perverse, how foolish, perhaps, it was to have fixed her fancy on an ideal—on one who—but then, the tournament, the cross—and then her father; she was sure he would have liked the duke for his son-in-law: ought she not to value so plain and true an affection? “down on thy knees, girl, and thank God for the love of an honest man!”—And would it be an honest return for such an attachment not to deal openly with it? While her lover spoke she thought thus: and when he took her hand, she did not withdraw it, but said—

“I have a sincere regard—I trust I always shall have—for you, but never anything more.”

“Never! But why?—But you said this moment—I thought you spoke of me so flatteringly, so kindly ——”

“I spoke exactly what I thought. I have the sincerest esteem and regard for all your excellent qualities: I shall always prize, as a happiness in life, the possession of your friendship: mine will be always yours: but my heart—it would be impossible not to trust one who is so trusting, so open as you are—my heart is not mine to give you;” and she drew away her hand, with a deep blush, as she turned from him.

“You are engaged?” exclaimed the duke, with much emotion.

“No, I am not! No human being knows, or, I believe, suspects my attachment: I scarcely acknowledge it to myself. You are the only person I have ever—it is the only reason I can give you: it is the only reason I can give myself for not being able to return—for not being worthy of such a true affection as yours. It is not right, perhaps, to make you my confidant; but I thought that it was but due to you—who have so frankly thrown

your whole soul open to me—I thought it but due to you to be sincere.”

“Thank you,” said he. “Indeed I deserve it;” and he spoke with emotion; “for whatever—however unsuited in other respects, we do agree in openness and truth; and, whatever is to be my fate, I shall for ever recollect, with pride and gratitude, the confidence you have ——”

He paused: she moved as if to walk on—  
“But Mr. Windham,” exclaimed the duke,  
“he has been so friendly to me ——”

“Did you tell my father?” cried she, precipitately.

“No. I knew it was not necessary to ask his leave, and one does not like speaking to a third person in such a case. But why do you ask?”

“Only that he is so fond of you, it would vex him to have you——disappointed.”

“But, dear Lady Umfraville, you say you are not engaged. I cannot despair; I shall not give up all chance;” and his countenance clearing up, almost resumed its usual boyish pleasantness. “I am very hopeful ——”

“ Oh! do not deceive yourself; I did not say I could give you any hope.”

“ No: you gave me none, but I take some, and I shall —— ”

But surely this would not be doing yourself justice; I should feel as if I were using you as ill as possible. Do not deceive yourself.”

“It will not be your fault,” said he, smiling, “if I do. You have done what you could to make me unhappy; but I had rather put it off, if you please, and even though you do not please, I will not despair yet. Your regard, you say, I have; you value me for exactly what I wish to be valued for; and, as you praise my temper, and trust in my honour, I dare to—I do think I could—I know it would be the business of my life to try and make you happy; and, perhaps, you may think so yet yourself.”

“ Be my friend always—my brother.”

“ No, no, my dearest Lady Umfraville, not your brother yet;” and, taking her hand, he kissed it eagerly.

At this instant Lord Cornbury appeared.



An awkward situation for the most assured of men!—and this, the least assured, and most awkward of *mal-rencontrés*, stood colouring all over as if rooted to the ground, and as if he wished it would open under his feet, and swallow him up on the instant.

He stammered out something about the carriage, and Mr. Windham. “I am ready,” said she; and the duke, taking her arm under his, pressed it to his heart, an action which did not escape Lord Cornbury, who, like all purblind intruders, always contrived to see just what he should not.

They all said something as they walked on, but what it was none of them ever knew. They reached the house, and the carriage was ready—Mr. Windham on the steps with Lord Philip, and Mr. Poynings, and the few who remained of the party; their adieus were quickly made, and the duke, as he handed Lady Umfraville into the carriage, whispered, “I *won't* be made unhappy, you see—I will be happy.”

And they drove off.

On looking over the letters which lay on the table, when Evelyn reached her house in town, they looked very uninteresting—notes of invitation for the next fortnight, solicitations from establishments for her patronage, notices of concerts and balls, lists of new books, &c., &c. ; but one, which was as uninteresting as the rest in its direction, she found, on opening, to be from Sir Luttrell Wycherley ; and the very sight of his handwriting was painful to her : it was not in her nature to hate anybody, but she certainly thought of him with very unkindly feelings.

“You ask others to be merciful, can you show none yourself? I heard these words addressed to Lady Barnstaple—‘We all wish you to be merciful ;’ I saw you like an angel descended from its sphere, to mitigate all human passions ; I saw you through the dark inanity of those about you, like a ray of light from Heaven—and that ray was sent for me. This Spirit of Light descended for one at the last ebb of despair ; and passing over, and lulling the waters of strife, saved the wretch

just overwhelmed in the waves! How those angel-words have ever since rung in my ears! How that angel-smile has ever since dwelt in my soul! What forgiveness, what blessing was in that sunny smile! what hope!—Yes, I have dared to hope; spite of your contemptuous spurning, your haughty rejection, I saw your generous soul; I saw that you could not bear that even him you had rejected should be trampled upon and insulted. You asked for mercy for me, will you show none? You have shown it—that very act was forgiveness. It was not the proud condescension of the tyrant beauty, in her pride, exercising, as one of her prerogatives, the power to doom, or to respite. You came in all humility; you whispered your request; you did not stay even to look on the pardoned slave; you gave the manumission, but not as to a bondman, bent and used to blows, but with a gentle touch, that seemed to cherish while it freed.

“And yet you are, perhaps, not free yourself. I am, perhaps, addressing one already destined to another—destined to one,

who, in his pride of place, may well pretend to you.

“I stop ——. If your destiny is fixed, I should say what you could not hear. If—— but I cannot endure the doubt—and yet to hear the certainty were death!

“You return to-day; and if I receive no answer to this, I shall consider it as a permission to present myself once more before you; what you bid me to be I will become. I did not think that mortal lived to whom I could have sued; but you appear not to me as a mortal; you bind me to your service, not by the silver links of a mere material chain, but by the strong, invisible, and indestructible ties of eternal gratitude. You bind no abject slave, but one who has proved his powers to injure—it is yours to make those powers a blessing instead of a curse.

“Only try me, I ask no more. Send me not some deadly words, but let me, lulled by silent forgiveness, find myself once more unscorned in your presence; open the noiseless gates of Mercy; and, instead of the hell

in which I have lived forgotten, let me live once more unscathed in the heaven of your smiles.

“And allow me to subscribe myself,

“Not ‘THE KNIGHT OF THE SCORPION,’

(expiring in its own frenzy fire),

“but ‘THE KNIGHT OF THE WORLD,’

(‘*Todo es poco*’—without thee.)”

At first Evelyn thought she would ask her father to reply to this rhapsody; but fearing that Sir Luttrell’s casuistry might construe it, as not being from herself, as no reply, and as a tacit permission to him to resume his attentions; afraid to write, not knowing what advantage so unprincipled a man might take of any thing—every thing she could say. And yet write she must. “Oh, if it had been to-morrow, I could have said I am engaged: Lord Rupert will surely come to-morrow.” And then, though alone, blushing at this thought, she sat down resolutely to the disagreeable task.

“In that most painful interview with you, —at Umfraville,—I told you that the answer,

the rejection, which I then gave you, was final. What I told you then, I respect now, that answer I consider as final; and if these words seem harsh, it is from my anxiety to prevent any further renewal of a subject so exceedingly painful. Would that I had been spared the grief of thus again wounding your feelings. I beg you to understand that I shall answer no further communication on the subject.

“UMFRAVILLE.

“10th April,  
*Saturday Morning.*”

She showed Sir Luttrell's letter and her answer to her father, and begged him to enclose or direct her letter, and send it by his own man that it might be sure to reach Sir Luttrell that evening, which was done.

“That is over, thank Heaven,” said she. “It is over as far as mercy and forgiveness are concerned,” said Mr. Windham; “but if malice and hatred can work out a revenge, I do not think you have done with Sir Luttrell yet.”

“What revenge could he inflict on me? he has troubled me enough already, I am sure.”

“I really cannot foresee in what way he could annoy you, but that he will continue to do so I have no doubt.”

After taking leave of her father, Evelyn went to a party at Mrs. Bowen's, where she expected to meet Lord Rupert,—nor was she mistaken; for as Mrs. Bowen was making her compliments, she met his eyes as he stood close to the entrance; he bowed, but there was a gravity in the expression of his face, as his look glanced from her countenance to the chair from which hung the concealed cross, that seemed anything but responsive to the deep blush which she was conscious dyed her cheek when she saw him. Not one word of Mrs. Bowen's compliments did she hear; and, fortunately, before that lady had well begun her first sentence about the tournament, another arrival interrupted her, and released Lady Umfraville. Mrs. Yearsley, her *chaperone*, was fully occupied, and Evelyn found herself as nearly as possible *tête-a-tête* with Lord Rupert.

“I should apologize for having addressed you, as it were, anonymously. You and my brother only are aware of the secret; but, had

I known what I now know, I should not have been guilty of such presumption. I thought you would have liked the romance, the wildness; I find it was only folly—I find I mistook. Though acting a part myself, I forgot that others were only acting also.” He stopped for an instant, and then hurried on—“As it is, I can only resign all pretensions as your knight,” giving another and almost contemptuous glance at the chain, and then adding, abruptly, “I wish you every happiness.” He was gone!

And now, again and again, for whole hours of the night, the same round of miserable anxiety was gone over and over. “Had I known what I now know,” Lord Rupert had said; he considered her engaged to the Duke of Plessingham. That unlucky Lord Cornbury, must have told what he had seen. It had not occurred to her at the time: full of her refusal, she had never thought that to him the duke must have appeared a successful lover. How infinitely unfortunate! Had she been less kind to the duke—but how could she be severe to him? Sincere she had been. He



alone knew that she loved, and, if he should discover the object of her love, he must know it to be unsuccessful. And, yet, how agitated Lord Rupert was!—how totally different to anything she had ever seen in him before—so totally unlike the usual cheerful, unembarrassed, easy, self-thoughtlessness of manner: and even in her hopelessness her heart bounded and thrilled to its inmost recesses at the thought—He loves me, and yet he leaves me—leaves me in the belief that I am engaged, that I belong to the Duke of Plessingham. And could he believe that I should have so accepted his trophies,—so received his offering, his token, what he had worn next his heart,—received his and given one in return, when engaged to another? Could he have so misinterpreted?—and “her heart swelled high with pride”—pride and humiliation, conscious of all that she felt, of all her look might have said. Did she not lay her hand in that gauntleted palm?—and she started, in the silence of the night, at what such conduct must have been in one engaged. But if he could believe her capable of such coquetry, he was incapable of compre-

hending her character : he could not love her as she ought to be loved.

But he considered it all a mere tournament scene; he considered her as only acting a part. Still, he believed her going to be married. How could she ever explain? How strange and perverse it was that the only one of her lovers whom she wished to keep would be hopeless, while it was so hard to make the others cease to love !

Morning brought brighter views. She should meet him accidentally, and all would be explained, if she could ever see him not in a crowd! At all events, he would soon perceive that she was not married to the duke, that was a fact which would speak for itself, and she might meet Lord Cornbury. A thousand accidents might occur to set things to rights, and she wondered that she had been the night before so overcome.

On coming out of church, Evelyn and her father were joined by Mr. Mortlake.

“ You have not seen your bust since it was finished?” said he ; and —— is so anxious you should. I think he is unusually pleased

with his own work : I am curious to know whether you will approve of it : I am afraid you are determined not to like it ;” continued he, with his usual aptitude to start, like a half-blind horse, at some unreal object of alarm. Observing a shade of anxious gravity cloud her countenance—“ You are sure you will not like it.”

“ What possible reason have you for thinking so ? If Mr. ——— is so much delighted, I should think he must have flattered me, and so, of course, I shall not fail to be pleased.”

“ You expect me to say you could not be flattered,” said Mr. Mortlake, smiling ; “ but I am not going to say so ! I was sure you had pre-determined to dislike Mr. ———’s performance, because you looked so grave when I mentioned him.”

Evelyn coloured : for, the moment her bust was spoken of, her thoughts had flown to that of Lord Rupert. While sitting for her own, she had been so placed as to command a full view of that of Lord Rupert ; and she had sighed as she thought of the real happiness of her vague romance, contrasted with the disappointment and anxiety of the actual reality.

“You observe very quickly,” said she, “but I assure you I am pre-determined to admire myself.”

