

23/10

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. I.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1856.

PRINTED BY CHARLES BEVAN AND SON,
STREET'S BUILDINGS, CHAPEL STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

RANK AND BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

IT had never annoyed Mr. Windham that his only child was a daughter. Mrs. Windham thought a son would have been better ; but he always pleased himself with the notion, that the ancient barony of Umfraville went in the female line ; and though he was really grieved at the death of the mother, he never lost sight of the hope that the daughter would be Baroness of Umfraville. He had been himself the younger son of a large family ; and having been bred to the diplomatic line, had served some years as secretary to an embassy abroad,

and had afterwards held some small place in the Government, which, on the death of his elder brother, he gave up and retired to his country-seat, Enmore, in Somersetshire, where he made an excellent library in the heraldic line, and spent his leisure hours playing the violoncello. He kept up but little society with his country neighbours; for though he had seen too much of the world not to be fully aware of how little value sixteen quarterings are in the art of getting on, yet in his private arrangements he considered himself at liberty to select his society only from those whose names, at least, were in the rolls of chivalry.

His daughter, Evelyn, was now grown up; she was beautiful and accomplished, especially in music, in which Mr. Windham himself excelled. She had a fine figure, and that air of high birth which had distinguished her mother, and which was worthy of the ancient house of Umfraville; and he was extremely averse to allowing any one to be in her company who was not, or whose son, brother, or nephew, was not fit to aspire to the hand of the heiress of Enmore—a respectable though not grand property, and

the possible successor to a title, bearing date the 12th Henry III.

On the death of old Lord Umfraville, who was Mrs. Windham's second cousin once removed, and the accession of his son, a fine young man, who would marry and have sons and grandsons past counting, Mr. Windham almost despaired. His daughter was twenty, and he began seriously to look about for a *bon parti* for her, but he knew that her personal merits, and her small heiress-ship, could hope for nothing very sublime. The only neighbour, whose rights in that way he acknowledged, were Lord and Lady Amery—the younger sons were happily children, and could do no harm, but he looked forward to the return of the eldest from his travels; the name, Vernon, spoke for itself; and though the Amerys were what are called serious people, and Prior Vernon himself was reported to have been distributing tracts in Syria, he was disposed to overlook these defects in favour of his coat of arms, and of the Amery estate, which *marched* with that of Enmore.

The melancholy intelligence—from autho-

riety—in the newspapers at last appeared, that Lord Umfraville was going to be married, and Mr. Windham was so much discomfited that he did not touch his violoncello for a week, and was only appeased by learning—and he was at some pains to ascertain the fact—that Miss Gats-hill's grandfather had undoubtedly been partner in a cotton factory. There had never been any intercourse between Mr. Windham and the old lord, and though the marriage of Evelyn with the young man had been an alternative, on which he had meditated much, it was difficult to accomplish, and it would have hurt his pride to have it said that he was manœuvring a match. Yet he felt as if he was personally injured when Miss Gatshill was named as his daughter's rival.

But the very day before the marriage was to have been celebrated appeared a paragraph:—“ We are desired to announce that the nuptials of Lord Umfraville are postponed in consequence of his lordship's severe indisposition”—and two days afterwards “ Death of Stephen, twenty-second Lord Umfraville,” appeared an undoubted and incontrovertible fact, and Mr.

Windham felt himself endowed with all the dignity of a prophet, and at the very climax of his hopes. He had his prophetic glory, however, all to himself, for he had never, but to Mrs. Windham, disclosed the darling object of his ambition, so that Evelyn was perfectly unconscious of the destiny which awaited her when her father, entering the room where she sat copying music, laid a sheet of paper before her, and desired her to sign her name "Umfraville."

She laughed, and asked what he meant, upon which he sat down and with a grave dignity expounded the case to her, and laid before her the legal measures necessary to be taken now, and his intentions of going to London when their mourning was over, and when the season commenced.

When the season commenced, Mr. Windham, having taken a house in Spring Gardens, and mounted his establishment, and arranged all things in the most correct style, took his daughter to town, and she was presented as Lady Umfraville, and few mortals have ever enjoyed more unmixed satisfaction than did Mr. Windham from the setting off of the carriage with the

white and gold liveries “in state” to the buzz of applause at the loveliness and grace of his daughter, and her more than gracious reception by Majesty.

CHAPTER II.

To a living Red Book or walking Peerage, as was Mr. Windham, it was no difficulty to pass in review before his mind's eye all the young noblemen whom he thought fit to aspire to his daughter's hand. His daughter, meanwhile, if she inherited her father's pride of birth and her mother's beauty of person, had in herself a tone of enthusiastic feeling that perhaps belongs to her age in even the lowly born, but which is refined into the high spirit of wild romance only in the far descended who feel that it is their best inheritance. For, however little Evelyn knew or cared about her succession to a title and estate, she loved to think of how her ancestors, on both sides, "were blazoned high upon the roll of chivalry," and she never could comprehend how her father endured

her not being a son, who should have been an Edmund, and have rivalled his heroic ancestor, who braved even "bluff king Hal." And born and growing up in times of peace so piteously profound that not a hero could be heard or read of in these her days, her imagination turned to the only fame that could now be found. Though Mr. Windham was no politician, he liked to have his daughter read to him the resumé of the debates and the leading articles of the papers; and the Prime Minister of the day was gradually wrought up by her fancy into the realization of that ideal perfection which is the day-dream of the enthusiastic.

Lord Rupert Conway, called, while still almost a youth, to the first situation which a subject can hold in the universe, was this unseen idol of Evelyn's heart, and while her father was revelling in the realization of all the pomp he loved, and in the expectation of the many rival suitors she would have: Evelyn was herself, in her heart of hearts, interested in but one person in that vast Babylon into which they had now entered. London was not new to her, she had passed much of her

girlhood there, had been early accustomed to all that belongs to fashion and rank, and a whirl of company, and too young to share, she had too much of the early prescience of genius not to be aware of all the nothingness of such things; and although not a ruffle of passion had ever yet stirred the deep serene of her soul, yet with her fancy full of one, to her, as a superior being, the trivialities of society, and of all those who composed it, were only an amusement in which she shared with a careless gaiety which seemed to belong to one that had passed through, rather than just entered on the world.

"I am glad to see you here," said Prior Vernon to her, on Sunday, as he joined her and her father as they were leaving Whitehall Chapel.

"Why here particularly? Is the preacher a friend of yours?" said Evelyn.

"I meant by here, at church," said he.

"Did you think we did not go to church like other people? or have you lived so long in the land of infidels that you want to be assured that we do not go to mosque."

"Every body does not go to church," said Mr. Vernon.

"Every body should," said Mr. Windham.

"But," continued Prior, addressing Lady Umfraville, "do you go only because other people do?"

"When one lives with those who always do what is right, one does so habitually and does not look back every time to one's motives," said Evelyn

"Mere habitual virtue might easily change to habitual vice; we should act from higher motives."

"Oh no," said she, smiling at the idea of her falling into habitual vice, "early habit is much the strongest staff to trust to. Looking about for a fresh one we should soon lose ourselves in the wood of theories. A good father's arm that has always led one in the way one should go, is so secure."

Mr. Windham smiled affectionately in all the best pride of his heart, and Mr. Vernon lost, in his admiration of the gay sweetness of her beautiful countenance, some of the gravity of his own. And he nearly smiled himself as he

said, "It is well to do right at all events, but what is good without a good motive. We should think of a higher reward than the mere comments of society."

"Is it not better, and higher to do right, because it is right, than to look for any reward in the matter?"

"Any earthly reward, certainly," said he. "But I should wish ——"

"Do you wish to take a walk with us," interrupted Mr. Windham, as they came near home, "or perhaps you do not think it *right*?"

Mr. Vernon regretted, and he did really regret it, that he was obliged to go back to his mother, whom he was to accompany to evening service.

Prior Vernon had been at the levee which was the precursor of Lady Umfraville's first drawing-room, presented "on his return from Syria." He had returned, but he was no longer quite the unexceptionable *parti* for Lady Umfraville, that he had been in her father's eyes for Miss Windham. Still he would have done, his pedigree was perfect, and though his rank and fortune were not supreme, they were

not to be objected to, and Mr. Windham made no resistance to the continuance of the former intimacy of the families. He was too proud to plot, but he was too honourable to allow of intercourse which could lead to what he could not sanction. He would never interfere to promote, although he might to prevent. He really wished his daughter to be happy, and if the happiness was with a Ducal, in addition to her own Magna Charta Baroness, coronet, why it would be all the better; and when the young Duke of Plessingham was introduced to them, and displayed the most evident admiration of Lady Umfraville's charms, Mr. Windham got into a most pleasing difficulty, in his own mind, as to how her signature should be arranged, so that she should not merge the privilege of her independent Umfraville, and he was beginning to seek for precedents in his well-stored memory, while his daughter was endeavouring to attend to the Duke of Plessingham's description of a lion hunt, and feeling more agitated than she had ever been in her life before, for she was now at the house of one of the ministry, Mr. Bowen, and she

had heard him say "Lord Rupert was to have been here if there was no house."

How earnestly did she hope there was "no house," and how fortunate did she think herself in being opposite to the door. It opened, and "Sir Luttrell Wycherley" was announced—"Do you know Sir Luttrell?" asked the Duke, as he saw a shade of dissatisfaction cross Lady Umfraville's countenance.

"Only by his writings."

"They are like himself—vastly eccentric," said the Duke.

The door opened again, and Lord Rupert Conway entered. Evelyn gave one glance. It was enough, she was not disappointed. It seemed as if a picture, on which she had long gazed, was suddenly instinct with life, and had stepped from its frame before her. His tall figure, the distinguished simplicity of his air—it was a living Vandyke, a cavalier, one of his noble cavalier ancestors, or one to whom her fancy had always likened him, who long of yore had with an Umfraville fought the Paynim far beyond the sea. Was this reality?

Mr. Bowen offering her his arm to take her

down to dinner certainly was; and placed beside him, with old Lord Belvoir on her other hand, she was obliged to pay some attention to what they said; but she was all the time endeavouring to catch the sound of Lord Rupert's voice. He spoke very low, and entirely to his next neighbour, and she was a very pretty person, a foreign ambassadress—French by birth, but from a German court.

Evelyn could not during half dinner-time summon courage to look across the table, for Lord Rupert was exactly opposite to her. She was really in his company! He was actually there! but it was like the confusion with none of the vividness of a dream. Her two supporters were very conversible, and thought her very agreeable, so well did she appear to listen.

At last Mr. Bowen turned to speak to Lady Belvoir, at the same moment that Lord Belvoir was so deeply engaged in the contemplation of a glass of wine as to require no attention from her, and Evelyn turned and looked towards Lord Rupert.—He was looking at her—their eyes met.

What is that meeting of the eyes? What impenetrable mystery of our being lies hid in that one instant of time? Unanswered and unanswerable question. Every body in the room looked at Lady Umfraville as well as Lord Rupert, and she looked at them; but why should that one look of his and of hers—why should meeting his eyes so thrill through every fibre of her frame, and into the very recesses of her soul?

The gentlemen rejoined the ladies almost immediately after dinner, and Mrs. Bowen introduced to Lady Umfraville Sir Luttrell Wycherley, who had come to the table where they were looking at some numbers of the “Gallery of Beauties.”

“Have you been sitting to —— yet?” said Sir Luttrell to her.

“No, I have not. I have a painful recollection of having sat when I was a child, when sitting still anywhere was a misery ill compensated by its being —:” she stopped, for Lord Rupert and her father joined the group.

“My dear,” said Mr. Windham, “Lord Rupert has been so kind as to recollect that I

had once the honour of serving under Lord Ipswich, and has requested me to introduce him."

The conscious blush of Evelyn served to convert this most formal of all ceremonies into something of the deepest interest.

"Do you find that fine memory of yours, Conway," said Sir Luttrell, "spring up at once with place, or is it part of the education for it? But you were speaking," continued he, addressing Evelyn, without waiting for Lord Rupert's answer, "'ill compensated by being'—you see I have a memory too."

"Though it seems ridiculous in old pictures being represented as Shepherdesses and Dianas, yet it must have taken away some of the awkwardness," said Evelyn, exerting herself, "they must have felt they were acting a part, and less stiff than in their every-day clothes."

"Yes, like speaking a foreign language, everything seems so disguised that it passes for graceful," said Sir Luttrell, glancing rudely, as Evelyn thought, at the princess.

"I have often found it so abroad," said Lord Rupert, "when I have blundered out

some stupid speech, I hear it taken up new-dressed, and produced before me so much better than the original—you are so merciful in France to all our mistakes.”

The princess looked towards Sir Luttrell, and replied to Lord Rupert—for though she generally spoke French she understood English as well as a Frenchwoman ever does—and said, “she thought he had studied the art to turn an ill-meaning to a good one.”

“What character would you choose to be painted in?” said Sir Luttrell to Evelyn.
“What would you advise, Princess?”

“Flore, pour une belle blonde comme Lady Umfraville, assurément Flore, couronnée de fleurs.”

And your authority for Flora’s fair hair, Madame le Princesse?” said Sir Luttrell, with a sneer at her choosing for a character meant as complimentary, a personage of such questionable reputation as Flora has been made.

“What character would you choose for Lady Umfraville, Conway?” said he.

“Portia, I think,” said he.

“Why Portia?” said Evelyn, in her anxiety

to know why he should think her like Portia, for the first time directly addressing Lord Rupert—"Why should I be Portia?"

"It would be suitable, would it not?" said he to Mr. Windham, "As the Paduan Doctor, the wise young judge," said Sir Luttrell, "in the lawyer's robe?"

"In the casket scene, I conclude," said Mr. Windham; "the Venetian buildings and the Moorish prince always make it a beautiful scene. Will you be painted as Portia?"

"Who is to sit, or stand, for the Prince of Morocco?" said Sir Luttrell. "Shall we have a *tableau vivant*? Impromptu—Plessingham, the Moorish prince; you and I, Conway, shall draw lots which shall be Prince of Arragon; and whom, Mr. Windham, do you name for Bassanio? Princess, will you be Jessica?"

"You do not admire *tableaux*, Wycherley, I am sure," said Lord Rupert; "they are so prosaic."

"There can be no action as in acting," said Evelyn, "yet there is not the repose of a real picture—one is all the time in pain for the performers."

“Miserably so,’ said Lord Rupert,” “and one can neither laugh nor cry as at a play, nor fall into a reverie as we do at a picture. There is neither sympathy nor contemplation.”

Here is sympathy, however, thought Evelyn, as Lord Rupert spoke so exactly what she felt.

The Princess asked Lady Umfraville, “if she was to be next day at the Horticultural Show?”

“I believe so,” said Mr. Windham;” “but the great show is on the 12th. Do you inherit Lord Ipswich’s passion for flowers?” he continued to Lord Rupert.

“Oh, yes! we are all gardeners; it is still my father’s greatest pleasure—a little envious though of my sister, Matlock, she surpasses him—but then it is all on his own plans.”

“Have you ever time to caress a lily or gather a rose?” said Sir Luttrell.

“One has generally time to do what one likes, I observe,” said Lord Rupert.

“Love of flowers, however, is quite *en règle* for a statesman. Lord Strafford writes of the

blowing of his tulips, and Richelieu was a florist," said Sir Luttrell.

"My dear," said Mr. Windham, "the carriage is announced, we must go to Lady Daventry's ball."

To the ball they went, and Lady Umfraville danced with perhaps more than her usual gaiety, for she was excited, and in a whirl of unaccustomed feelings; but when she returned home, she had not an idea of the ball remaining, not a trace of room, partners, or music; she had gone through it all mechanically, her mind remaining at Mr. Bowen's.

Her first thought on awakening was certainly Lord Rupert, but her next was—"What a perfectly disagreeable man is that Sir Luttrell Wycherley!"

He was the first person she saw, for he came to call on her father and almost at the same moment Lord Amery and his son came in. Lord Amery had brought a letter from his steward about enclosing a common, on which he and Mr. Windham began to consult; and Mr. Vernon said to Evelyn:—

"I have come to ask you to subscribe to the

Missionary Society—I do not see your name in the list.”

“I am not fond of seeing my name in subscription lists,” said she, as she took out her purse. “Perhaps you think that affectation, and perhaps you will think it worse when I tell you that I am only ‘doing this because others do.’ I give you this money because I am sure you think it is for a good purpose, but I am not quite sure that it would not be better employed for one’s neighbour than for the Tartars.”

“Come to the meeting on Friday,” said Prior “and we will tell you of the glorious labours of our devoted missionaries.”

“Without waiting for the meeting,” said Sir Luttrell, “allow me to bear my testimony, at least, to their labour and their devotedness. I am not speaking of their objects, or of what the whole society may be, but of individual merit in the various parts of the world where I have met them. I do speak enthusiastically : the courage, and patience, and quenchless zeal, with which I have seen those men endure every bodily privation, and every species of mental

anguish, persecution, obloquy, treachery, ceaseless disappointment!—all borne unshaken, unshrinkingly. Dull, stupid men, too, that one would never suspect had such constancy.”

Prior Vernon's look expressed “I never should have expected this from you”—Lady Umfraville was surprised the Sir Luttrell of the night before seemed only the embodiment of a sneer.

“And at the meeting you will hear all the interesting particulars of what Sir Luttrell describes,” said Mr. Vernon.

“I do not think my father wishes me to go to bible or missionary meetings.”

“But on such a subject do not you judge for yourself, Lady Umfraville?—Are you contented to think—or rather not to think—but to follow thoughtlessly what you are told in matters of such importance as a religious opinion?”

“Your notion of woman as a ‘ministering angel’ then, Mr. Vernon, is of her preaching like a minister?” said Sir Luttrell.

Evelyn laughed: Prior smiled a little but continued gravely—“you will not attend a religious meeting because Mr. Windham forbids it.”

"He never forbade it, because I never asked his permission."

"Do you never think for yourself. In opinions on serious subjects do not you judge for yourself?"

"In all matters of speculative opinion on religion," said Evelyn, as gravely as Mr. Vernon himself, "no one ought or can interfere with what I think. But in a more formal business—a matter of taste, not of belief—I should certainly act as best pleased those I live with."

"You asked me last Sunday if the preacher at Whitehall chapel was a friend of mine: if I asked you to go and hear a preacher who is a friend of mine, you would not go if Mr. Windham did not like him?"

"Certainly not."

"Nor, if I asked Lady Umfraville to go and hear a favorite opera-singer, would she go if Mr. Windham thought she sung out of tune," said Sir Luttrell.

"That is just the light I see it in," said Evelyn, smiling, "to go to church for a performer in the pulpit, is not very different from going to the play to see a fine actor."

"If the 'performer,' as you call him, was to do you good, would 'not you try to convince your father of his error?"