“I was charged with a message from ——— : he begged me to tell you that, obedient to Mr. Windham’s orders, he would have destroyed the cast, but that he could not find it. I hope you give him credit for his honesty : he might have concealed the fact for ever : but he candidly acknowledges that it has (but how ? he cannot tell,) disappeared entirely.”

“Pray tell him I do not care at all about it myself ; but I think we had better not imitate ———’s honesty—we need not tell my father the misfortune.”

“Will not Mr. Windham allow anyone to look on your face in marble, or in a cast ?” said Prior Vernon, who had joined them ; “when everybody in this Park, and in every public place, can see you alive every day.”

“You do not know how ‘cruel charming’ I appear in a cast !” said she, laughing.

But Mr. Mortlake took fire—“I perfectly

agree with Mr. Windham in disgust at the idea of his daughter's face being carried about the streets, on trays, by a parcel of Italian boys, with every sort of vulgar image, and common-place heads of everybody."

Evelyn laughed at the humour of Mr. Mortlake, and the idea of her face going about upon trays, and even Mr. Vernon smiled.

"I cannot understand how you can laugh, Lady Umfraville! or what there is to be laughed at in it," said he, very angrily, in answer to Prior's smile; "to make the face of one's daughter or one's friend become current in every house, 'here and there, and everywhere,' and if there is worth 'intrinsical in't,' it is the last reason for letting all the world know it; and it has always seemed to me most ungallant and wrong our having our Queen's head on the coin; it is very well for *his*, but not for her Majesty, to be the 'pale and common drudge.' It shows a want of refinement; it shows that our chivalry is gone."

"It is singular," said Mr. Vernon to Lady Umfraville, "to address a complaint of the

failure of chivalry to you—the object of such a knightly pageant.”

“And Queen Elizabeth had her head on her coins; you do not consider all chivalry lost in her time?”

“Quite: the days of romantic gallantry and pedantic pageants; but the heartsomeness of real chivalry was gone.”

“In the days of Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh, and Lord Essex—the very pattern of heroes,” cried Lady Umfraville, nearly as vehemently as the old gentleman—“no, no, Mr. Mortlake, I will not have a word said against the chivalric gallantry of the days in which those men lived.”

“Gallantry, I give up to you; but chivalry implies something more.”

“What more?” cried she, “more than Sir Philip Sidney?”

Mr. Mortlake, like all people who use exaggerated expressions, and who are warmer than the occasion requires, became calm at Evelyn’s enthusiasm, and rather amused at an eagerness which had been his own five minutes before.

"I am afraid to touch on so very tender a subject," said he, "but I own I have a notion that we are rather worshipping a phantom in the idea we have of Sir Philip Sidney. He did nothing after all so very wonderful."

"The men of Elizabeth's time can hardly be compared to those of Richard the I. or Edward III.'s time; they were a different species: they were men of learning and Protestants," said Vernon. "All these knights and tournaments belong essentially to the days of superstitious barbarism. One is surprised that men and women, and in these times, should even in play, wish to assimilate themselves to such weaknesses."

"Barbarism!" cried Mr. Mortlake; "chivalry, the very cause of civilization, called barbarism! how wicked! What it is to live in these days! Well, I have always thought the public education in England —— Pray, sir, may I ask, were you at Eton or Harrow?"

"Neither, sir; I never was at school."

"You were at Cambridge, then?"

"Yes, I was."

"Ah! so I thought; that accounts for it all,"

cried Mr. Mortlake, striking his cane with all his might on the walk.

"Why should you have supposed Mr. Vernon to have been at Cambridge?" said Evelyn, in hopes of appeasing him.

"I had not a doubt of it; I knew it from his manner of speaking of knight-errantry."

"Unluckily, Mr. Mortlake," said Evelyn; "but perhaps you are not acquainted with the book, 'The Broad-Stone of Honour,' are you?" it was written not only by a Cambridge man, but at Cambridge, I believe, and it is very generous of me to produce this fact in favour of Mr. Vernon's university, when he condemns me and my tournament so pointedly."

"You could not have given a better instance in favour of what I asserted," said Prior Vernon; "we all know what the cause or result of that book was in its author's faith."

"I do not know anything about it," said Mr. Mortlake. "I live very much out of the world."

"You would not be likely to hear of that book in the world, the terrible world," said she with a smile at Mr. Vernon; "for



‘The Broad-Stone of Honour,’ though written in this century, would not be cared for but by those who, like you and me, Mr. Mortlake, think the days of the Crusades better than these days we happen so unluckily to be forced to live in. When you read ‘The Broad Stone,’ which I will lend you, I think that you will allow that one man at least in these degenerated days is worthy to have lived in those of Bayard.”

“Thank you; I like the title. Do you know the author?”

“Not in the least; I have heard his name, which is worthy of his book.”

“Had you this book, which you admire so vastly, as the manual of your tournament? Plessingham must have delighted in it, I am sure,” said Vernon sneeringly.

“I do not know that any—” and she hesitated, “sure that the Knight of the Lily must know and honour such a book. I was not the giver of the tournament; but I never heard the book mentioned by any of the knights, and it could not have been the guide to a mere tilting match; it is a manual of a

true knight's conduct in his errantry in all his life, not in one scene only."

"Ah, that is a book, indeed! not a mere scene like a *tableau* acted, or a quadrille, on horse-back, like Louis the Fourteenth's; anybody can get up such things as well as a Lord Mayor's Show; but the spirit of a gentleman, as it should be in such a book as you describe, Lady Umfraville, belongs to how few!"

"Have you made Plessingham a convert to this model of excellence?" said Vernon.

"I have such veneration for the book, I should never think of mentioning it to any one who could so little value or understand it."

Mr. Vernon's face cleared-up for the first time that day.

"How came he then," said Mr. Mortlake, "to think of so chivalric a proceeding? and so correctly got up and performed as his tournament was. I read the account of it this morning in the papers, mis-doubting the conduct of such a grand attempt; but it seemed, I acknowledge, to be perfect; it could not have been more correct if the the performers had been really Crusaders."

“I am so glad you think so, for my father was the comptroller of it all.”

They smiled and shook hands, and went their different ways, while Evelyn and her father returned home.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE Duke of Plessingham had remained in the country for at least ten days, but he was not dispirited enough to find any longer absence from gaiety necessary. There were several balls about to be, and he had no intention of losing them, and his brother was gone back to his quarters. The first time that he and Lady Umfraville met again was at one of these balls, and his first look was embarrassed, as well as hers; and he did not ask her to dance, nor did he come near her all the evening; which a good deal puzzled the commentators on the newspapers, which had, of course, settled that the fête-giver and the fête-givee must be engaged.

They met frequently, but not intimately; and though she sometimes found his unthinking eyes fixed upon her, with their usual dull

stare of admiration, she flattered herself that he would soon forget all about it.

One night, at the opera, he came into the box before any one else had joined her and her father. "You will like to know that poor St. Leonard, though he was not your knight, has found that he did not fight in vain; at least, that his Sylvia was worthy of his gallant defence of her charms. The fair Gabrielle has renounced her rich *parti*, disobeyed her father in the most heroic style, and has been banished to a *vieille tante*, near Thoulouse, in the most romantic manner."

"That must be very satisfactory to Lord St. Leonard; but her being starved to death, as I suppose she is to be, will not advance their marriage."

"No; but it is a great matter to find her constant; and he hopes something may turn up. You admire their constancy, I am sure."

"Yes, excessively; I only hope it will be rewarded."

"I knew you would be interested in his story, St. Leonard is such a fine fellow. I was immensely sorry for him, when I thought she

had given him up. I was sorry then, but," added he, in a lower voice, as Mr. Windham, either accidentally, in his love of music, or intentionally, in his 'Duenna' character, turned quite towards the stage,—“but, now, I know myself what it is to be disappointed.”

And he left the box. As the door shut, her father looked round—“Is he gone?” said he, as he fixed his eyes for one instant, with a look of displeasure, on his daughter. She coloured very deeply, as he added, “We have seen very little of him since he came to town!” but instantly, as if afraid he had, contrary to his fixed principle of non-interference in his daughter's love affairs, shown the vexation he felt, in his suspicion that she had refused the duke, he added, “We shall meet him, however, at Lady Barnstaple's, to-morrow.”

Evelyn had not told her father of the duke's proposal, for she did not like to vex him by her refusal; and, besides, she had, in spite of her regard for the duke, rather a belief that he would altogether be glad to have escaped matrimony for the present.

Lady Barnstaple's entertainment was mag-

nificent: there was a quadrille of all the Knights that could be collected. As she appropriated the duke to herself, Lady Umfraville had not to be his partner; and, as they scarcely spoke to each other, Lady Barnstaple was quite happy, as it confirmed the contradiction which she had been so zealously giving to all the reports of their engagement. She could not marry the duke herself; nor had she any ambition of having him for her lover; for she was considered a most correct person, whatever Sir Luttrell's conjuration about Count's letters might imply; she only liked to be supposed to manage the duke; and, though her matrimonial speculations in his favour had hitherto failed, she did not despair of fixing some niece or favourite friend as Duchess of Plessingham—at all events, she did not wish Lady Umfraville to have the situation. She thought (and justly) that she had enough without; and, though she would not have allowed it, perhaps, yet she had a notion that Lady Umfraville's abilities were too superior to the duke's, for him to be in love with her, although his looks and manners

had often said the contrary ; and it was a very fair theory, had the duke thought of her powers, and his own weakness. But, as a very amiable man, with a warm, ingenuous heart, he loved her for her beauty and amiability, and her unsophisticated, cheerful kindness.

Mr. Windham considered it right, and Lady Barnstaple confirmed his considerations, that his daughter should also give a Tournament party. And the invitation to all the Knights, and to the Queen of Love and Beauty, and her attendant train, were all from the Lady of the White and Gold ; and Evelyn, with a beating heart, enclosed in a cover to Lord Rupert Conway—"The Lady of the White and Gold hopes that the Knight of the Lily will join his brothers-in-arms. His incognito shall be preserved."

The invitations were almost all successful, but no answer had come from Lord Rupert ; and Evelyn doubted, with extreme anxiety, whether he would come, or whether he would, by a contemptuous silent refusal, show that he considered her, as he had evidently ex-



pressed in their last painful scene, as a coquette, secure of one lover, but not unwilling to palter with another.

The very evening of her ball, while dressing, she received a note directed in a hand the very sight of which thrilled through her heart.

“The Knight of the Lily is unable to obey the summons of the Lady of the White and Gold, as he is unable to appear in character. He has no longer any claim to the title of her knight; he has ceased to act a part; and to accept her invitation in his own character, under the present circumstances, would be an intrusion on her, and most painful to himself.”

How should she ever undeceive him? Lord Cornbury was abroad, and, had he been at home, how could she have made him of any use? She could not go up to him and say, “You were quite mistaken: I was refusing, not accepting, the Duke of Plessingham, and I beg you will tell your brother so.” She could not write to Lord Rupert—“I am not going to be married; I do not want to marry anybody but you, if you please.” He might not please. And again her heart swelled, as she

thought his regard for her could be very slight, if he could understand her so little as to suppose she could have accepted and worn his gift, and given one in return, and all the time engaged to another. And, yet, it was just what she had to all appearance done.

Her rooms were splendid, and splendidly lighted; and, sparkling in jewels, her natural loveliness was heightened by all that dress and ornament can add to beauty.

Sir Luttrell Wycherley was not asked, either as the "World"—*Todo es poco*, or as the "Scorpion," he was deemed a double recreant.

"The Duke of Plessingham" was announced, and though it was impossible, with the eyes of all the curious impertinents of fashion fixed upon her, that her manner should be free from consciousness, there was nothing in her reception of him different from that of any of the other distinguished young noblemen who were her guests.

He was so afraid, too, of being intrusive, that he did not speak to Evelyn, nor attempt to approach her till he could claim her hand, which he could not help pressing as he led her

to her place. He said nothing, however, but continued alternately pulling up his glove and biting one finger of it: which was much more remarkable than anything he could have said, because silence was so very unusual in him!

At last Evelyn asked for Lord Philip; and on that subject he could not be silent. "Yes, I have heard that he had got back. I heard yesterday. He writes longer letters to me than I deserve, though I do write every mail. I really do not think I have ever passed one since he went out."

"That deserves every return, I am sure; it seems to me far beyond the usual standard of brotherly affection."

"But what do I write? Very little more than that I am alive, and that I hope he is the same."

"You mention an extraordinary run with the hounds, or the purchase of an extraordinary fine horse, perhaps."