"No, indeed!" said Evelyn.

"If you had the misfortune, then, of having a vicious or infidel father, you would leave him unconverted."

"Why should you invent such horrible misfortunes for me," said Evelyn, laughing; "but if I was in so pitiable a condition, I should certainly endeavour to hide the wickedness from myself, as well as from everybody else."

"Then this money you have given without the least wish that it should be used in reclaiming the unconverted heathen?"

"Surely," exclaimed Sir Luttrell "those missionaries whose martyrdom I admired,—can at the best be only considered excellent madmen. Their object is, to say the least of it, absurd—a pious paradox—hazarding their lives, sacrificing their fortunes, to make their fellow creatures miserable."

"Miserable! in teaching them eternal truth!" cried Vernon.

"Miserable, by overturning all they hav

held dear and sacred. What, what can a proselyter give in place of that 'fervor and faith of a soul' that belongs to early implanted belief! how replace the heart-strings he has broken? Desecrate the altar where childhood offered its earliest flowers, you desecrate all holiness of soul. The truth which you——"

"Lady Amery is at the door, to take Lady Umfraville to the Gardens," said a footman.

Evelyn was ready, and drove off with Lady Amery and her two little girls.

CHAPTER III.

At the gardens, Lady Amery introduced Lady Umfraville to Lord Ipswich, a good natured looking old gentleman, who regretted the earliness of the season, and apologized for the flowers not being more forward. But he was so pleased with the interest which Evelyn took in what he shewed her, and so little suspected that it was only as Lord Rupert Conway's father that she listened to him, that he asked her to come with Mr. Windham to his villa at Richmond, and see his hot houses. He lived out of the world, and could hardly hope, he said, to induce those who belonged to it, to visit his retirement, but Lady Ipswich would be very happy to make her acquaintance.

"My great conservatory is at Billingsly, but

my spring collection is chiefly at Richmond, because I am there in spring."

Mr. Windham was going to Somersetshire, on business, for a few days, but he accompanied his daughter to Lord Ipswich's, and was as well pleased she should be there as at his sister's, at Kensington, where he had intended Evelyn should be during his short absence.

The newspapers set it down that she was, so that the world knew not of her stay at Richmond.

Lord Rupert arrived immediately after Mr. Windham departed, and his appearance was unexpected by his father and mother. "Was it accident, or did he know that I was here?" thought Evelyn, as they walked on the grassy lawn. "I am a stranger to him, he thinks he is so to me. How little can he dream of what he has been so long to me!" She felt as if it were but a dream to herself, that she was actually beside the embodied phantom of her fancy.

"How cool and fresh it is here," said he.

"Yes, how one prizes green grass and pure air, after being any time in town."

“It is very odd that human beings who, all—except Dr. Johnson, who preferred Fleet street to this view from Richmond—who all declare they so enjoy fields and flowers, and birds when they have them, should in all countries choose to spend some months of every year, in narrow pens, looking only on brick and stone, and hearing only carriages and every disagreeable noise.”

“But most nations do so only in a season when houses and human beings are a prettier sight than snow and storm, and when there are no birds to be heard, they have very ingeniously invented noises that are equally agreeable. We enlightened and free-born Britons are the only people who choose to imprison themselves in these pens, when all fields and flowers are in their most charming freshness, and to spend their time dressing themselves instead of looking at nature, who has been bedizening herself so beautifully for them, all in vain.”

“We should be wiser if we did not attempt,” said Lord Rupert, “to have nature too, with the brick and stone, and smoke. If we were content to come out to Richmond or

Hampstead for trees and flowers, it would be much more dignified, instead of our wretched attempts at gardens, covered with dust, and flowers blackened with soot. Only look at the melancholy attempts my mother has made, and the perseverance with which she, year after year, persuaded herself she had flowers in her garden in Grosvenor square, till she came to live here and was convinced of the error she had laboured under."

"I should not quite like the dignity of having no squares or parks, though," said Evelyn. "The squares are beautiful for a few days at least; and in the parks, even with a hundred thousand people sharing one's pleasure: it is delightful to be on the rides there, instead of on the stones. And though it is an exotic taste in every sense, do not you admire flowers by lamp or candlelight; bought though they are, and brilliant only for a night, how very beautiful they are."

"It is a fact that cannot be denied—it is quite wrong that it should be so—one ought to think a rose by gas light, as inferior to a rose in sunshine as rouge is to a natural

blush," said he, as he glanced at Evelyn's cheek. "But truth compels me to allow—it must be the contrast, all contrast, I suppose—one does not actually go through the process of contrasting, but it must be the idea of green leaves and flower colours in a new situation, that pleases the eye."

"Perhaps foreigners would tell us, that we only by gas-light see flowers as bright as they should be, and that with our pale and watery sun, we never know them by day as they really appear."

"It is late," said Lady Ipswich, from the window.

Lord Rupert was gone before breakfast each morning, but he came back in the evening, and it was Saturday; he remained all Sunday.

"I heard from Selina, yesterday," said Lady Ipswich.

"Yes, she wrote to me too—she seems to like Paris more than she expected, but as her dancing master is *enchanté* with her progress, it is not surprising."

"My youngest daughter," said Lady Ipswich,

“she is with her aunt, and rather sorry, I am afraid that I am soon to go and bring her home.”

“No, indeed!” said Lord Rupert, eagerly. “She expatiates upon the ecstasy of seeing you; and says, she overwhelmed Cornbury with questions.”

“I hope he answered her better than he does anybody else,” said Lord Ipswich, with a sigh.

“He never refused his pet Selina anything, even to answer her,” said Lord Rupert.

“You both spoil her to the last degree,” said Lady Ipswich, “brothers are always in extremes, they either torment their sisters into crossness, or indulge them into selfishness.”

“I doubt if real good affectionate spoiling ever does spoil people,” said Evelyn.

“Never! I am sure,” said Lord Rupert, “the affection counterbalances all other evils.”

“What else could make one spoil a person?” said Lady Ipswich.

• “Just folly,” said Evelyn, “laziness; it is much easier to give a child what it cries for, I suppose, than to go through the process

of making it good humoured first, and till it begins to cry for the moon, which it cannot have, it never finds out the mischief that has been done."

"Yes, that is what I mean," said Lord Rupert. "People just give a cross brat what it asks for, to get rid of a disagreeable noise, and not because they like to make it happy. Both spoiler and spoilee soon find out, to their cost, how endless it is."

"You act upon that principle, I suppose, Rupert," said his father, "by the country—not to give it what it asks and threatens for, and says it will be ruined without; but out of your great bounty and affection, you will do them what good you think proper."

Lord Rupert laughed. "It's an unruly child at best. No master has had the training of it from the beginning, and late education will not undo the ill effects of early unaffectionate spoiling."

"A bad rider complaining of his ill-broken horse," said Lord Ipswich.

"You think it argues a bad workman, as much to complain of his material, as it does to

quarrel with his tools," said Lord Rupert. However, you must allow that tugging at a hard-mouthed mule is a different affair from guiding, with a silken rein, a well-trained roadster, like that beautiful animal I saw you on the other day, in the Park, Lady Umfraville."

"Rainbow is perfect. But what day did you see me in the Park?" said Evelyn, wondering that he could have seen her without her seeing him.

"On Friday, the day you came here, you were stopped by a party, and turning to speak as I passed, I saw that your horse stopped at a touch."

"Something in the rider too, I think you will find always in these touch and go horses," said Lord Ipswich.

"You are fond of riding?" said Lord Rupert, as they strolled out into the garden. while Lord Matlock went to the gardener.

"Excessively. Lady Matlock rides, I think; I saw her the other day."

"Yes—we ride together, whenever we can, but it is so seldom! We have as many rides,

however, as we can, in the holidays, at Billingsly."

"Look here, Rupert!" cried his father, coming out of a hot house, "here is one of the seeds Colonel Pigott gave me, at last coming up."

"So it is! I had quite given them up—there is nothing like waiting long enough. I shall be glad to tell Dorothea, as she got them from the Colonel. It is surprising," continued he, as his father returned with his precious flower pot, "how goodnaturedly people sympathise with one's tastes: so many people knowing my father's love for rare plants, have remembered to bring over seeds or bulbs for him, from the most out of the way places."

"People always do sympathize with a real enthusiasm."

"Some people—not all: there must be some enthusiasm in a nature that has the power of comprehending the objects of the enthusiasm: to those who do not comprehend it, it is only ridiculous: and to ridicule is so easy."

"I do not know that understanding the object is so necessary," said Evelyn. "Where

the ignorant has great admiration for the enthusiast, I can fancy great sympathy even with what is not understood."

"The feeling of admiration is exactly what I doubt," said he, "to feel admiration, whatever philosophers or poets may say to the contrary, I do think requires some nobility of mind."

"To admire our 'birthday nobles' splendid liveries,'—every mob in the street does so on a drawing-room day," said she, smiling.

"And a degree of nobleness of mind, it requires, I will maintain," said he, smiling too, "is it not generous of a mob neither to dread nor to desire, but simply and generously to delight in a pomp that they can never emulate. Do not you think an English crowd in the park, watching for the Queen to come by, are a nobler crowd than a set of French republicans, *'à la lanterning*, all aristocracy."

"That is exactly what I say, that there may be enthusiasm, without any reasoning about it, or at all comprehending the real grandeur of what is admired."

"You think I have just taken the opposite

side from which I set out at, but I was speaking of an English mob, as generous. I said it required some nobility of mind to be enthusiastic, or to feel for it, and as I know by experience, that an English mob can hiss: I mean, that when they do admire, they show their natural generosity; but they can be made to feel all the mean envy and hatred that the enthusiastic, the ungenerous always feel: the ungenerous are more among those who are nearer the objects, it is of want of power of comprehending enthusiasm, in those who could do so, that I spoke of."

"Yes—and I think you suppose more is necessary than there is: persons may admire a character that they do not fully understand; and how much devoted attachment has been often shown by those who felt only the attachment, and who cared for the enthusiasm, only because they cared for the enthusiast."

"At first, perhaps—but it must be a very dull sort that stops short at that," said Lord Rupert, "who is ready to run down, or up the hill which is harder, with the runner, only

because they like him, without knowing or caring what they are to find at the top."

"The pleasure is in the race, is not it said so," said she.

"To a race horse, or a race horse rider, perhaps, but when a man runs himself, he has some end in view."

"You should not speak so disrespectfully of a horse's feelings—horses have a great deal of feeling."

"I would not breathe a syllable against them—but as they are out of hearing, and as I spoke of them only in rather a corrupt state of existence, I trust that their nobler kinds will never have their feelings hurt by what I so incautiously let fall."

"Led away by the heat of argument, you might have wounded the noblest heart!"

"And where my enthusiasm would have been so little understood, it would hardly have been pardoned."

"If your horse, carried away by the eagerness of his feelings, were to kick you, you would hardly pardon him," said she.

"I should make allowances. the best

dispositions are sometimes just past all control."

"But allowance is not always made for the provocation. People are ready to tell of any body being in a passion, but very seldom think that it was a case past human endurance."

"They are not very wrong; I suppose there are very few cases past human endurance, although the statute-book allows justifiable homicide."

"But society does not allow of justifiable ill-breeding or ill-temper."

"Because people have no business in society with these kind of provocations. In the ordinary course of society nothing should be heard to stir up any unpleasant feelings, and it is not likely that there should people come out to seem their best, and to put away care."

"If they can, but it does not always succeed; and when the brow is only smoothed outwardly, it is very apt visibly to be ruffled again on very little provocation," said Lady Umfraville.

"It is an odd remedy for care, certainly," said he, "to bring it out into a crowd, and to

think to lose it there, and not pick it up again. One would think it more natural to go and hide it, and deal with it alone."

"Much more sensible to trust to mere noise, the absolute force of outward circumstances, the mere bodily sensation of a great crowd, and a going on of things—to carry the mind out of itself."

"You think the plan of putting on silks and velvets, and appearing in the well-lighted drawing-rooms, safer than sackcloth and ashes, and scourging with knotted cords?" said Lord Rupert.

"The sackcloth and ashes would only make the matter worse, it would be only putting one in mind of misery without attempting to remove it; the whipping would be on just the same principle as the going into a crowd, it would be stunning the mind by bodily sensation. But unless one should get some one else to use the whip, perhaps one would never do it hard enough."

"One reason of running into a crowd to get rid of care is, that people want to prove that they have none: going to a cell, and flogging oneself, or being flogged, is an acknowledgment

of misery that a man must be very miserable indeed to have arrived at."

"Yet how few would acknowledge they were happy."

"Very few are capable of happiness," said he; "very few let their natural feelings be their happiness; it is only when the heart mistrusts that it asks about whether it is joy or not—you are not afraid to acknowledge your happiness?"

"Not at all; I am, and have always been, so happy I never questioned it myself, but I should have always answered the question unhesitatingly—'perfectly so, thank you.'"

How much happiness she had made for herself, in the wild dream of pure romance, about him, who now stood beside her! and how little he could dream of how much enthusiasm he had so unconsciously been the object!

Lord Ipswich came up; the evening was over; Lord Rupert was gone. Mr. Windham came early the next day, and he and his daughter returned to town. Their hosts were very civil, but they lived out of the world; and if the world did not quite forget them—for they

were father and mother of the Prime-Minister—they forgot the world so completely that, considering Lady Umfraville and her father as of it, they thought no more about them, except that Lord Ipswich reminded Evelyn, as he handed her into the carriage, that there would be, on the 12th, a finer show at the Horticultural Gardens than there had been the last time, and hoped that she would be there.

They returned to town, “from Somersetshire,” the newspapers kindly informed the public; gaiety was still on the increase, and every body getting deeper and deeper into the whirl of engagements.

It was the 12th of May, and she went to the Horticultural Show, again with Lady Amery.

Evelyn was handed from the carriage by Lord Rupert Conway, and Lord Ipswich was obliged to take Lady Amery’s arm.

“Are not these beautiful,” said Lord Rupert, stepping before a dazzling bank of azaleas.

“Beautiful! and I am so fond of azaleas; but I think I should admire them, more comfortably at least, if there were not all these gay

flies hovering about them," said she, smiling at the well dressed mob which filled the gardens.

"Primroses one would admire more by oneself; a cowslip, whose perfume is of the first spring ramble, the first run of the Easter holidays, it would disgust me to see in a *soirée ambulante*—(one may have that as well as a *thé dansante*, I suppose) like this; but azaleas and camellias, and cactuses, all those exotics seem as suitable as these forced strawberries, and as different from the 'strawberry blossom' that one 'spares' in the wood, as a cactus is from a cowslip," said he, as they stopped before a refreshment table. While he was handing an ice to Lady Amery, Lord Ipswich asked Evelyn if she did not admire the flower show.

"Oh, it is delightful!" said she.

"But Lady Umfraville would prefer it without so many other ornaments; she cannot see the flowers for the belles."

"That will not do for a pun," said Lord Ipswich, good humouredly, "but I should be delighted to show the gardens on a quiet day."

"My father has the private *entrée* here

always," said Lord Rupert, "and he quite respects you, for wishing to become more intimately acquainted with his favorites."

"On Friday, Lady Umfraville, if you and Mr. Windham are disengaged, I will call for you at four o'clock, and then you can really study the merits of the collection."

"And you can really tell me the name of this wonderful flower?" said the Duke of Plessingham, joining them with the Princess von Rheinfels on his arm. "Here," said he, pointing to a splendid lily which was on a stand.

"You are quite right in admiring it," said the old fanatico, "it is new from South America, 'the Braggomia,' called after Bragg, the famous botanist."

"Well I was not far out," said the duke laughing, "I called it the *Ornithorinca Farofarnia*."

Lady Umfraville and Lord Rupert laughed too; Lord Ipswich looked rather scandalized; and the Princess said, "It seemed as if length of name was indispensable to a flower."

"If you really want to name a flower," said

Lord Ipswich, who did not like this nonsense, "here is another lily, which is yet unnamed—Here is a beauty ! The 'Umfravillia,' if you choose."

"But here is your compatriot, princess," said Lord Rupert, seeing the Princess look actually mortified that the honor was not hers, "this is from French seed, and superb it is, as you see, shall it be 'La belle Hortense.'—"

Quite reconciled, La belle Hortense was all smiles "*Et la cérémonie de Baptême ?*"

"Give a leaf with a smile to each of us," said the duke.

"A leaf!" cried Lord Ipswich, there were but two on the whole plant.

"A petal," whispered Lord Rupert.

"Oh, a petal I mean," said the duke, "a petal from the flower all round."

"Pull off the petals!" cried Lord Ipswich, with a look of such horror that the princess started, and began to think the ceremony of christening a flower in England was no joke.

"Belle Hortense, this"—continued Lord Ipswich, turning away from the duke with

disgust, and noting in his pocket-book, "and this the 'Umfravillia.'"

"The Evelina is prettier," said Lord Rupert ; which shall it be ?"

"The Evelina," said Lady Umfraville, while her heart beat at hearing Lord Rupert almost call her by her name, and she blushed so deeply that the princess's large dancing eyes were fixed in amazement.

"But on the other hand," said Lord Rupert, "Umfravillia sounds much more scientific—genus *Umfravillia*, one might see in the Hortus Cantab. ; but Evelina might be for a hyacinth in a glass—it sounds ephemeral."

"I shall speak to the directors, and have the names entered," continued Lord Ipswich, and turning to his son with complacency—"That is a very just observation, but the Evelina is only a variety—it is not even a new species."

The duke bowed, and they walked on.

"How little discoverers, who name new islands, and ports, and so forth," said Evelyn, "can foresee their destiny—some place called with great care, perhaps, unknown except on the map, and some silly Cape Jane—called

after the captain's youngest daughter—or Duck Harbour—after the first duck shot that season—may become renowned.”

“While Wellington Beach, or Nelson River, are never heard of,” said Lord Rupert; “but that is ‘their misfortune not their fault.’”

“Why did you say I was like Portia?” said Evelyn. “Quick insight into character was it not? Just the first name that occurred to you?—it turned up as you opened the ‘Shakespeare on the table?’”

“That would have been only a lucky *sortes*: I spoke from conviction. Unlike Cape Jane, or Duck Harbour, your situation and your character agree: they are both Portia-like.”

Lord Ipswich and Lady Amery, who preceded them, sat down while the carriages were called. The duke and the princess were butterflying about elsewhere. Evelyn sat down. “People do not choose by caskets now,” said she, hesitatingly, “and yet on what small circumstances does every one’s destiny hang.”

“We cannot foresee the circumstances,” said Lord Rupert, “but we can command them—at least, be prepared for them. It

seems the nearest approach to that hero character, that intuition of genius, which the ancients deified; when if a man does not exactly 'see what he foresaw,' he is prepared to meet all circumstances. It is the nearest imitation of that—given a Bane, and found an Antidote—which is every thing in the mere material world."