"Sometimes. You rather overrate my powers of letter writing; I do not often get as far as that. He used to ask several questions in his letters, and expect that I should answer;

but that I did so very seldom, that he has quite given it up since."

"Did you ever read them? Perhaps, the outside of the letter—the direction—was enough for you; it told he was alive, and must have had the use of his right hand, and that is enough, is it not?"

"No, indeed," said he, laughing, "that is too bad: I read, and even re-read his letters: they are very amusing, and he writes a very good hand, at least one that I like, and can read easily, and that is a great help; indeed, we neither of us ever date our letters, for fear of being too particular."

The quadrille over, the duke having led her to a seat, lingered a moment, and then saying—"If I stayed by you now, it would come under the head 'persecution'"—he left her.

She danced with some of the principal knights, who had formed part of the quadrilles. The duke, though he did not again address her, danced every set, to have the pleasure of being near her; but the report of their engagements could hardly be kept up, she thought, when their indifference was so marked.

When Lord Douglas Wilton had taken her back to her seat, Mr. Poynings said to her—  
“Sir Luttrell is not here, I see, in either of his characters.”

“Janus,” said she, smiling, “is hardly a knight-worthy device.”

Then a gay party of young people joined them, eagerly petitioning Lady Umfraville to patronise a grand finale dance of one of those capriccio figures which revive the fitful flashes of expiring gaiety into a bright and final blaze. Her suggestion was command, of course; and, in few minutes, a merry set was formed, glad to prove their superiority of spirits over their departed comrades, and who, in the relaxed guardianship of their weary *chaperones*, and in the absence of the *premiers partis*, all gathered to their gambling-houses, readily accepted the real favourites, or despised younger brother, or low-rated guardsman, for their partners, while Lady Umfraville, in the natural delight in the mere act of dancing—which youth sometimes feels even in London—was in better spirits than she had been all the evening, while thinking that everybody was there but the

person she wished to be there; that she heard every voice but the only one that she cared to hear, and listened with irritation to the thousand foolish compliments of her admirers. The duke, thinking that all dancing was over, was gone; and though this was just the sort of thing he would have liked, Evelyn felt glad of his absence, and glad to be able thus to dance down all reports, by her having had him but once as her partner, and showed herself now so readily to go on without even his presence.

"All the knights are here, I believe," said Miss Fanshaw, who stood next to her, "except the unknown, and the known unknown, Sir Luttrell Wycherley; I have never seen him, but at the tournament, since the Christmas party at Plessy Canons. How odd and rude he sometimes was there, what out of the way things he says!"

"Wycherley?" said George Beamish, "but what splendored things he writes!"

"Dear! I cannot understand them. I wish you would explain them to me."

The idea of the high, sublime, deep, absurd, but really poetic mysticism being interpreted

to a goose by a blockhead, who was anxious to mark, by his style, that he had stepped from the first form to the university in the last month, was rather too good, and Evelyn smiled as Mr. Beamish, adjusting his neck-cloth, said, "that is just the sublime of Wycherley—his writings are difficult, profound, vague, mysterious, but——"

Being called upon for their part of the dance, interrupted this lucid explanation of what was so difficult. The young lady, however, did not let go so fine a subject. She was just old enough to wish to be thought fresh from the school-room, she did *Naiveté*, while her younger sister, whose first season it is, could afford to be less foolish, and she was "remarkably clever for her age." *Naiveté* said, "Now the heroine 'Lucinda,' he says her hair was

"Like a nightingale's soft song

Wafted through night's still loveliness."

"How can hair be like a song?" said *Naiveté* with a most interesting lisp, and appropriate giggle.

Mr. Beamish smiled superior. "Now, to me that appears so full of poetry."

“ So pretty as it is, I am not clever enough to understand it.”

“ It is so difficult to put into prose what is so essentially poetry. He means, you know, that her hair, which was light, you know, seemed as bright as—as—You know the nightingale sings only when other birds are asleep, and everything else is still : that is the simile of it.”

“ Oh ! that is the meaning : it is a simile !” said *Naiveté*.

“ That is just the poetry of it, you know,” said the interpreter. “ The hair shone amongst the crowd, you know, as the nightingale was heard in the night.”

“ Oh ! that is the meaning ! How pretty : is it not, Lady Umfraville ?”

“ Is it ? I have always thought it simply nonsense.”

George Beamish looked rather confounded. He thought he had been very fine, and felt it a pity one who spoke so well, should have spoken in vain. He had a great admiration for Lady Umfraville : the adventure of Rainbow's wound had made him feel great



reliance in her good nature, so that he did not think she meant to ridicule him ; but he felt awe-struck at this sudden desecration of what he had just been at great pains to get up, in admiration for ; because it was the thing at Cambridge, among a set that were considered *the* set at Trinity ; it was the thing to be a reader of Wycherley ; and, so strong was his reliance on the infallibility of these clever fellows, that he ventured to say, “ Do you think all Sir Luttrell’s poetry is nonsense ? ”

“ No, no ! Some of it is real poetry, full of feeling, in beautiful versification—but, at present, I am thinking about the dance.”

## CHAPTER XII.

“WHY did you say you would have known me to be a Cambridge man?” said Prior Vernon to Mr. Mortlake, when they met one morning at Lady Umfraville’s.

“I could pronounce at once, I think, which was Oxford and which Cambridge,” said he.

“But by what?” said Prior.

“Perhaps I could not communicate my reasons for it—the air is different—the style of conceit is quite different. An Oxford man has a sort of High Street step about him always—a look as if he were being looked at there.”

“Nothing against Oxford, if you please,” said Mr. Windham: “Have I the Oxford—have I the High Street step?”

Mr. Mortlake laughed:—“No; you could not have ever had it—it belongs to an Oxford

man of this day. I am of Oxford, and of it still, and have my name on the books, and I often meditate a retreat there, to end my days in a place I love so much. You are of Christ Church ?”

“Yes—and you ?”

“I am of All Souls: and when I walk in those quiet gardens, I wonder that professions or possessions can ever entice one from that peaceful calm, where one is so full of memories of the past, and so undisturbed in the present.”

“And yet you can speak so contemptuously of the High Street step ?” said Evelyn.

“For that very reason: that ‘fine gentleman’ air is so little suited to a denizen of that City of the Illustrious Dead.”

“Would you have everybody ‘lightly tread, ’tis hallowed ground’—creep about as if afraid of disturbing them? Creeping about to find themselves *honourable* deaths ?” said Evelyn.

“What an idea,” said Mr. Mortlake, indignantly, “as if I wished to take away that manly spirit, that pride of port which belongs to us, where every college has its own hero, its own glory; whose lustre every member thinks he

shares in. I never knew so dull an officer in Army or Navy but could boast of where 'ours' was most distinguished, or of the supereminence of H.M.S. Badger, or whatever it might be, over every other in the Royal Navy; nor was there ever so worthless a member of Oxford that could not tell of the worthies of his own particular college."

"Do you forget that our illustrious outnumber yours?" said Prior.

"You do not attempt to say so," cried Mr. Mortlake, angrily, getting up and walking about the room, as he was wont when much confused. "You have so little of Cambridge, the very buildings want the grandeur of ours; it looks so time-worn—so little time-honoured."

"King's College, for instance."

"Yes, King's College, that is all you have."

"But it was of our 'freshmen' that you were speaking, and of which you will find number beats you hollow."

"Number! but I count by weight. Good heavens! to think of such an assertion being ever made; but anybody can assert anything. And so truly, Cambridge—the number, indeed!

as if number was everything! Cambridge superior in her sons to Oxford!"

"I am afraid Cambridge has the superiority in weight as well as number," said Evelyn—Milton, and Bacon, and Newton.

"You against me too! So you support—though your father is of Oxford, you will uphold Cambridge—oh, it is very natural, I suppose—all in the usual course, that you should be on Mr. Vernon's side! Well, it is too hard!—it is always the case—a person I really thought superior; after all the mistakes I have made, I really did think she was above the common race—deceived just as usual—find she will join, set up against her father and me, just merely and solely, and entirely, because the youngest man in company differs from us. Woman! woman! always the same. And yet I really thought—I had really fancied—there was some romance in her. I thought I had found out that her object was really as superior as I had thought herself; but it is always the same—anybody that is a suitable ——"

"My dear Mr. Mortlake," interposed Mr. Windham, whose quiet habits were on the

rack during the outburst of this soliloquy, and who now not knowing what might be coming, broke in with an air of this-is-too-bad—"My dear Mr. Mortlake, what are you talking about. You are not in the gardens of All Souls—you have an audience to your speech."

"Was I speaking?" said he. "I was quite unconscious that I was putting my thoughts in audible words. I really beg everybody's pardon," continued he, on observing the deep blush of Evelyn, and the heightened colour of Prior Vernon, who did not well know whether he was to be affronted or flattered by this crazy old gentleman. Mr. Windham, with well-bred good nature, took down a volume of "Oxford Views," and turned the current of Mr. Mortlake's extravagancies to enthusiasm about the beauty of those palaces of learning.

Vernon stood silently by, looking at Lady Umfraville, not at the prints, till the two elderlies became very happy over their college reminiscences, and "You knew A," and "I knew B," and "C was before my time," and "D was of Oriel," and so on; when he returned to Evelyn, who was arranging an envelope-box.

“Do you find them correct?” said Lady Umfraville to Mr. Mortlake.

“Beautifully so; and Mr. Windham and I have been going over so many of our recollections, for, though he did not enter till I was gone, we knew many of the same people.”

“He is so fond of Oxford. And, though I did, in my liberal zeal, speak the truth for Cambridge, for truth’s sake, I love to hear him expatiate on the beauty and glory of Oxford.”

“Such recollections, indeed,” said Prior, rudely, for he was quite out of humour—“Such recollections are better suited to his time of life than acting leader to the sports of a set of boys, at that nonsense tournament. Do you not think so, sir?”

“No, indeed, I do not. I like to see an English gentleman, of any age, keeping up the old manly English character.”

“An old English gentleman has better objects, or should have more grave and serious employment than taking a part in a play.”

“Play!” repeated Mr. Mortlake, firing up. “Play! to put the noble sport of our ancestors—a gallant passage of arms, where each man’s

strength and skill are brought to the test—a play! as if on a level with a set of hiring puppies, performing what they do not care about! To preside at these fine trials of skill and courage was always the privilege of our knightly Nestors.”

Mr. Windham, the knightly Nestor, returned with his folio; and Evelyn joined them, as they looked over the prints.

“One has more feeling, when one really sees people and places as they were in the days of our ancestors, looking from the top of the Radcliffe, than anywhere else in the world,” said she.

“I would rather look at our universities, rejoicing that they were emancipated from the trammels of popery and superstition, than as belonging to the darkness of our unreformed ancestors,” said Prior.

“Wonderful power it was,” said Mr. Mortlake, “the melting these ancient institutions into the Reformation—keeping the good and avoiding all the evil of monastic foundations.”

“What is the good?” said Mr. Vernon.

“All the discipline and seclusion, and, above all, the preserving the old reverend buildings.



No new institution, however excellent in itself, can match the long-established associations and powers over the human mind which these old walls maintain."

"Oxford, indeed, seems fast relapsing into the dark ages, ——," began Mr. Vernon; but the announcement of a party of lady-visitors put an end to the conversation.

Though Mr. Windham was superior to manœuvring, and would have scorned to use any arts to secure a principedom for his daughter, yet he did not consider himself as infringing on his rule of not meddling in his daughter's love affairs, to ask the Duke of Plessingham to dinner one day, without telling her of it. He did not understand about him: he perceived that he kept aloof, and he half feared he was refused; but, hoping it was not so bad as that, he thought it might be only some misunderstanding; so, finding him only engaged to his club, he begged the duke would dine alone with Lady Umfraville and him. He accepted the invitation; and when her father announced it to Evelyn, she made no objection.

"Shall you be at the Queen's Ball, to-morrow?" said the duke to Evelyn.

"Certainly!" It was the only place where she had now any hope of seeing Lord Rupert. She had gone, in vain, to two Horticultural Shows, having been rewarded for her pains only by meeting Lord Ipswich, who praised her for her florist tastes, and said, Rupert was so much engaged, he could not come. While she was considering the chances of his being at the Palace on this occasion, the duke went on—

"That will be something for ball lovers; but, I assure you, every *fête* since yours and Lady Barnstaple's has seemed so flat: our Tournament folk gave such a zest to them."

"I was afraid," said Evelyn, "that you would have been disgusted at the second *rechauffé* of your own feast."

"Oh! no. So good a thing, as all the world agrees the Tournament was, cannot re-appear too often; it is not yet old or out of season.—But, by the way, have you heard Wycherley's last adventure? It is rather too bad."

"What has he been doing?" said Mr. Windham.

“Oh, have you not heard? By the bye, it was only this morning Darrell was telling me—so childish, really. He went, last Sunday, and preached at St. Something, in the City.”

“Has he turned preacher? That is a droll change,” said Mr. Windham.

“No, no! not at all!—but he got hold of some unfortunate curate there, who wanted his duty done while he went to be married, or something of that sort; and he went to him, all in black, and so clerical looking, and the poor fellow, in his hurry, never thought it could be a wolf in such respectable sheep’s clothing, and Wycherley came over him so with the Bishop of Peterborough, and a great deal, and touched up the character so to the life. The fellow swallowed the whole, open-mouthed, and Wycherley performed the whole service; and how the deuce he knew his way through the Prayer-Book is what puzzles me, for he has not been at church, I am sure, since he was at chapel, at Cambridge: but he got through it all, and preached a most eloquent sermon. He is a wonderful fellow, to be sure: he can do anything. But, as ill-luck would have it, a

woman who had seen him in his own character, and who was now obliged to debase herself by serving some linen-draper, in the City, was at this very church ; and whether she had not been bribed high enough by him formerly, or thought he had had a hand in turning her off, I don't know, but she went straight to her linen-draper master, who went to the church-wardens, or whatever the authorities there are called, and they were in a regular taking, and posted off to the Bishop of London, and he has the whole story, and the poor curate has been annihilated, and a deal about licenses and præmunires that are beyond me ; but Wycherley has disappeared : not that it is anything new in him, but he has hid remarkably well this time ; no one has an idea where he is, but he is printing his sermon ; and, Darrell says, he hears the bishop got such a clever letter from him to-day. Such a fancy for Wycherley, of all things in the world ! ”

“ It is curious how he tries all characters in turn,” said Mr. Windham. “ He is a knight-errant to-day, and to-morrow a parish preacher ! ”

"I never read a sermon in my life, I think," said the duke, "and never read anything that I can possibly avoid ; but I really think I will read Wycherley's sermon."

Evelyn was amused at the story, especially in thinking what Prior Vernon would say of it. How infinitely shocked he would be at the wickedness of the transaction ! But, much more, how his vanity would be hurt to the core at this abandoned sinner taking up and surpassing him in his own trade ! For, though Mr. Vernon did not, Evelyn had good reason to know that Sir Luttrell could be religiously eloquent.

"I dare say his sermon will sell as well as any of his poems," said Mr. Windham. "Everybody will be curious to know what Sir Luttrell Wycherley could say in a church."

"I hope he will give the profits of it to the poor curate," said Evelyn.

"He should, indeed," said the good-natured duke. "I was sorry for the poor man ; but Darrell said some good-natured old gentleman had sent him money, and assured him he should not starve for his folly."

Lady Umfraville had no doubt that the benevolent old gentleman was Mr. Mortlake.

“Wycherley certainly succeeds in making a sensation, which is his great object, I believe,” said Mr. Windham.

“That it is,” said the duke. “He would murder anybody this minute, I am sure, for the pleasure of the fuss the newspapers would make about it, if it was not for the unpleasant chance of being hanged.”

“He will not stop till he does something irretrievable,” said Mr. Windham. “He has no character to lose; his life can be no great pleasure to him, and his death would be a riddance to society.”

“He would not like to die, though,” said the duke, “as long as he could find ways o making people stare. And though they would stare very much at his hanging, it would be poor consolation to him, as he could not see the account of it in the papers afterwards.”

“He is about eight-and-thirty now, I think,” said Mr. Windham, “from the date of his birth; but, if one was to count his life by his adventures, he would be in his grand-climacteric by

“He is forty, I declare,” said the duke ; “he has been before the public so long. I remember, when I was at Harrow, hearing of his walking about London with a tame leopard, and going into Lady Croydon’s assembly with the beast. It was one of those great mobs people used to have—a regular crush ; and, in their fright at Sir Luttrell and his leopard, the crowd was nearly crushed to death ; but some lady, whom Wycherley was making a fool of then—it is so long ago, I do not recollect who it was—but she, wanting to show her own courage, and please him, began playing with the leopard, throwing her scarf over his head and pulling it away, and such pretty little kitten sports, till the brute, despising this mere cats’ play, got into a fury and scratched the lady’s beautiful hand ; and, when he had tasted the blood, he would have torn her all to pieces in a minute. I really forget the end of it, except that the beast was killed, and Sir Luttrell dismissed.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

AT the moment that Evelyn discerned Lord Rupert that night at the palace, she was instructed that she and the Duke of Plessingham were named for the Royal quadrille ; and as the duke, with eager gratitude, was thanking her for her generosity to his friend, as he was leading her to her place, they were in full view of Lord Rupert. She had expected to meet, and hoped to speak to him ; a look, indeed, she thought might convince him ; but she had not foreseen her commanded acceptance of the duke as her partner ; and to look with a friendly air at Lord Rupert, while her hand was on the duke's arm, and while he, in the eagerness of his interest in Lord St. Leonard's happiness, must have the air of triumphing in his own, she felt that such a look must have the appearance of childish coquetry or insolent scorn ; not to look at



all would have the appearance of being ashamed to meet him. These thoughts did not, as actual thoughts, pass through her mind, but their result appeared, as they passed Lord Rupert, when she bowed very slightly, as she met his eye more fully, perhaps, than she had ever done before, with a grave and almost haughty expression: in such a momentary expression there could not be much; but she felt as she looked—"if you think me a coquette, you are not worth my thinking about."

During the quadrille, she was aware he was close behind her; and even at the hazard of being out in the figure—a crime not to be thought of when your *vis-à-vis* is partner to a Queen—she turned her head; but at that instant some one spoke to him, and she did not know whether he even perceived the movement; but as in the changes of the figure, she came opposite to where he stood, she had a full view of him: he was listening to his next neighbour; but she perceived his eyes turned towards her place, and follow her through the figure. She thought he looked pale and melancholy—perhaps it was fancy—perhaps he was

only over-worked—could he have<sup>e</sup> leisure to grow pale about a woman's smile? and yet his emotion, when he left her at Mr. Bowen's, seemed enough to make his heart ache in the loneliness of official life, surrounded with uncongenial, even sympathetic beings; and in the pauses of mental and bodily exertion, it grieved more than it flattered her to think that he might be unhappy.

The quadrille was over, and the duke said, as he led her to her seat—"Conway looks very grave at me; I must go and make my peace with him, and promise to be a good boy. The fact is, I have not been in the House this session, so I will go and beg his pardon, and promise to be there to-morrow."

Had the duke ever possessed the slightest penetration, or had his brains been capable of holding more than one idea at a time, he would have perceived enough in his partner's countenance when he said Lord Rupert looked grave upon him, to have ascertained him at once to be his rival. He saw nothing, however, and hurried off in search of Lord Rupert. She could not see either of their countenances, but

their conference seemed very short. The duke moved away, and she almost expected he would come to her. She had been startled by the beginning of the duke's speech, and felt quite re-assured when he came to "the House."

Lord Rupert, as the duke left him, went to speak to the Queen; and as her Majesty turned to some one else, Evelyn observed him to stand still and silent, as if in a reverie, which is an unseemly state for a minister to be in, anywhere, but more especially at a ball, in his Sovereign's presence. A flutter of young gentlemen were all this time hovering round Lady Umfraville, and she spoke to them, of course, but all through she watched Lord Rupert. He seemed to shake off his abstraction; as he moved across the room, she thought he was coming towards her, but he was stopped by a mother and daughter, to whom he spoke, and afterwards he disappeared, and she saw him no more that evening.

Lord Ipswich had been so much pleased at Lady Umfraville's continued botanical zeal, to which he reasonably attributed her regularity at the horticultural shows, that he and Lady

Ipswich begged her and Mr. Windham to come to his villa again the first fine day. Next Sunday was fixed on, because on Sunday she thought Lord Rupert would be at his father's; and to Richmond they went; and though Sunday is not an agreeable day for the river, they went by water; for it was one of Mr. Windham's fancies that his daughter should have her own barge, and her boatmen in her livery, as they could embark from their own garden.

Lord and Lady Ipswich were very friendly and agreeable, though a good deal occupied with their grand-children, Lady Matlock's sons from Westminster, and daughters from the school-room, all wild with the freedom and freshness of the grassy lawn.

"Rupert should be here by this time," said Lord Ipswich, as they were going to the conservatories. "I told him my new cactus was to blow to-day, and I said I hoped you would be here."

"What a pity!" thought Evelyn.

No Lord Rupert appeared. The gardens were most minutely explored; an early dinner

was over; Mr. Windham did not wish to be late, and, just as the boat was pushed off, Evelyn saw Lord Rupert alight from his horse at the hall-door.

She felt exceedingly hurt, and sighed, as they glided swiftly on, in a lovely May evening, when all seemed so happy in nature; even the vulgar happiness of the enfranchised citizens, whose wherries passed them every moment, and the moving crowd on the shore, might have gladdened a heart at ease; for a fine Sunday in London, though it has none of the holy calm of a country Sabbath, none of the poetry of rustic joy, none of the picturesqueness of the Continental merry-makings, is still a fine sight in the parks and on the river, out of smell and hearing of gin-palaces, where one sees the demon of merry-making fairly laid for four-and-twenty hours; all Her Majesty's subjects—from the Lord High Chancellor to the cheesemonger and chandler—enjoying the mere enjoyment of existence. On a fine Sunday in London nature really seems to reign from high to low—lawyers see their wives' faces, and hear their children's voices; and fat citizens stroll

about with their little train of fac-similes behind them, so pleased and so proud; and if there are fine ladies so fine as to stay in their houses, for fear they should be contaminated by their meaner fellow-citizens' vulgar joys, the more is the pity!

Lady Umfraville was not a fine lady, though a fine woman; and she had often gazed at the happy homes which were grouped about the trees in the parks with the sympathy of a kind and happy heart, and a thinking mind; but she was not happy now; she was vexed, disappointed, and anxious. Would that I had never seen him! thought she. Would that I had still lived in the phantom worship of the past! Would that I had not met him at that unfortunate party! If I had not gone there he would have come, perhaps, next morning; and I should have seen him alone, and all might have been explained, if I had but had time to have said, "If you had known what." Above all, would that I had never taken that unlucky stroll in the grounds at Plessy Canons! What had I to do admiring the prospects there? and why did that most

ill-fated of blunderers, Lord Cornbury, appear just at the most ill-fated moment?

Saddened by these reflections to a degree of sadness she had never felt before, she was so silent, and gazed so abstractedly upon the water, that her father said :—

“My love, you have been tired with that old friend of mine and his flowers. I am fond of a garden myself; but a *fanatico* of that sort, like poor Lord Ipswich is, bores one, and becomes, mentally and bodily, wearisome.”

Evelyn said she was not tired, and began to praise Lord Ipswich, the gardens, and the children; and Mr. Windham was contented.

“The Duke of Plessingham and Lord St. Leonard” were announced one evening, just as Lady Umfraville had come down, dressed for the opera, and was waiting for her father.

“I beg your pardon, for coming at such a strange hour,” said the duke, his countenance all radiant with pleasure; but I determined to try if we could catch you, and was so glad to see your carriage at the door.”

Mr. Windham entered and paid his compliments, and asked the duke if he was

coming to the Opera ; but he declined, saying he was engaged to St. Leonard, and they went off, to Evelyn's satisfaction, as she saw, as she had seen before, Lord Rupert in his sister's box, which was nearly opposite hers, and had observed his glass fixed again and again, though but for a moment at a time, upon her. He did not attract remark, but she was well aware that at every possible instant he was looking at her. Admirer after admirer came into her box, and his glass regularly took cognizance of each. He must see that the duke does not come into my box ; he must observe that I still wear the chain : Lord Rupert Conway cannot be an idiot : if he never looked at me it would not signify, but as he does, why cannot he come round and speak to me ?

Presently she perceived Lady Matlock's glass fixed on her, and then she spoke to her brother. What worlds would Evelyn have given to have heard his reply ? She ventured at that instant to fix her glass on their box : he looked very grave—his sister was smiling—was she in his confidence ?



Mr. Windham, whose whole soul was in the music, did not care much for the ballet ; and, during it, he kept up some conversation with the young gentlemen who appeared, for Lady Umfraville was not very attentive to what they said. At last, Lord Rupert left his box ; the door of her's opened soon after—it was not he.