"One's own feelings one can rule; but one is never independent of the feelings of others, over which one has no control." She rose as she spoke, and the little Vernon girls, being at last convinced that their mother would not stay for the banquet, they departed.

CHAPTER IV

EVELYN and her father dined at Lord Amery's. "Will you not come to the meeting on Friday," said Mr. Vernon.

"We are going with Lord Ipswich to the Horticultural Gardens on Friday."

"Had you not enough of them to-day?"

"We went to-day to see our acquaintance, and to be seen of them. On Friday we go to see the flowers."

"And now you are going to Almack's. You will not go to the missionary meeting, where you might be improved, but you will go to this ball only to be amused."

"And is it not fortunate that I am amused, so many whom I meet there find it 'so dull.' I am very fond of dancing."

"I wish I could convince you how wrong it is."

"That is kind of you, because you think that would add to my pleasure in doing it; but it really would not."

"I wish you would be angry at what I say, said Prior; "I wish you would say, 'you are very impertinent.'"

"You are very impertinent," said Evelyn, gaily.

"No, no," said he, smiling and shaking his head, "that will not do. You are not displeased; I had rather you were, I should then have some hope of you; anything is better than indifference. You are never vexed, and yet we never agree."

"Oh yes, we agree in spoiling this little troublesome boy," said she, playing with his youngest brother, who stood before her, eager to say something: "Do you know what, Lady Umfraville—Miss Champion is to be away next Tuesday, and we are all of us going to a party at Mrs. Bowen's, at Wandsworth."

"I wonder how Miss Champion would punish you, young man," said Prior, "if she heard

you say, 'I tell you what,' when you are speaking to Lady Umfraville."

"We cannot agree even about poor little Willy, I perceive," said she; you will not spoil him. I should have overlooked the bad English, in favour of his belief in my sympathy."

"Is he to usurp all your sympathy? Am I never to have any of it?" said Mr. Vernon, earnestly.

"When we were his age, we had great sympathy: Do you remember the scrape we were in, about unmooring the boat," said she.

"Oh, pray tell me about the boat," cried Willy.

"What is this," said Lord Amery, "what larks of yours, Lady Umfraville, with Prior, in your youthful days, are you confessing there?"

They laughed, and joined the rest of the company, much to Willy's disappointment, as he did not hear about the boat; and Lady Umfraville went to Almack's, much to his brother's discomfiture, as he perceived he made not the slightest impression upon her.

Lady Umfraville and Mr. Windham went, with Lord Ipswich, to the Horticultural Gardens, and it was very agreeable, for he was perfectly acquainted with all they saw, and most able and willing to impart his knowledge. But Evelyn, though exceedingly fond of flowers, and glad to learn, had expected Lord Rupert to be there, and felt out of spirits all day.

The Ipswiches departed for Paris, nor did she see any more of Lord Rupert until Monday, when riding with her father in the park, they accidentally met him on his way to the House, speaking to his sister, Lady Matlock, just coming into the Park as they were leaving it; she merely spoke and rode on; but Evelyn heard her say to her brother, "Are you to be at the rehearsal-concert to-morrow?" and Lord Rupert reply, "Yes, I shall try hard for it," and Evelyn rejoiced that her father had settled they were to go. But the next morning, when ready, and the carriage coming to the door, "The Miss Vernons" were announced, and two of Lady Amery's little daughters entered with very melancholy faces. "What is the matter?"

“We were going to Wandsworth, you know, to-day; but mamma has one of her bad headaches, and she cannot go, and she says she cannot trust us with any body but you. Old Mrs. Blisset, Mrs. Bowen’s mother, we were to call for; but mamma says that unless you can come too, we must go home and send the carriage for Mrs. Blisset, but mamma hopes you have no other engagement, as I am sure so do we.”

Evelyn said she had another engagement, but that she would give it up.

Mr. Windham did not wish to lose an opportunity of obliging the Amerys, and he did not like his daughter losing the music, which she so enjoyed.

“It is such a pity,” continued Georgiana, “that Prior is gone to see some friend at Cambridge; he would have been with us.”

“I will go, my dear; you shall not be disappointed,” said Evelyn, with a smile that Prior would have enjoyed without his usual compensating sigh.

“You are very good-natured,” said her father. How much it cost her he did not, nor

did any body know. If thanks and happy faces could repay her, however, she was amply rewarded, for Willy's doleful countenance, as he kneeled on the front seat, watching the door, expanded into the most radiant delight, as Lady Umfraville appeared. They called for old Mrs. Blisset; and when they reached Wandsworth, the party were so many, and enjoyed the boating, and dancing, and dinner, and archery in the evening so intensely, that Evelyn felt almost as gay as they did. She was sitting on a turf throne, distributing flowers to the victors, who, with bows and arrows, and shouts of "mine's in,"—"you've hit," were running back and forward, as noisy and joyous as possible, when the Duke of Plessingham appeared.

"I met Mr. Windham as I was going to the park, and he told me you were here, and I thought I might come too. I am as fond of seeing children happy, as you are,"—and his good-natured countenance expressed so much admiration and sympathy in her kind-heartedness as almost to confuse her.

"Here is a bow," said their hostess, flattered

at the duke's visit, "Lady Umfraville gives the prize."

The duke shot, and the children shouted—"Oh, how bad! Oh, Duke, not even hit the target."

The duke diverted himself and the young party with all manner of grimaces—aiming too high, and too low, and too wide, like the clown of a pantomime.

"Look! look! how he fumbles at the string." "Now—Oh, look! he's shooting backward! Oh, what a face!—look how he squeezes his eyes, and twists his mouth, and never hits anything!"

"Attention!" cried the duke, as if throwing off his clown disguise—"Now you shall see what you shall see," and his first arrow struck the gold—a second the centre—and a third quivered almost upon it. Shouts of ecstasy burst from the little crowd, and the duke came for his prize.

"I expect a crown," said he, falling on his knees, "I expect that crown like Miss Vernon's; it is mine, lawfully mine."

The children gathered round, as Evelyn,

laughing, put the wreath on the head of the veriest child of the group.

"The Victor crowned by the Queen of Beauty," cried he, as he rose, and Evelyn descended from her throne.

"Oh, if it was a real tournament! cried Georgiana, "and Lady Umfraville really judging the victorious knights."

"Shall we have a tournament?" exclaimed the duke. "I have often tilted—I can carry away the ring splendidly."

"I never saw riding at the ring," said Evelyn.

"You shall then; I declare I will have a tournament. There is a glorious place—a real tilting-ground—at Plessy Canons; real knights have fought there."

"And can any one, in these degenerate days, pretend to imitate them."

"Do you know," said the duke, earnestly, "that is quite a mistake about our degeneracy. I have often put on the armour at Plessy Canons, and it is rather tight, and I could dance in it: I do not feel the weight in the least."

The duke was six feet two, and large in proportion.

“And the other day when Rupert Conway was trying on one of their cavalier buff coats, at Billingsly, and neither he nor Cornbury could put it on—at least, it was not large for them.”

The duke chattered on, as they walked towards the house, but Evelyn heard no more, Lord Rupert and his cavalier buff coat had taken her back to her early dream of the Battle of Edgehill, where Prince Rupert and Sir Gaspar Conway had fought side by side; and she mused upon those days of yore, from which, in spite of the duke's stalwart form, she thought the present sadly fallen of; not, indeed, in their heroic air, thought she, as Lord Rupert's look, expressing “the will to do—the soul to dare,” rose to her mind. “But where is the opportunity?”

They had entered the drawing-room before she awoke from her reverie, when Mrs. Blisset came up with—“lateness, and dew, and Lady Amery,” and they were to go.

The duke was still full of his tournament.

“I am going to have a tournament at Plessy Canons. Mrs. Bowen, I invite you and all your party now: Lady Umfraville is already engaged, as the Queen of Beauty, to present the prizes.”

Evelyn laughed.

“Oh, I am quite serious,” said the duke. “It shall be splendid. It will be better than going again to the Cape this year. I will consult Wycherley: if he takes it up, he will be just the fellow for it—he will do all the poetry of the thing..”

“But you cannot count on him,” said Mr. Bowen. “What do you think his last exploit was?—he imported twenty Moors—Algerines, he calls them Moors—to his Irish property, and wanted to marry them to twenty of his tenants’ daughters!—to improve the race, he said. But the fair daughters of Erin totally refused. He had quite a rebellion: the priests were excommunicating him, and the old women were going to beat him to death with their spinning-wheels; and the young men would have made it no joke, as they threatened him with their shillelaghs, and he had to make a very hasty retreat.”

“And his Moors?” said the duke.

“Oh, he has them in Hampshire, at Bricksby; he writes to his steward every day to know if he has made up any matches yet; and Prior Vernon is converting them. But the best thing is, Colonel O'Neill, of the Guards, I heard this morning at the Carlton, was going to challenge Wycherley for insulting the Irish nation with his pitiful Moors; and Thorpe and Darrell had ever so much to do to keep the peace, for Wycherley was personally hurt, such an undersized fellow he is; and the colonel is taller than you, duke, and said something about ‘little men;’ however they were pacified into a wager; and Sir Luttrell and Colonel O'Neill have a bet pending—O'Neill is to bring up forty Irishmen, each four inches taller than his Moors, in ten days time.”

“So like Wycherley—never knowing what will come of what he does.”