Evelyn was mortified, and she felt so vexed that she did not receive the duke very cordially, when he called, next day.

“ You could not attend the Lords, last night ? ” said Evelyn. “ Did you not say you meant to make your peace by so doing ? ”

“ Yes ; I told Conway I was quite ashamed of not having been in the House all the Session, and he said, more severely than I have ever heard him say anything, ‘ I do not wonder you are ; ’ and when I said ‘ I shall go to-morrow, ’ he said ‘ I hope you will ; ’ and turned away. But there was, luckily for me, ‘ no house ; ’ as I was with St. Leonard, I really could not have gone.”

“ But I have excellent news for you : Lord Droitwich has consented to his son's marriage

after a deal of persuasion, and St. Leonard was off for Paris this morning."

"And will the Melanies agree to so bad a match?" said Evelyn.

"He thinks they must give in: and, after all, the Droitwiches, though not rich here, are richer, I am sure, than the Melanies—those French noblesse are poverty itself."

"I cannot say I approve of French women coming into English families," said Mr. Windham.

"It is a pity, of course," said the duke; "but the Melanies are immensely respectable, and all that sort of thing; besides, there are so many English ladies married to French men—very complimentary to our fair countrywomen, I am sure; how many more English wives are there in France than French wives in England. I suppose there is not a town, that might be called a town, in France, where there are not one or two English families."

"They had better have stayed at home," said Mr. Windham.

"I must say I think Paris a delightful place for a little while. It is too late for it

now : the Tournament kept me here this Spring ; but, last year, I went there, in February, and stayed to the Carnival, and it was charming."

"It must have been for a little while, indeed," said Evelyn.

"Just a fortnight ; but a fortnight industriously employed will do a good deal. It was a hard frost ; there was no hunting, and parties, except what the English give, are so early there, that one can find sleep enough to keep up during the day."

"It is all very well in the evenings," said Mr. Windham ; but the mornings at Paris, if you do not spend them in the Galleries, are very tiresome."

"The streets look so gay," said Evelyn : "I used to like the mere driving through the streets."

"To be sure, my dear Evelyn," said her father, "for you were a mere child : but that everlasting calling at this boudoir, and that, is so unmanly and un-English !"

"Stupid ! Intolerable !" said the duke. "I tried it one day, but it was not in my style

at all. I found, always, plenty of English riding parties or *Montagne Russe*, I do not know what, for the mornings; but the evenings are the pleasure at Paris; the balls and the theatres are perfection. I am so fond of good acting, and, if there is any here, somehow, one never sees it; but I believe there is none; one cannot get to the theatre in time ever here: but I never laughed more than at some of the little theatres at Paris, they do those things so uncommonly well!"

As the duke uttered these abominable words, "French theatres," Prior Vernon was announced; and the duke, seeing his condemnatory countenance, immediately took leave.

## CHAPTER XIV.

As Lady Umfraville shook hands with Mr. Vernon, he said—"An old friend, like my father, an old play-fellow, like myself, deserve, I think I may say, a little more confidence than the rest of the world. You think me undeserving of your regard, I know," said he with emotion; "but that cannot change my regard for you. I asked Mr. Windham, when you returned to town, if there was any truth in the report; he answered rather ambiguously—and now I see the duke here!"

"Well, what then?"

"You cannot pretend to be ignorant that all the world have reported that you are engaged to the Duke of Plessingham."

"I wish that, as the French '*faire parte de la mariage*' of their friends, one might '*faire*

*part* of one's NOT engagement, and leave it with one's card at everybody's door; it would save so much trouble and annoyance.

"You mean to say that you are not engaged to the Duke of Plessingham, if you will not be displeased at my speaking so plainly."

"I am not engaged to him. If I had been, I should have told so kind a friend as your mother directly."

"Thank you," cried Vernon, with a more joyful expression of countenance than she had seen him wear since his successful election.

"It is very hard that all the world will trouble themselves with the affairs of people who are nothing to them," said Evelyn.

"But you are a great deal to the world, and such are the penalties of greatness—Do you think the pleasures counterbalance them?"

"That is a question that people have been debating since the Creation, and have not settled yet. One does not choose the lot to which one is born; we can only make the best of what we are doomed to."

"Providence." Providentially Mr. Windham interrupted his speech, not looking extremely

well pleased at the *tête-à-tête*. He could not make out about the duke; and strongly suspecting that he had been refused, he was willing to lay the blame on the first young man he saw; and he had, besides, a fear that some lurking reminiscence of childhood, and the wonderful power which a penitent has over the female heart, with inconstancy to be abjured, and constancy so long kept up, he was afraid that Mr. Vernon might be successful after all. He little knew that the romance of Lord Rupert had begun almost with childhood; he was too common-place, and unromantic himself to be at all aware of the *longanimité* of his daughter's contempt for so weak a character as Prior Vernon's, and he felt quite annoyed at his unusually cheerful countenance.

"What do you think of Sir Luttrell Wycherley's having taken your office of lay preacher?" said he to Prior.

"Has he been preaching here?" said Prior, with a look of terror.

Evelyn felt a little terrified too; for she was sure her father must be displeased with her, or he would not have introduced Sir Lut-

trell into his conversation when Mr. Vernon was present.

“No; but have you not heard of his sermon in the City?”

“I have, with disgust—I only wish he could be as severely punished as he deserves; but there is no catching him; and his sermon is to be published to-morrow, and everybody will read it, and admire it too, I dare say. People who have never listened to or read a really enlightening discourse by a pious preacher, will all be wild after what is said by this reprobate.”

“And if what he says is true, is it to be disbelieved, because he says it?” said Mr. Windham.

Evelyn was almost amused at her father’s defending Sir Luttrell, and wondering why he should seem so cross to Mr. Vernon, she said—

“The finest doctrine would appear travestied coming from the pen of Sir Luttrell.”

“How right and just!” cried Vernon, triumphantly.

“If we were to inquire into the private history or inmost thoughts of every writer or



preacher that we admired," said Mr. Windham, "our admiration would be very much limited, I think. We have no right to scan people's motives so closely. And how do you know," continued he, with a sneer, very unusual in him,—“how do you know that Sir Luttrell Wycherley has not had ‘a call’ as well as yourself?”

“I should rejoice with all my heart, if he had,” said Prior, with real magnanimity; “we should never despair. But you are only joking, I know, Mr. Windham: you must be as well aware as I am that if Sir Luttrell really wished to do good—if he had been at last really enlightened, he would not have commenced his career with a deceit—a trick which may have ruined his victim, the poor curate, and by a deliberate and scandalous insult to the Established Church.”

“I quite agree with you,” said Evelyn. “There is something so perfectly revolting, in having the holiest words, and most hallowed place profaned by his uttering them—insulted by his presence.”

She did not see Prior's look of delighted

sympathy, for she was leaving the room to get ready for a ride; and, the horses being announced, Prior took his leave.

“Stay, Evelyn,” said her father, gravely; “I want to speak to you. Why do you encourage Mr. Vernon again?”

“I did not mean to encourage him in the least.”

“Why do you discourage the Duke of Plesingham, then?”

“Because I want to put an end to the reports that there have been about us.”

“Do you mean to say you would refuse him, if he proposed to you?”

“My dear father, do not look displeased with me, I cannot bear it. I have refused the duke. I did not like to tell you, because I thought that he would think no more about it.”

Mr. Windham was silent with mortification. Evelyn took his hand—“You cannot really wish that I should marry the duke? You think of him just as I do, or you did quite agree me, that he is just a very good-natured man, and very good-humoured; but hardly agreeable, even as an acquaintance.”

"I do not think him a fool, by any means," said her father.

"No, not a fool; but not very wise."

"You cannot but admire his zeal for his friends?"

"Exceedingly; I think him one of the most kind-hearted people I ever saw, and I liked his deference to you, at the tournament, of all things. I hope we shall always have him for our friend."

"But why not as more? I tell you fairly, I prefer him as a son-in-law above all the men who have ever addressed you. A man of the highest rank, and vast fortune; totally unspoiled, and unselfish; and of an honourable, unblemished character, and very well-looking. I really think any woman might be perfectly happy with such a man."

"Any woman! but you do not consider me as any woman, I am sure," said she, gaily.

"Mr. Windham half smiled, and said, "You are more gifted by nature and fortune than any woman I know, certainly, but ——"

"But why, then, should you wish me to run the risk of changing that fortune?"

“How would you change it? By uniting yourself to an excellent man, perfectly suited to you in rank and position, you would only increase and confirm your happiness, and, of course, add most exceedingly to mine.”

“I do not think it would add to my happiness, it would lessen it exceedingly; and I am sure that would not be any satisfaction to you.”

“It would not, of course. To be sure, my dearest child, your happiness is the one sole object of my existence, and that is the very reason I wished to secure it by giving your hand to a man who, I feel certain, would be devoted to you”

“You do not like to give up your own power, I believe,” said he, sincerely.

“He would always be very attentive and good-natured; but he is nothing more.”

“Have I been so very fond of my own way?—have you found me unwilling to ask your advice? In what have I ever —— I meant, at least, always to defer to your will,” said she, with tears in her eyes.

“My dear Evelyn,” said her father, kissing

her, "do not let me bring tears into your eyes on any account. You are, and have always been, the most dutiful of daughters; and, though legally your own mistress for nearly two years, you have never made the slightest effort to assert your own independence; and, beyond signing your name when I asked you, you have never ——"

"Oh, yes, I have, though; you forget I did disobey—not disobey, exactly, for you did not command me; but I did differ from you, and did act as my own mistress, in my own wilful way, about the tenants' votes, last year, at the election."

Mr. Windham smiled, as he looked fondly at his daughter. "Yes, I had forgotten that whim, but it was the only whim you ever had; and when you are so ready to yield to a father's authority, I cannot understand why you should dread any other."

"It is not that I dread the duke's authority; on the contrary, I fear his want of it. It is not that I should like to submit; but that I should never have that respect—that reliance on him that I ought to have. It is not his

want of devotion to me that I fear, but his having too much. It is very agreeable, and all right, I suppose, in a lover ; but I would rather feel devotion to him. You know I could never look up to the Duke of Plessingham. On what subject, but the choice of a yacht, or a well-seasoned hunter, could he possibly give me any advice ? On what could I ever consult him, or rely on his judgment ? Not even about the arms on the panel of my carriage," said she, laughingly. " You know he does not know a chevron from a saltire ; and if he recollects his grandfather's christian name, it is the utmost extent of his genealogical erudition ; and, you know, his oldest barony is only of Elizabeth, and his father was the first duke—altogether a deplorable connection for the twenty-third representative of the title of Umfraville ! "

Her father smiled, but he did not tell his daughter how much all this had really weighed on his mind, against all the duke's personal merits, and strawberry leaves to boot.

She went on :—

" Fancy how ill it would look in the blazon-

ing, for me to begin in one corner of the vellum sheet up at the very tip-top, and then more than half-way down, opposite to my fifteenth coronet, this poor, pitiful Elizabethan title, and just at the very end, only a George III. coronation-title of his dukedom ! Awful ! perfectly. So do not let us keep the horses waiting any longer. You are not displeased now, I know ; and so I am quite contented."

There was the " Expedition " vessel at Woolwich, which it was " the thing " to go to. Mr. Windham went, as it was right to go, and Evelyn, because she had never been on board such a vessel. They arrived early, so as to be able to see everything, which is not easy when a mob of fine ladies are filling every hole and corner, as they do in one of those rages which seizes them for seeing what they cannot understand, and do not care for : tormenting the sailors, and trying, to the utmost, but never exhausting, the gallantry and patience of the officers, who go through the business of showmen, over and over again, several times a day, to some thousands, out of whom, perhaps, one hundred want to see what they are looking at,

and really listen to, and comprehend what they hear. How must all this idle show contrast afterwards with the hardships and dangers which these gentlemen have subsequently to go through !”

Now, however, the vessel was in gallant trim, and all the officers in high spirits, casting all care away, and living as if the world contained no danger—no occupation but attention to the ladies and gentlemen who tormented them.

Just as Evelyn and the captain emerged upon deck, Lord Rupert Conway stepped on it. He could have as little expected to meet Lady Umfraville there, and at that unfashionable hour, as she had thought of meeting him ; and, in spite of his official training, he changed colour as he saw her. They just bowed, and, as he shook hands with the Captain, Evelyn said, “ I shall be in your way, now, as you will want to show everything to Lord Rupert ; ”—and there was the slightest possible, but still perceptible quiver in her voice, as she pronounced the name—“ I will sit down till my father comes up.”



"Have you been pleased?" said Lord Rupert, in a constrained manner.

"Most exceedingly interested, and so much obliged to Captain —— for his kindness."

"Oh! I was only too happy," said the captain, who spoke quite truly, proud of having so lovely a person leaning on his arm.

"I am only detaining you now ; Lord Rupert has come early, in hopes of seeing the vessel in peace ; he could hardly have expected to find any one here before him."

"As you have been so much interested, you would not dislike to see some things again, perhaps," said Lord Rupert, politely. "We will not waste Captain ——'s time with apologies : will you show me the new wheel at the helm."

They walked along the deck, Lord Rupert on the other side of the captain. And her heart beat, when she observed, that at the moment the captain took hold of the wheel to exhibit its powers, the eyes of Lord Rupert were fixed, not on its revolutions, but on the chain round her neck. There was something that would have been fascinating to every one,

but which was ecstatical to Evelyn's romantic love, to perceive the natural folly of a young man of an enthusiastic heart, breaking through all the acquired restraint of a minister, and making him, for the moment, utterly incapable of attending to what he came to see ! He glanced from the chain to her countenance ; their eyes met, and both their countenances expressed—"What am I to understand ?" One momentary look of passionate admiration did he give, but as Captain ——— at this instant turned from the wheel to Lord Rupert, he said—"Would you shew that movement again to me, for I acknowledge I do not quite understand it."

"Your lordship is not so quick as Lady Umfraville, then," said the captain, laughing ; "for she understood it, and proved she did, at once !"

Lord Rupert looked again at her, but her eyes sunk under the expression of his ; it was not that he looked displeased, certainly ; and as Mr. Windham at this moment joined her, she felt a glow of happiness she had never experienced before.

“Come, my dear,” said her father, “we are only in the way now.”

“Thank you,” said she, shaking hands with the captain, who, giving her his arm, insisted on leaving his first lieutenant to finish the explanation, while he re-conducted Lady Umfraville, who could only bow to Lord Rupert and depart.

It is to be hoped that the rest of Her Majesty’s ministers, who honored Captain —— with their visit, were more attentive than Lord Rupert was that day.

Evelyn was so gay, and admired the vessel so much, that her father said, he was afraid of her going on the expedition.

She found on her table “From the author. A Sermon, preached at St. ——, by Sir Luttrell Wycherley.” The word “Sermon” and Sir Luttrell Wycherley, in juxta-position, seemed comical, certainly. She read it, and it was so eloquent, that carried away by its apparent fervour, she found it difficult to believe that it could have been written by one so perfectly insincere : it was evidently the same hand that had concocted the letter to

Mr. Vernon. She was still reading it when Mr. Poynings called.

“You are reading Wycherley, I see.”

“Have you read it?”

“No, I only this moment saw it at my bookseller’s; but you have a presentation copy of course? He has certainly come out in a new form—a new edition of Sir Luttrell, not enlarged, but much corrected. Do you admire it?”

“It is very eloquent; and if I had read it without knowing it to be his, or without knowing the circumstances in which it was preached, I should have really admired it: as it is, one can only feel disgust at the audacity of the whole proceeding.”

“Nobody but Wycherley would have thought of such a thing; I should have liked, I must confess, to see how he looked in a surplice! The only thing I wonder at is, that he did not get into some more fashionable part of the town. If he could have appeared at some of the west-end chapels, what a sensation he would have produced.”

“He could not, I suppose,” said Evelyn, “or he surely would.”

“Fancy the sensation!” continued Mr. Poynings, “Truths divine coming from his tongue, whether mended or marred, would have been listened to.”

“So well-known as he is here, he could hardly have attempted it.”

“He is known to us, but I suppose he has not much acquaintance with the clergy, even at this end of the town.”

“But to appear before all whom he has been in the habit of meeting in such a different character, I scarcely think even his impudence could have got through with it.”

“You quite undervalue his powers, they are not to be daunted by any weakness of that sort; shyness is not his defect, and he has already practised it so much that he can hardly help changing—he could hardly stick to his natural character now.”

“Has he any?”

“In one sense, certainly not; but Sir Luttrell Wycherley *proper* exists still, in all the various dresses that are put on the pasteboard figure; the face remains the same in all his transformations, the harlequin, though in a

mask, is the same harlequin still ; the same indestructible vanity and impudence ; and by this trick, he has, for the present, put himself out of society, so that society have at least something to thank him for."

"They are very ungrateful then, for he has so often furnished it with something to wonder at, now more particularly certainly, when people are getting worn-out rather."

"I cannot say you appear so," said Mr. Poynings ; "you have no need to take any cordial of extra wonder to renew your spirits, nor even of flattery to preserve your bloom."

"It is a pity to waste it upon me ; is it not ?"

"I should be very sorry to attempt it ; I have seen it tried so often upon you without the slightest apparent effect."

"It is only that you have not seen the right dose administered yet ; no one can by intuition know at once the strength and nature of the potion which will suit each patient, some heads will stand a dose that would turn one, when a much weaker, only of the right sort for that constitution, will upset another."

"I have never seen that right sort and right measure."

He was interrupted by Mr. Windham.

"Will you come with us, Poynings, on Saturday? We are going to Greenwich, by water, for the young Vernons: I have just arranged it with Lady Amery, my dear," continued he, to Evelyn.

"I shall be delighted," said Mr. Poynings.

"You shall not be asked to go, if it is not a perfectly fine day when we set out; and, as we cannot depend on the evening, you shall have abundant boat-cloaks provided for you."

"You do not forget my horror of your airy proceedings at Plessy Canons; but it is not Christmas now."

"From Lord Ipswich, my lady," said a footman, who brought in a packet.

"Disagreeable business this, at Constantinople," said Mr. Windham—an observation which luckily turned Mr. Poyning's eyes from the daughter to the father, or he might have been so puzzled at the crimson of her cheeks, that he might have puzzled out the truth of why a packet from old Lord Ipswich should

cause such emotion: it caused her so much that she retreated to the next room to open it. In that instant of time which elapses between the receiving and the opening of a letter, everyone knows how many strange hypotheses may pass through the mind; and, at the sight of this packet, it darted into her thoughts, that it really contained a letter from Lord Rupert, who only adopted his father's name to baffle the servants concerned in its transmission. But when she opened it, there appeared only a printed pamphlet—"Report of the Horticultural Society"—really from Lord Ipswich himself, with a few lines to say he was going down, with Lady Ipswich, to Kent, and sent this before his departure; which interesting intelligence Evelyn immediately communicated to her father and Mr. Poynings.



## CHAPTER XV.

THE evening was passed—no letter from Lord Rupert arrived; nor did one come in the morning. As soon as it was possible that visitors could call, Evelyn became extremely anxious; for Mr. Windham had set off early for Somersetshire, where he was obliged, by the sudden death of his steward, to go, and to remain till Monday; and she dreaded that Lord Rupert should call, and be rejected in the general rule of exclusion against young men in her father's absence. She could not go and tell the porter to except Lord Rupert Conway. She desired him, however, to tell any one who called, that Mr. Windham was out of town. She might have spared herself the trouble. He did not come, and she was not disappointed, because it was a Drawing-

Room day, and he must see her there ; though while she dressed, she was telling herself that she had had no sort of explanation with him ; they had merely looked at each other—and what was there in a mere look, that could so raise her hopes, she could not have defined what it was ; but there was enough to make it appear most beautifully conscious. She went with Mrs. Yearsley ; but what was her surprise, on reaching the Royal Presence, to find herself received, not only coldly, but with an air of marked displeasure !

Instead of being detained, as she had always hitherto been, with peculiar favour by a few words of the most friendly courtesy, she was now suffered to go unnoticed, except by a look, which seemed but too well interpreted by all the courtiers ; for, as she glanced round, in amazement, as it were, inquiringly at those she passed, their eyes were bent on the ground. Lord Rupert was not to be seen, but she heard—for, even in that agony of confusion, she heard his name distinctly—she heard some one say, “ Lord Rupert has gone down to Billingsly ; Lord Ipswich has been taken dangerously ill.”

Confounded at her reception—for innocence, however justifying it may be, on reflection, cannot bear, any more than guilt, the suddenness of such reproof—she reached the next room, where she was soon re-assured by all her acquaintance, who met her, as usual, and had evidently not an idea that anything extraordinary had occurred; and she went through the usual routine, speaking with all the conventional forms, which, to those accustomed to them, are second nature, and returned to her carriage, without showing or seeing any other appearance of anything being wrong, accompanied by Mrs. Yearsley, who was wholly ignorant that anything had happened to disturb her cousin; for Her Majesty, as if to mark more distinctly her displeasure to Lady Umfraville, spoke particularly to her companion. Mrs. Yearsley was staying with her during Mr. Windham's absence, and she found the evening, which they passed at home, uncommonly dull. Evelyn was wretched.

She did not belong to the Court; she had nothing to lose or to gain there; she had not even anything to ask; but she was pained to

the very heart at the change of manner. She had always hitherto been honoured, if not with the friendship, with at least the most particular favour ; and to feel herself rebuked, under her Sovereign's eye, was revolting to her pride and bitter to her feelings. It is painful to perceive a frown on the face of the commonest acquaintance who had smiled before, and for whose change there seems no cause ; but to find oneself publicly marked as the object of displeasure to the First Person in the world, is, though armed in conscious innocence, a severe trial to a young, guileless, and most affectionate heart ; the more so, as—besides the warm personal attachment which she felt for Her Majesty—the principle of devoted loyalty had been so early installed in Lady Umfraville's mind, that to feel she had incurred her Queen's displeasure was a more serious misery to her, than it usually is to those who have nothing to ask or to lose. Her only consolation was that her father was not present. How dreadfully it would have hurt him !

What could be the cause ? The Queen could know nothing of Lord Rupert's feelings ; the

Queen could not have thought her a coquette. It could not have concerned her, whether she encouraged or discouraged the Duke of Ples-singham. What could have been said of her? Perfectly innocent of ever having even a thought of Her Majesty but admiration and affection, she could form no conjecture as to what her imagined offence could possibly be.

Friday morning came, and with it the newspaper, in which was a paragraph which cleared up the mystery; though it redoubled Lady Umfraville's amazement, and, indeed utterly confounded her.

“We understand that a young and lovely peeress—in her own right, Baroness U——e—has been making arrangements for taking her seat in the House of Lords, not in the peeresses' box as a peeress only, but among her peers as a peer; intending, not only to take her seat, but to give her vote, and to act altogether as if she were baron instead of baroness. It is said that this novel project has excited no small displeasure in an Illustrious Personage, whose opinion on the subject was not, we understand, inquired into, or her

approval solicited before steps were taken to put the plan into execution. We have been informed that a young nobleman, younger son a marquis, who has been paying some attention to the worthy and titled beauty—one of her knights in the tournament—has been induced to try his influence in the highest quarters, to obtain permission for the proposed step.”

There was a great deal mere upon the possibility, and legality, or illegality, &c., &c. of the intention ; but Evelyn had seen enough !

That so mad an idea should have been considered as anything but perfectly ludicrous, was the first thing which struck her ; she could hardly believe that the Illustrious Personage would have believed her in her senses, and capable of such absurdity : yet the Queen must have known it by some other means ; it had been known yesterday morning only by the Court. Who could have suggested it ? Who could have put it in the papers ? Above all, who could possibly have known about Lord Rupert ? who, in the world, knew him to be Knight of the Lily, but himself and

herself, and his brother, who would have died sooner than betray him, and who was, besides, out of the kingdom !

The fantastic nature of the idea, and his being the only person upon earth who was unfriendly towards her, suggested Sir Luttrell Wycherley ; and, if it was he, how completely had he avenged himself ! Lost her the favour of her Sovereign, and, perhaps, undone her in the opinion of her lover. He must suppose that all her wish of attracting his notice was to obtain his influence in favour of her preposterous project.

After the first stunning amazement of reading this paragraph, and the chaos of annoyance that followed, she determined on what was best to be done. Alone, at least without anyone in whom she could confide, she was still rather glad that her father was spared the anxiety and vexation of the business.

She wrote to the editors of newspapers desiring them to contradict, "from authority," the whole report, stating that it had no foundation whatever ; and, having dispatched a servant with these notes, that the evening

papers might publish it that night, and having ordered her carriage, she wrote a letter to the Queen, expressing her profound grief at her Majesty's displeasure, and her utter ignorance of the cause till she had seen the paragraph in the papers, and her innocence of having ever dreamt of such an idea in her life.