“But I thought Irishmen were always tall—‘A host of tall Irish cousins,’ the song tells us,” said Mrs. Bowen to Evelyn, who had never thought on the subject, and went home to be consoled by her consciousness of good-nature, for hearing from her father that he had sat

next to Lady Matlock, who had Lord Rupert with her.

Days passed on, and she saw no more of him. She saw his name for ever in the "divisions," and in the Councils, and going to and from Windsor, but she saw him not, and almost wished she had never seen him. She felt that it was absurd to suppose that a man occupied with the fate of empires, and given up to ambition, could have a thought to bestow on her. She knew she was not the mere trifler, the mere fashionable he must suppose her; she knew that she was capable of valuing his powers and his character, but how was he to be aware of that? Yet, he said "I was Portia!"

CHAPTER V.

MR. WINDHAM asked Sir Luttrell Wycherley to dinner, rather against his daughter's will ; but he was a man much talked of and much invited, and, therefore, it was creditable to have him. He sat beside Evelyn.

“ What do you think of Lord Rupert Conway ? ” said he to her, suddenly.

“ I have always admired his abilities and his character, and his manner seems perfectly unaffected,” she replied, with a calmness which disarmed impertinence.

“ I have always thought him the happiest man in the world,” said Sir Luttrell, “ I think so now more than ever. Do we not want a word, Lady Umfraville, that should express a something, not envy of another, but that one would wish to be that other ? ”

“Emulation.”

“No!—emulation implies activity—rather to surpass than to take the place of. So gifted by nature, so favoured by fortune, as Conway is. That is another word which we want, one which will describe those whose powers are as a curse.”

“Is it not, that the thing is not in nature, therefore the word cannot be in language: to wish to have another’s good fortune is envy and nothing else; and to turn a blessing to a curse, is in the receiver, not in the gift.”

“You do not then think *une âme trop sensible*, is *un don fatal du ciel*.”

“I thought, hearts unknowing how to feel, was the curse; I am sure I should think it so.”

“I should have thought you enthroned on your own calm majesty, above us vulgar mortals, the sport of our passions.”

Lady Umfraville made no reply.

“Had you ever your fortune told?” said Sir Luttrell.

“Never! that is an act of vulgar mortality I should never wish to be guilty of.”

“If a gipsy then were to be at the door

now, or a more sublime conjurer, would not you learn your destiny?

“What could they tell me, that I do not know already?”

“Have you your horoscope before you?”

“As far as any one can, I must know more of my fate than any gipsy or astrologer could. The particular accidents of life, no one can foretel: those misfortunes that our own faults are likely to lead to, we know best ourselves.”

“Shall I read your destiny as the stars have written it? You will find it come true.”

“Of course, if you understand the oracular art; there can always be an interpretation—the plague that was interchangeable with the famine, or the Jerusalem chamber, or Josephine and Malmaison—I should admire your ingenuity; nothing can be more ingenious than the science of oracular answers.”

“You consider it a mere play upon words? you do not believe that fortune, fame, power, life itself, are as a star, or governed by their movements.”

“Oh, no!—Do you? If you do, enquiring

into it, is only—as you said the other day about the missionaries—a paradox, an infirmity of noble minds, it has been; but I really cannot comprehend why. To know a coming misfortune would be to try and avoid it; if it is avoided, there is an end of the prophecy.”

Sir Luttrell’s dark countenance was irradiated with pleasure at Lady Umfraville’s recollecting what he had said before, and he was silent. She talked to her other neighbour, and the conversation became general.

“Has Sir Luttrell been telling you of his Atlantic Wall?” said Mrs. Bowen to Evelyn when the ladies retired.

“No,” said she, thinking it might have been better worth hearing than his fortune telling.

“That is his last freak; he is going to build a wall on the coast of Kerry, where his estate is, and means to persuade government to extend it to Donegal! He says all the bad weather and storms in Ireland come from the Atlantic, and he will build it out, and so make a fine climate, and save ‘that unhappy country’ from its annual starvation.”

"I think government will wait to see the effect in Kerry, first," said Evelyn.

"Do you think Sir Luttrell agreeable?" said Mrs. Bowen.

"One is curious, of course, about what a poet says; but there is an effort about him that is tiresome."

"He is a curiosity, indeed, exactly," said Lady Louisa Darrell, "you have heard of his Moors and his wager with Colonel O'Neill, but do you know how he lived in a balloon? Colonel Darrell told me that it really is a fact, Sir Luttrell lived months in a balloon."

"But how did he get the balloon to stay for months in the air?"

"I do not know, I am sure," said Lady Louisa; Darrell did not see him in the balloon, he only heard of it."

"Perhaps he only talked of it, to make people stare," said Evelyn; "the object of most of his talking, I suppose."

"You are invited to Windsor, on the Ascot days, are you not, Lady Umfraville?" said Lady Louisa.

This subject had hardly been finished when

the gentlemen entered, and Lady Louisa immediately attacked Sir Luttrell Wycherley.—

“How long did you live in your balloon?”

“Four months, I think,” said he, carelessly.

“Really and truly in a balloon?”

“Really and truly in a balloon. Why should living in an air yacht surprise you more than Plessingham’s living in a water yacht, every summer?” said he, languidly.

“Lady Umfraville wants to know how you made the balloon stay quietly up in the sky all that time?”

“He turned instantly, in an animated manner to Evelyn.

“So you have realized Laputa!” said she, smiling, “or were you not the slave, instead of the master, of your air-yacht?”

“Very much so, I confess; but it was a glorious time. There was a sublimity in my peril that has left all dangers flat in comparison. Mine was a fire balloon; I was at the mercy of the elements. Tossed by the winds; a spark would have blazed my habitation like a rocket, and left me to fall like the stick; and more than once, in passing through

a cloud, my fire was extinguished by rain, and down I came. It was in the desert, and I had no fear of being twisted into a tree, or impaled on a spire; the descent was so rapid, so 'sheer,' that I hardly knew it till I touched the earth. The worst of it was how little I could see below me."

"There was not much interest in looking down on the desert. Did you never Asmodeus over any city?"

"There was my helplessness: it seemed as if I always got into the same current, I never got far from the same spot. But there was something divine in the first soar above mankind. No hermitage like a balloon, the true dwelling place of a misanthrope. Spurning not only man, but earth itself: to live 'communing with the skies,' literally."

"How could you ever give up your heavenly abode, and condescend to live again in the smoke and stir you had escaped?"

"My heavenly abode left me in a very unheavenly way, like that of my predecessor, the false Mahomet; it was found, and the Arabs took me prisoner, and a new thread was knot-

ted on the web of life, and I e'en lived upon earth as before."

"The conclusion is come, certainly," said Evelyn, "I wonder you did not follow the example of your predecessor, and enact Mahomet; or set up as some new sect-founder: the cloud-seer would have sounded as well as the Veiled Prophet, and would have succeeded as well, I dare say."

"Read your own destiny, you might well speak of," said Sir Luttrell, in a low voice, fixing upon her those 'large dark dilated orbs, so often the characteristics of overwrought genius.' "Read your own fate!—you have read mine! No human being could have told you, for no human being ever knew my intentions. I *had* formed the project to be a new Mahomet—a new prophet—the ruler of millions—now, and for ages to come. How incessantly I meditated this idea in my floating throne; I felt I was above mortality.

"It is not yet too late," continued he, in a still lower voice, and with great emotion, while his eyes still fixed upon Evelyn, seemed to flash

absolute fire. "It is not yet too late; if you ——"

He stopped short at Evelyn's look of unrestrained surprise. After an instant, however, he went on: "You say one knows one's own fate! And yet in what mysterious ignorance we live! What a mystery is the unopened door of a house, of a room, before you enter it! How little, when I followed the footman up stairs, the other night, at Mrs. Bowen's, where I have been a hundred times, how little did I foresee that on the other side of that unopened door was my fate!"

Evelyn coloured deeply; not from being considered Sir Luttrell Wycherley's 'fate,' but at the thought of how her own fate had, too, been in that room; how she had watched that opening door, and of her disappointment at the entrance of Sir Luttrell himself.

He watched the blush, but he could not comprehend the look of absence, which accompanied it.

"How little," continued he, "how little did I fancy that after all my wanderings, all my

adventures, and after the curtain had, I thought, long since fallen on the serious scene of life, after I had thought I was hereafter only to make the most I could of laughing at the farce, to find the curtain suddenly rise once more, and disclose—perhaps, the real tragedy of my existence.”

“Is not the mixture best—tragi-comedy, mixed drama? the most Shakesperian, the most natural—the tragedy and the farce are seldom so very far apart,” said Lady Umfraville, rising and joining the rest of the party.

Sir Luttrell immediately went away, and Mr. Windham having entered into a discussion with Colonel Darrell, on whether it was a canton or an augmentation in the Darrell coat, and further enlarged on the different arms borne by the Windhams of Norfolk, and the Windhams of Somersetshire, the ladies addicted themselves to *écarté* with the other gentlemen, or resolved a new pattern for a carpet-work, or some subject as interesting to them, as the canton was to Mr. Windham.

CHAPTER VI.

“WHEN did you return?” said Mr. Windham to Prior Vernon.

“Only last night. You did not think I could have been more than twelve hours in town without calling here?” And when Evelyn gave him her hand, he held it for a moment, as he looked in her face; and as he let it go, he sighed.”

“‘Poor lost thing, thou art—’ that look said, if ever look could be interpreted,” said she, laughing.

“Not lost, I trust?” said he, gravely, as he glanced at Mr. Windham, who was busy with his violoncello. “So Sir Luttrell Wycherley has been dining here!”

“Is that what you are sighing at?”

“I am surprised at Mr. Windham’s asking such a person.”

"Take care, Mr. Vernon," said Lady Umfraville, "nothing against my father, if you please; or, I may say, 'you are very impertinent,' seriously, and be, not angry but, much worse—displeased."

"Do you like Sir Luttrell?"

"I thought him most disagreeable the first time I met him: now he seems a kind of curiosity, a person who is willing to be an actor, whenever he can find an audience."

"Especially such an audience as you are."

"He is not well-bred, I think; he talks too much of himself."

"He is a bad man."

"I am not to sit in judgment, on every body's merits, to whom I happen to be introduced."

"But a person of your influence, in the high position you hold in society——"

Mr. Windham caught these words, and laid down his instrument; he was pleased at this picture of his daughter's consequence.

"In the high position you hold in society, with all the irresistible," and he said it with emotion, "irresistible powers you possess, you

should mark your disapprobation of the wicked."

"You speak very flatteringly," said she, smiling, "but surely you do not wish me to be what Sir Luttrell said was your definition of a ministering angel."

Prior looked too much vexed for speech, and Mr. Windham not knowing what it was about, thought that matters were going wrong, and interrupted, with—"You had better look over these books, Evelyn; the man will call presently to know about the binding."

They looked over the books; there was not one worth reading, in Prior's opinion, except a volume of sermons, by a friend of his, which he had given to Evelyn—he took it up. "The leaves are actually cut, I see. That much attention you have paid this poor book?"

"I read it, I believe, every word."

"And admired it?"

"It is very eloquent, I think."

"Eloquent it is, and I wish," continued he, in a low voice, as Mr. Windham took a volume of prints to examine in the window, "I wish you could remember some of the passages in

these Sermons as well as you do such vain remarks as you just now repeated."

Having Sir Luttrell quoted against him, Mr. Vernon could not get over. Evelyn laid a splendidly bound book before him. "Do you like this binding?" said she.

"It is beautiful, but I perceive," said he, relaxing into a smile, "I see you think I am not worthy of the outside; you hide the title from me."

"Sir Luttrell Wycherley's Poems," said Mr. Windham, returning to the table and glancing at the book.

"I wanted your unprejudiced opinion of the binding; I knew you would say it was frightful, if you had seen what it was."

The darkest gloom overspread his countenance: everything announced "a presentation copy." He opened it—"Homage, from the author to Lady Umfraville."

"Obliged to borrow a word from the French! methinks an English poet might use his own language—that patchwork French and English is so affected."

"Is it not very well to adopt a word from

any language that expresses what we could only say by a roundabout phrase?"

"I prefer sterling plain old English."

"A scrap from the great 'feast of languages,' may be very palatable though," said she, "even with our solid roast beef and plum pudding expressions."

"I cannot say anything against Anglicized French," said Mr. Windham, "for my favourite science is, in fact, all French—only ill-pronounced. Even you, Prior, do not despise Heraldry; and you would be puzzled to find Saxon synonymes for all our terms. By-the-bye, I have got an order for seeing those MSS. in the British Museum: you would like to look at them. Will you come with us? Can you go to day, Evelyn?"

They went. Perfectly secure of Lady Umfraville's company, the drive was delightful to Vernon—he was quite happy: and they spent some hours looking over musty parchments in the most amicable manner.

"How sorry Scribes must have been," said Evelyn, "when printing took away the whole glory of their skill."

"It was a glory ill-compensated by the locking up of all knowledge," said Prior, "every man can have his own Bible now."

"Reading these long rolls must have been troublesome," said Mr. Windham.

"But how much more valuable the contents were," said Evelyn, "when to get at them was so difficult; and then the illuminated margins gave such an interest to every page."

"As your ladyship is fond of these things," said the curator, "I will shew you some splendidly illuminated MSS. we have in the next room."

They followed him, and as he laid the books on a table, two gentlemen deeply engaged with some prints looked up—the Duke of Plessingham and Sir Luttrell Wycherley.

"We are engaged in your service," said Sir Luttrell to Evelyn, in that subdued voice, proper to the place, but which gave a confidential air to what he said.

"How?" said Evelyn, surprised.

"Look here!" said the Duke, vainly trying to moderate his joyous voice to a proper key.

"Look here—this is the very thing; a whole

tournament, ready depicted for us. Here we enter, and there you sit."

"Bright eyes rain prizes; fair hands bestow good gifts," said Sir Luttrell.

"Are you going to have a tournament?" said Mr. Windham.

"Yes," said the Duke, "Did not Lady Umfraville tell you of it?"

"I thought it a mere joke," said she, conscious, that she had not heard one word in ten, of what the Duke had said of it.

"It was Miss Georgiana Vernon," said the Duke to Prior, "who suggested the idea."

Prior looked as if he could have whipped his sister with pleasure. "What can she have heard about such things?"

"Not from you," said Sir Luttrell, "your conscience is perfectly clear on that subject; but Lady Amery should be informed of the melancholy fact. As a good brother, take care that her having not only heard of, but spoken about, a tournament, be properly punished. Three irregular Italian verbs, and seven hymns, to be learned before night: her penance."

“Lady Umfraville has accepted the post of Queen of Beauty,” continued the Duke, “and you, Mr. Windham, if you would be Marshal of the Field, you would be invaluable; we should be sure of our costume, and the whole being in perfect keeping. Wycherley is skilled, too, but he wants to be one of the Knights. I engage to provide the place, and the rest of the heroes. Prior, you are to be the Grand Master of the Templars.”

Mr. Windham was excessively pleased at the idea, and took it up eagerly. They remained sometime, looking over prints and books of Chivalry; but as the Duke led Evelyn to her carriage, she said, “Do not you think Lady Barnstaple should be the ‘Queen of Beauty—’ she is, I am sure.”

“But it is all for you,” said the Duke, eagerly, as he looked at her.

“I shall like to see the Tournament, of all things! But I should not like to be the giver of the prizes.”

“It was your doing it so charmingly at Wandsworth, originated the whole,” exclaimed he, more earnestly still.

Evelyn coloured, but went on as they waited for the carriage to draw up—"I know you are the most good-natured person in the world, Duke; if you will not like to vex two persons, Lady Barnstaple, by not being, and me, by being Queen."

"I would not have you vexed for a single instant, for anything!" cried the Duke, fervently. "I would give it all up, rather than give you the slightest annoyance—I will speak to Lady Barnstaple. At all events, I am your Knight."

Mr. Windham did not hear the words, but he saw the look which accompanied them as the Duke put Evelyn into the carriage, and he was satisfied. The Duke of Plessingham, for his son-in-law, would be perfection. Preferable, even independently of his rank, to Mr. Vernon, though he was so thoroughly excellent and so well born, that Mr. Windham would have made no objection had his daughter liked him, but he rather dreaded his seriousness.

Prior hesitated when asked to accompany them home: the Tournament had overturned

cried Mr. Windham. "and Lady Barnstaple—Beauty! She was a beauty ten years ago—she may think herself so, still; but nobody else will. And Barnstaple only an Earldom of George the Fourth—Marquis only the other day—their first peerage only 58 George III. Barnstaple!—Woolstaple would have been much more suitable: old Mr. Golding, the grandfather, was, neither more nor less than a Gloucestershire cloth weaver. The descendant of a wool-comber to be Queen of a tournament!"

"Indeed," said Evelyn, laughing, "I am afraid the Duke of Plessingham would not care, if she had combed wool herself, provided she was well dressed, and did her part becomingly."

"As if she could! If he knows no better, he should not attempt tournaments," said Mr. Windham, and so exceedingly was he disgusted at what he considered a slight to his daughter, that he felt now not the least wish for the Duke as his son-in-law. He had before, a painful suspicion that his grace knew nothing of genealogy, or heraldry, but he had tried

to disguise from himself the melancholy truth : now it burst forth.

“He give a tournament! He did not know to-day that he was entitled to wear the Maintville arms—indeed he did not know what arms they were.”

“He knows more of Lions shot at in the plains of Caffraria, I am sure, than lions rampant or passant in any other field argent or gules,” said Evelyn.

“Let him go to his lions then,” said Mr. Windham, “and give up his tournament.”

“He had much better, indeed—” said Vernon, quite pleased at this turn of affairs.

“Plessy Canons, where real jousts have been held, would be quite disgraced by such a one as he could get up.”

“Have you ever seen Plessy Canons?” said Prior to Lady Umfraville, “It is a glorious old place.”

The idea of Evelyn, mistress of the ducal palace, of Plessy Canons, rose in Mr. Windham's mind against the possessor's unhallowed ignorance, and he stopped at his house in a very discomfited state of mind.

Mr. Vernon might well wonder that Evelyn was not intoxicated with the homage she received, or made selfish by the vortex of amusements in which she necessarily lived. Old Lord Umfraville had died enormously rich ; his successor had not had time to spend much, so that she had every claim to be the fashion in London. Wealth, certainly, the first ; her rank was nothing in itself—but peeresses in their own right are not very common ; and her beauty was very uncommon, though certainly meriting the lowest place in human, or at least in London, calculation. The constant calls upon the time, and the purse of the English great, is certainly a curse—but a pleasing curse—a worry, but a flattering worry. Writers of *Annals* entreated to be allowed to dedicate to Lady Umfraville ; charitable institutions earnestly solicited her name as one of the lady-patronesses ; editors begging for her subscription for some maudlin poetess, or broken magazine hack ; a long array of pious paupers, with Prior Vernon at their head, who were always building a church, or founding a school, or sending out a cargo of tracts ; and

whose audacious importunity is scarcely justified by its success. Luckless widows; cases of unparalleled distress; and artists innumerable, seeking assistance, or entreating for a sitting.