She then wrote a note to one of the ladies of the Bed chamber, with whom she was somewhat intimate, and, taking it, and Her letter to the Queen, she went, as soon as ever it was an hour at which she could hope to be received, to the Palace, and sending in her card and note to Lady ——— requesting admission, she was, after some delay, received. Lady ——— was a kind and sensible person, and interested herself, with all her heart, in the matter. She told Evelyn that, yesterday morning, just before the Drawing-Room, an official despatch arrived from the Heralds' office, to her Majesty, stating that it was the intention of Lady Umfraville to take her seat, next day, in the House of Lords, and that this intention had been kept a profound secret, and that having been informed of the fact, the



writer had been desired by Lady Umfraville to try and discover what were Her Majesty's sentiments on the business, without committing her, but that the writer had deemed it his duty to state the actual fact of the project at once. The authority seemed unexceptionable, and the Queen was extremely displeased. "I was present; but Lord Douglas Wilton, whom I see that the papers accuse of having abetted you in the plan, was, certainly, innocent of the whole story, till after the Drawing-Room, when it was talked of. But the newspaper paragraphs must have been from another source, for this evening paper was printed before it was known here, except to the few who were present when the letter arrived."

"I never had any communication with the Heralds' office on the subject, or, indeed, ever thought of such a preposterous idea in my life."

Without further delay, Lady ——— took Lady Umfraville's justification to Her Majesty, while Evelyn remained in a state of extreme anxiety: but, nevertheless, the worst part of the misfortune she felt to be over, by the

discovery that Lord Rupert Conway was not meant by the Marquis's younger son, as Lord Douglas Wilton answered all the conditions of the description. She waited long: at last, Lady —— returned with a smiling countenance, and informed Lady Umfraville that she had Her Majesty's commands to inform her that she would grant her an audience now, and commanded her to join the dinner party at the Palace that evening.

The audience, though only of a few minutes' duration, was perfectly gracious, even kind, and Lady Umfraville was afraid that the herald would be properly rebuked for his folly, and she returned home in very different spirits indeed from those in which she had set out, but still with a feeling of being hurried and worn. She determined on remaining perfectly quiet, to be calm before going to the Palace; but, late in the day, she was informed that a gentleman from the Heralds' office wished to speak to her. He appeared—just such a pompous ass as would make a fool of himself in believing such a story. He said that—  
“Late on Wednesday evening, a gentleman

had come to him, and informed him that it was Lady Umfraville's intention to take Her seat, and that, as it was supposed Her Majesty would be displeased at it, it would be better, in his official capacity, to warn the Queen of this scandalous intention ; " upon which, the old fool, by his own account, perpetrated that letter which had caused such a combustion. It was a matter in which he and his office had very little concern ; but he prosed on and on about it, while all that Evelyn cared about was the appearance of his informer, of which she at last extracted a description. It was a low man, with dark eyes, he rather thought ; but his eyebrows and whiskers red, and red hair ; so that, if it was Sir Luttrell, he must have been well disguised. She asked the culprit if he had ever seen Sir Luttrell Wycherley, and he said he had, and had been in company with him.

" In fact, he called at my office, Madam, a short time before this tournament, at the Duke of Plessingham's, which has made so much noise, and in which your Ladyship made so great a sensation, with the Marchioness of

Barnstaple, and others of the beauties of England. Sir Luttrell Wycherley, I say, called on me about that time, and we held a conference on certain matters connected with his paternal and maternal coats."

This was quite enough: Evelyn had no doubt that he had in this conference arrived at a complete knowledge of this worthy's capacity for being deceived, and had, relying on his powers of disguise, both in person and in voice, attacked the old unfortunate official, and hurried him into this act of precipitate interference, which he truly said he should repent all his life. He departed.

Lady Umfraville was just dressed when she received a visit from Lord Amery, whose card she found on her table at her return from the Palace; and he would now have entered into a long explanation of his own and his son's regret that she had not consulted them, and lamentation that the circumstance had occurred, and of their wish that they could have been of service, but evidently immensely relieved, when she said she could not wait to hear him now, for that she was going to the

Palace. This relieved him from the horrible perplexity he was in of seeming to be the friend of one in disgrace at Court; and he handed her into her carriage with great satisfaction.

Lord Rupert was not at this dinner : he was still at Billingsly.

Lord Ipswich had caught cold, in his journey from town, and gout in the stomach, and instant danger was apprehended. His absence was not so great a misfortune as Evelyn would have felt it at any other time ; for it was happiness to be completely relieved from the annoyance of the morning, and entirely restored to the more than former favour the being thus graciously included in the dinner party at the Palace—put a total end to all reports of regal displeasure.

And, on her return, she was gratified ; but thought it was nonsense by finding on her table the cards of all the Tournament Knights, not only of her own colours but those of the opposing Blue, who had thus gallantly redeemed the pledge Lord Ashton had given at the banquet, in their name, with notes expres-

sive of their devotion to her service. And one from the Duke of Plessingham, regretting his absence from town, and hoping she would make use of him in any way she could. Lord Douglas Wilton, in the most apologetic manner, as if he had been in fault, regretted that his name should have been brought forward with hers, in such an improper manner.

So that if the devotion of England's Chivalry could console her for the annoyance she had suffered, she was amply repaid by the gallantry of these Tournament heroes.

From all her knights had this chivalric offer of their services arrived, except from that recreant who was, she was sure, the cause of the whole evil, and from the Knight of the Lily, the only one whose services she would have cared to accept.

She had forgotten the water party, when the arrival of Lady Amery's governess with an apology from Lady Amery, that little Emily was ill, which detained her, though the other children came, and Mr. Poynings, recalled her to the business of the day ; fortunately Prior was engaged on a committee, and they had a

very pleasant row down the river, and the children were so happy at Greenwich—at the Observatory, seeing a star by daylight; and at the Hospital, seeing so many old men with wooden legs eat their dinners, that Evelyn, relieved from the misery of anxiety, felt a calm in the freshness of the day, and the scenery, and happiness in the joy of the children.

“I was at Lady Barnstaple’s on Thursday night,” said Mr. Poynings, “when this strange report was the subject of conversation; and it was amusing to see and hear the Queen of Love and Beauty said about it, between her satisfaction that a rival beauty ——”

“Rival! I am sure I never meant to be her rival!”

“No one but her Ladyship ever dreamed of it; nor even she ever thought you were actively so; but passively, you know you could not help; and in spite of her supremacy at the Tournament and nobody, of course, with lip polite or politic, was ever so injudicious, in her presence, to suppose that anybody else was looked at at Plessy Canons but herself; yet the newspapers are very unmanageable, and

had the rudeness to say so much of Lady Umfraville, that—though nobody minds what they say—yet Lady Barnstaple cannot forgive them, or you, and she was half indignant at the idea of your attaining such a prominent situation—and your birthright of peeress which she would never possess ; and all her superior precedence was nothing compared to the idea of the sensation you would make taking your seat among the peers ; and then, on the other hand, she hoped you would get in disgrace in the highest quarter by such a proceeding, though all the time she declared, with everybody else, that the thing was impossible.”

“I am sure, if she knew how I dreaded to be talked of, or brought before the public, in any way ; if she could comprehend how I hated to see my name, even as the giver of a ball, in the newspapers, her utmost malice would be satisfied, by the misery it has been to me to be obliged to contradict this nonsense—the wretchedness I have felt in being even for a day the subject of conversation to the public. But why she should trouble herself with envy of me, I really cannot imagine. With



all her long-established supremacy and understanding, all the business of her beauty's life, so well as she does, she might be satisfied to leave me to repose."

"One word that you have used accounts for it all—*long-established* supremacy. Though not very much given to calculation, she can come to the conclusion by the force of vanity, I suppose, that a new face goes for more with the public than all other claims put together; and she can no more forgive your being twenty years younger than her, ——"

"Ten—ten, Mr. Poynings," cried Evelyn. "Take care lest the winds and the waves should carry that shocking slander to her ears."

"The Peerage, I am afraid, will bear me out—the privilege of obscurity! Mrs. Jobson, *née* Jackson, may figure as twenty long after she is thirty, while the age of unhappy rank is blazoned abroad to a year."

"It is one of the oddest weaknesses of humanity; but I suppose everybody is subject to it. I suppose it comes on one with age; but, at present, I can hardly imagine ever being anxious to conceal how old one is."

"Oh, by the time you are eighty you will

be eager to have it known: it is a glory then."

"Eighty!" cried one of the little children,—"eighty!—fancy Lady Umfraville eighty! with white hair and wrinkles, and ——"

"Stop, stop!" cried Mr. Poynings; "you frighten us with these horrible images. Seeing one's own fetch would not be half so horrible as seeing at twenty what one was to be at eighty."

"Would you rather die than live to be old?" cried another of the children. "I should like to live and live, I do not know how long."

"Do you think you would know yourself, Willy, if you were to see your picture now as what you will be at ninety?" said Mrs. Yearsley.

Willy began to consider, while Mr. Poynings went on—"I suppose the Egyptians, or whoever the people were, became quite used to that figure of death that used to sit at their banquets. It would quite frighten one the first day, but the next it would be no more than any of the other guests."

"Nothing, of course; those sort of prepared warnings never produce the least effect."

“You do not think that the picture of ‘Caroline, Marchioness of Barnstaple, in her eightieth year,’ would alarm her ladyship now with the least consciousness that she might ever live to be respectable? Do you not recollect how disgusted she was with the idea of herself in a widow’s cap last winter?”

“Is it fair to suppose she had some painful feelings connected with the word widow, more consolatory to Lord Barnstaple than her mere horror of the unbecoming cap.”

“It is charitable, but not fair,” said Mr. Poynings; “and, perhaps, after all, a picture of herself, as she was—I will say—fifteen years ago, would be more irritating than any doubtful future: there would be a reality in the change that would be vastly shocking.”

“I am not sure that one would see it,” said Evelyn; “or, perhaps, we should be so pleased to see one ever looked so well, one would forget the rest. Perhaps, if you were to ask Willy, when he is eighty, if he knew himself at six, he would be still vain of what a dear little fellow he was then.”

“I do not think, among all our nonsensical

annuals, we have ever had a book of French, contrasted with English, beauties," said Mr. Poynings.

"I should be sorry that we were not superior; but the French have had very great beauties. I doubt if any age could match the Louis Quartorze loveliness—Madam de Montespan and the Duchesse de la Vallière. Charles the Second's court—Sir Peter Lely's sleepy-eyed beauties, and all, are nothing to them!"

"I was going to match our queens against them, forgetting that Henrietta Maria was French too," said Evelyn, "though we have the glory of her beauty; and Mary, Queen of Scots, also, was more than half French. But it shows how little mere beauty is, after all; for there is such a romance about all these queens, that one looks at them always with a sympathy for their misfortunes. One is quite intimate with Madame de Montespan—one looks at her as an old acquaintance; and the story of the Duchesse de la Vallière is so melancholy, it gives an interest to her loveliness beyond itself, great as it is. But in the beauties of these

days, they are just beauties, and there is an end ; they have no story."

"That would be a pity for posterity," said Mr. Poynings ; "but I think that, on a little reflection, we might make out stories for some that would answer the purpose—answer for my scandalous peerage, which so shocked Mr. Windham."

## CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN she came back from Greenwich, Lady Umfraville was surprised to find her father returned. He had seen the paragraph in the papers on Friday evening, and had instantly set out on his return : he had already been to the office of the paper, he had seen and found that it was all settled.

Evelyn was engaged to dine at the Amery's, and would have sent an excuse, but Mr. Windham would not hear of it, and further insisted on their going to the opera that night, that nobody might suppose Lady Umfraville shunned society. Society seemed determined not to shun her : her table was covered with cards, for, as her having dined at the Palace had been in all the morning papers, every acquaintance she had in town, had made it a point to call

upon her, to shew that they were convinced there was no truth in the report which they had all been repeating and talking over, with all the delight of a wonder so great that it lasted the whole day.

At Lady Amery's they found Mr. Mortlake, and Prior was at home, but Evelyn met him very coldly, and she was hurt at his want of zeal in her service—he had not come forward instantly as she thought he ought to have done.

Mr. Mortlake had but the moment before she entered heard the whole story, and he was quite agitated as he took her hand and said—  
“How heartless you must have thought me ! but I never read the newspapers—I had never heard of this—those confounded papers ! dragging you before the public in this way ! You have been so annoyed, I am almost mad at not having known it : Lord Amery has just shewn me the paragraph.”

And as the rest were engaged with Mr. Windham, he said, in a low voice, fixing his eyes upon hers—“This younger son of a marquis—does it, as Lord Amery says, mean—Lord Douglas Wilton ? No one else ?

And at the vivid blush which rose at the words "No one else!" his countenance brightened, and as she replied that she understood it alluded to Lord Douglas, he smiled.

Evelyn, in spite of her extreme embarrassment, felt so curious to know if he was aware that Lord Rupert was Knight of the Lily—that she added, "you see it says he was one of the Tournament!"

"Does it?—Oh, I had not observed that—it would not then have been supposed to mean ——"

Dinner was announced, but she was satisfied, whatever this singular old man's penetration had discovered, he was evidently perfectly unaware of the Knight of the Lily's secret.

"Do you say you never read the papers, Mr. Mortlake?" said Prior.

"Never! and I never will."

"Prior is surprised you can live without seeing his speeches," said Lord Amery, laughing.

"I lose a good deal, I am sure," said Mr. Mortlake, "but I think I gain more."

"I do not see how one could get on at all if one did not see the papers, one would never



know what was going on, or what any of our friends were about," said Mr. Windham, whose pride was so often over-laid by his vanity that it disappeared altogether, and who had a childish pleasure in seeing his own and his daughter's name on the lists of the Drawing Room, &c., &c.: a pleasure, which his daughter's contempt of such things, obliged him often to enjoy in secret.

"But you see that, from not reading the newspapers, you knew nothing of what everybody has been talking about," said Lady Amery.

"That is exactly what I complain of: everybody talking of what does not concern them in the least. Had I heard it, indeed, I should have flown to Lady Umfraville; and, as I could have done her no good, I should have been as impertinent as the rest of the world—I never was more rejoiced at my resolution against newspapers."

"You may continue to rejoice, Mr. Mortlake," said Lady Umfraville; "for I can assure you, that had it been possible for you to have been of any service, I should have summoned you directly."

Mr. Mortlake bowed and looked quite happy. Prior Vernon reddened, and went on about the newspapers:—"It seems to me to be a strange principle for an Englishman to go upon; newspapers are such an essential part of a free country. The privilege of publishing everything, appears to me the first birthright of an Englishman—all his freedom depends upon it."

"On the contrary," said Mr. Mortlake, "it destroys all freedom; nobody can stir without some impertinent rascal of a newspaper editor telling all the world that you have stirred."

"And not only that," said Evelyn, "but the why and the wherefore, and all their commentaries thereon."

"If people are not ashamed of what they do," said Mr. Vernon, "they cannot be afraid of having their actions published: that is the glory of a free press."

"That everybody may make free with everybody else's life and character," said Mr. Mortlake.

"No; but that no crime can be kept long concealed; no injustice left unpunished; no dark tribunals of oppression can exist; no in-

quisition horrors could be perpetrated in a country where there are newspapers."

"Nor any act of ostentatious virtue left unblazoned abroad; no charitable deed left in obscurity; no beneficence allowed to keep the noiseless tenour of its way: all—all is recounted, set down and capitalled, not for the advantage of the receiver, but to the vain glory of the giver," said Mr. Mortlake.

"Reading the newspapers is one of the few advantages which the poor man enjoys almost equally with the rich: the two extremes of society are thus brought together, and put, as it were, upon a par. Every little village or hamlet has its paper, and the highest in the realm must come in judgment before the lowest," said Prior.

"They had much better be minding their own affairs," said Evelyn.

"I am sure I think the newspapers are often a great nuisance; in the country, at least, people are always reading them," said Lady Amery.

"To wish to keep the actions of men in power concealed, is worthy only of the darkest and most uncivilized ages," cried Prior.

“The newspapers turn so-called civilization into barbarism,” said Mr. Mortlake. “Every man’s hand—at least every man’s hand that has a pen in it—is against every other man’s hand—not in the proud combat of ancient, falsely called barbaric times—sword to sword and life to life; where, if a man injured another, he knew that he did it at the hazard of his life, and was ready, sword in hand, to justify himself, or abide the consequences. While now, any obscure unknown, or set of unknown wretches are constantly sapping the very foundation of society—in ambushed security sending forth their venomd darts in small Lilliputian showers, that wound, smart, and fester in every spot they strike, tearing away the veil of sanctity from private life, and gratifying every mean passion, every loathsome curiosity in the details of scenes which are agony to the parties concerned, but jest to these scoundrel writers and their cruel readers.”

“Is not the terror of publicity a greater advantage to deter the many from evil, than the mere annoyance which may be now and then endured by the few?” said Vernon.

"If only the guilty suffered," said Mr. Mortlake; "but on the innocent falls the real injury—they suffer. To an abandoned sinner it can be no punishment to see his name branded with contempt; but to have beauty and youth, and innocence—the sacred excellence of woman—flung like a victim before the devouring multitude—woman that should be within a hallowed pale, and unapproachable, or whose defence, if in danger, ought to be the proud privilege of every man worthy of the name, is the chosen victim of those coward ruffians, unlike the bandit fierce of old, who might take life at once—these, by a line, a word, may poison a whole existence, to be dragged on in slow decay."

"A great many of these helpless victims, as you call them," said Lord Amery, "are very able and willing to take up their own defence, and, without any help from these privileged defenders, or from swords or spears, or any such barbarous proceedings, sit down in their boudoirs, and prepare a reply or an attack, as the case may be; and I really think they come off very often victorious."

“ Good heavens !—Have I lived to hear an English nobleman speak thus calmly of such horrors !—Admiring these *athlete* women flinging themselves into the arena of the public——”

In the ecstasy of his wrath, Mr. Mortlake was very near jumping up from dinner for his favourite process of walking off his exacerbatation.

“ Indeed, I think ladies have no business to write in any of these vulgar periodicals,” said Mr. Windham ; “ and a great deal of mischief is certainly done by these papers ; but one cannot help it—where is the remedy ? ”

“ Not reading the papers,” cried Mr. Mortlake. “ If every individual in England resolved not to read, not to pay for any more newspapers, there would be no more written.”

“ The omnipotence of the press is not so easily got rid of, I assure you,” said Prior.

“ The disease would break out again, perhaps,” said Evelyn, “ in some other shape, or corrupt the whole body politic to destruction, if it were not allowed to work itself off in this way.”

When Lady Umfraville's carriage was announced, Mr. Mortlake said to her—"I am sorry you are going out again to-night—going to bed would be much better for you; you look quite fagged."

"I am tired, but my father thought it better we should go."

"You seem displeased with me," said Mr. Vernon, as he handed her to the carriage, "or rather you seem even less pleased than usual. What have I done?"

"Oh, nothing," said she, carelessly; for she did not like to pay him the compliment of being offended with him; and, besides, she felt the inconsistency of expecting the services of a rejected lover.

Next day, a servant told Mr. Windham that Lord Douglas Wilton wished to speak to him in his study. A sudden terror seized Lady Umfraville: Lord Douglas had come from the Palace with some message of displeasure! What more could have occurred—what additional mischief had been done?

She was not very long in suspense: Lord Douglas entered with a smiling countenance,

which at once re-assured her as to any Royal displeasure.

“I came to request Mr. Windham—I did not know that he had returned—till I saw him last night at the Opera—I came to tell him how annoyed I was at those impudent papers bringing me forward in company with your name, and I wished him to tell you how much it grieved me. It would gratify anybody’s vanity to be supposed to be able to do Lady Umfraville any service, but I wanted to assure you that I do not plume myself upon it, and am only anxious that you should not have been annoyed by it.”

“It certainly could be no fault of yours that the newspapers chose to put our names in their foolish paragraphs. The whole thing was not worth half the thought which I have been obliged to give it.”

“But my principal reason for coming—I came here to-day, because—though, of course, at present, I should be most anxious to avoid anything that could give any colour to this paragraph; yet I am most anxious to assure you that the sentiments which I have long



ventured to entertain are not—that the declaration of them could not be prevented by the surmises of the newspapers, though I have postponed it, believing, with all the world, that the Duke of Plessingham—but, recently, circumstances seem to point out that he is not the fortunate person he was reported to be.”

Anxious to relieve the young gentleman from his perplexity, and not sorry to have so good an opportunity of having the ducal report contradicted, Lady Umfraville said she was not engaged to the Duke of Plessingham; and then hastened with kind cruelty to annihilate every ray of the hope which after this assurance, for a moment, enlivened the countenance of the lord-in-waiting, who went away quite as much puzzled as he came; but she hoped that he would console himself by repeating the intelligence “from authority” about the non-engagement of Lady Umfraville, and that it would soon be communicated to Lord Rupert. But this did not occur so immediately as she had hoped, for Lord Rupert was still at Billingsly; and, on Monday, a circumstance occurred which might certainly be called un-

toward, as far as concerned her position with regard to Lord Rupert.

On her breakfast-table, she found a rolled-up print, with the direction in a shopman's hand, from ———, the printseller. It was of herself, in her peeress robes, and below, "Evelyn, Baroness Umfraville, in her robes, as taking her seat as 'a peer of the realm among her peers in the House of Lords. Dedicated, without permission, to Her Majesty Queen Victoria."

Evelyn was so diverted at the absurdity of it, that she laughed as she saw herself; but Mr. Windham turned pale with rage, which made her serious instantly; and she entreated him to go as soon as he possibly could and buy up every copy; which he set out to do accordingly, the very instant he had breakfasted.

It was a very pretty print, and a most striking likeness, beautifully engraved. She wondered how it was so like; for ———'s picture and the bust were unrepeatd either by engraving or cast.

When Mr. Windham at length returned, he was accompanied by the duke of Plessingham.

“The prints are all destroyed, my dear,” said her father; “and, whatever other mischief they were intended to do you, they have cost you a great deal. It was with no small difficulty that I got hold of the plate, and most curious! when I asked for the picture, which I did not do till I had given a cheque for the price of the prints, and one hundred pounds more, Mr. ——— was submission itself to the requests of one who paid so well and bribed so high, and a little alarmed, too, at the idea of a prosecution, which I threatened, very wrongly, indeed, for I had not, of course, an idea of doing so. He gave me the plate, on my promising not to inquire who the artist was, which I promised very readily, and said I did not care who the artist was; all I wanted to know was, who the artificer of the whole plot was. He said he knew no more than I did; but the curious thing was, that he produced with the plate—and it was very handsome of him to do so, for I never could have thought of his having it—the cast which disappeared, you know, so oddly, out of ———’s studio, and from which the likeness was

taken by this unknown painter. I brought it, and the plate and the engraving, back with me, and I shall destroy them all."

"It must be a great disappointment to ———, in spite of his good pay," said the duke, "for I suppose everybody would have been in his shop to look at you—for who do you think was stopped by seeing you in the window? A Prime Minister even!—It is a fact. Conway walked in just as we had got into the shop."

Mr. Windham was entirely taken up with the prints he was turning over—but the duke's absence of all penetration must certainly have been extreme, as he did not in the least observe Lady Umfraville's emotion at this sudden introduction of Lord Rupert's name.

"Will you burn the prints here? Shall I light this fire?" said she, getting up and taking out a match.

"No, thank you—I will take them down to my own room," said Mr. Windham.

"I thought Lord Ipswich was very ill?" said she, rattling the matches.

"So he is—dying; and Conway looked as

thin and pale, and anxious as could be, and he only came up to a council to-day and goes back to-night, but he does not expect to find his father alive. He stayed but three minutes, he was walking down, but just arrived at Downing-street, and seeing the print, came in, and he said to Mr. Windham, 'you are buying these up,' but Mr. Windham did not hear him, and so I told him we were: and I stepped across to tell Mr. Windham that Conway was there, for he never saw him, but when he returned, he was gone."

So he had just found the duke with her father, and had been told that WE were buying up these prints—that the duke was necessarily a party concerned in the business was the natural inference.

"Poor fellow!" continued the duke, "he is a most affectionate son, and Lord Ipswich doats upon him; and Cornbury being away, they all depend on him; and between his business and his father, he is nearly worn out."

"Has Lord Cornbury been sent for?" said Evelyn.

"No, I fancy not, he is so far off, it would

be useless. All Lord Rupert's colleagues have been very sympathetic—doing his business, and in the 'Highest quarter.' Oh! by the bye, Lady Umfraville, you are to have Royalty next week, I hear."

"Yes," said Mr. Windham.

"Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to signify, &c., &c." said the duke, as he departed.

END OF VOL. II.

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