Mr. Windham at last fixed upon the person, he thought most worthy to have the honour of painting the portrait of Lady Umfraville, for King Richard's gallery at Umfraville—a gallery in which Cœur de Leon had dined, and where hung what was called his picture.

Evelyn was at what she hoped, was her last sitting, when the Duke of Plessingham came in. Mr. Windham received him coldly. The painter was delighted.

“I was calling in Privy Gardens, and was told you were here. Lady Barnstaple ‘has been graciously pleased to accept’ the Royalty, and I have almost made out my company of Knights; their badges are to be a secret from all the world, even from you; from everybody but ourselves, and our Earl Marshal or Lord Warden of the Field, or whatever you should be called, Mr. Windham,—I leave all the *historique* of the thing to you.”

“You had better, indeed,” muttered Mr.

Windham; and he was so little reconciled to the usurpation, that he said—"I only accepted the office, thinking that my daughter was to preside."

"It was Lady Umfraville's own 'ungracious acceptance' that led to the change," said the duke.

"Oh, you must be Earl Marshal, Sir," said Evelyn to her father.

"I do not think my services will be valued," said he, "as they will not be understood. Evelyn herself says, you do not know gules from argent."

"I am *d'une ignorance crasse*," said the duke, with his imperturbable good-humour; "but my humility should disarm reproof; and at all events I am Lady Umfraville's Knight, and will do my devoir stoutly, as her champion against the field. 'Do my devoir,' that is very correct, is it not, Mr. Windham? but I learned it from Wycherley. Am I not candid?"

"You are, indeed," said Evelyn, with a smile at her father, which he, at least, found irresistible; and he agreed to be Earl Marshal of the jousts; while the entanglement of the

the titles, Umfraville and Plessingham, danced before his eyes, he had, for several hours been determined, that Lady Umfraville and Mr. Vernon, to become Lady Umfraville and Lord Amery, would be much more distinguished than even duke and duchess—still strawberry-leaves are strawberry-leaves—and his livery was blue and white, and very splendid.

“I must engage you to paint the tournament,” said the duke to Mr. —, “only I so detest being painted, you must catch one flying, or copy one from ‘the only likeness now extant of his grace’—an original, certainly—done by, I do not know who, when I was ten years old—a striking likeness of my pony, at all events.”

“What does your Grace think of this likeness?”

“Oh, I may look, may I? It is beautiful! It is perfect!” and he looked at the original and at the painting with undisguised admiration. “Are you satisfied with it yourself? Is not it exactly what you see in your own mirror?”

“No, for Mr. — is so agreeable, that I

seem in my picture as if I was listening to something entertaining, and one does not look amused at oneself in a looking-glass."

The duke spoke to everybody of Lady Umfraville's picture. It was not half finished, but all the young gentlemen of her society went to see it, that they might tell her how they admired it, at the next party or ball at which they met. She was utterly bored, but Mr. Windham was quite elated; he was perfectly satisfied with the attention she received; the unacceptable number of their invitations, and the crowd of suitors that followed in her train.

Evelyn looked only for one, whom she saw not—unseen, Lord Rupert had been as in imagination, a hero of romance; but having become acquainted with him, having been, as she thought, distinguished as worthy of his conversation, she felt mortified at herself for expecting to see more of him, and at her own inconsistency in admiring him for the very exultation which hid him from her. At Windsor she hoped, however, to meet him again.

CHAPTER VII.

“ Non : quoi qu’en disent les poètes, ce n’est point dans la solitude et sous la chaume, que l’amour regne avec le plus d’empire : c’est dans les palais, c’est entouré des plus brillantes illusions de la vie, qu’il naît avec promptitude et qu’il s’accroît avec violence.—DE GENLIS.

AT Windsor she met Lord Rupert; but although she saw him, it did not advance their acquaintance : for he was always beside Her Majesty or with the Prince. It, however, only raised still higher her admiration of his powers, and the sort of exultation which she felt in his high position, honored with his sovereign’s confidence, receiving it so gracefully ; so perfect in that true greatness, to obey as well as to command ; so sensible of the trust committed to him ; so possessed with the authority above him ; so capable to wield that which was given to him. She listened to his conversation ; she

felt his ability ; she watched him as he stood, and followed him with her eyes when he rode beside the Queen, and forgot herself in the ecstasy of her admiration for him. But so well accustomed to her own part of homage-receiving was she, that she seemed to be receiving, civilly at least, the attentions of those by whom she was surrounded.

Ascot was over ; and the last evening of her stay, when they returned from riding, Mr. Windham took her and a large party to the top of the Keep to see the view. She was leaning on the battlements, gazing from that "stately height" at the prospect beneath her, when Lord Rupert was by her side. "What an unrivalled view!" exclaimed she.

"Yes, it would have been wrong to go without having been up here." You are pleased with your visit?"

"Enchanted! 'A Queen to live and die under,' to live and die for!"

"Ha!" cried he, with sudden emotion, and with a *eureka* expression of countenance, as if he had indeed found a heart in unison with his own.

"How delightful to hear such enthusiastic

words! Everybody feels it perhaps, but so few—none express it. Chained in our English reserve, fettered by the strange affectation of uninterestedness, which is quite a national characteristic, we never hear a burst of fresh feeling.”

“It is better surely. It would be so unworthy for us to be like the French—all a mere loyalty of exclamations—so vehement and so fickle. I knew who I was speaking to,” said she, colouring very deeply, “or even this scene would have hardly made me overcome the reserve, or the affectation of conventional common place.”

“I feel that as more than a compliment,” replied he, with feeling, “but certainly ‘here, if ever from an English heart,’ enthusiasm should break forth—the very Castle of Chivalry, itself.”

“It is almost like a dream to me,” said Evelyn, “I can sometimes scarcely persuade myself that it is real—it seems to me more as if I were reading a ‘Waverley’ romance, than living my actual self. To be in the society of the ‘daughter of a hundred kings,’ in this

palace of her chivalrous ancestors, the noblest in the world; seems more like reading a description, or the sort of double sensation of a dream, the being at once what we see and the person seeing it, than a mere reality—but then one feels how gone are all those high chivalric days. This melancholy serenity of profound peace,” continued she, with a smile, as she turned to follow the rest of the party, “is chilling in such a scene. That mighty sword of Edward the Third’s, in St. George’s hall, seems a mockery to those peace-filled stalls.”

“The Duke of Wellington’s, for instance,” said Lord Rupert, smiling in return. “The Black Prince would have been quite pleased to have him beside him.”

At the opera, the evening they returned to town, the Duke of Plessingham came to their box. “As you come from court,” said he, “I am sure you know nothing of state affairs—a dissolution next week.”

“You don’t say so!” cried Mr. Windham. “Those pitiful radicals have they brought it to this!”

“Yes, it is all the pother they keep about

the budget," said the duke; "and so Lord Rupert has advised a dissolution."

How painfully did these words mortify Lady Umfraville; it seemed to show her the chasm which separated her from her idol—the barrier that could never be passed. How absurd—how childish, must she have appeared on the Keep, talking of dreams of chivalry, when he must have been so utterly pre-occupied with the business of the day.

"You do not care about dissolutions," said the duke to her. "No more do I; but it will interfere with our tournament most grievously. We have our tilting-ground here, and my knights-companions cut a splendid figure, I assure you; but now they will be off to the country, shaking hands with the butchers and bakers, and counting up their everlasting poll-books. . It is too provoking, is it not?"

"Breaks up the season altogether," said Mr. Windham, mournfully.

"Just so: however, the ball at Buckingham Palace is not put off; we do not lose that; and there is a great fête on Thursday-week at the Princess Rheinfels—we shall just not lose them."

Sir Luttrell Wycherley came in. "This dissolution is very sudden?" said Mr. Windham.

"Stroke of genius, I suppose," said Sir Luttrell. "We must submit; Lord Rupert Conway ordains it: it must be right."

Lady Umfraville became so intensely interested in the performance, as Sir Luttrell was speaking, that she turned her face quite from the box. Sir Luttrell silently admired the back of her beautiful head and neck, till, at the first pause, the duke said, "Do you know why Wycherley is so downcast? He is lamenting that he cannot be two people at once."

"As you are Irish, Sir Luttrell, said she, almost revengefully, "perhaps you can be as your Irish birds can be 'in two places at once.'"

"That is a puzzling assertion of yours, Lady Umfraville," said the Duke. "Wycherley cannot for the life of him settle whether he is Irish or not. When he is patriotic, it is all 'my country and her wrongs,' and so forth, and then a priest curses him, or a parson preaches to him, and then he is a Briton only! Are you Irish to-day?"

"Lady Umfraville says so, and so I am."

"But you do not ask why he wishes to be two people; he wishes to be at once the Great Unknown and the Great Known. At our tilting-ground, two unknown Knights appeared, visor down, and all right. Quite in rule, Mr. Windham, is it not? I ought to have sent officially to you, as Earl Marshal, their devices;—no names. One is Knight of the Lion, the other of the Lily—a lily on a blue field. It is very delightful, is it not, Lady Umfraville?"

"Delightful; but I suppose you are all quite aware who they are."

"Not in the least; I just guess Lion to be St. Leonard; but I have no actual reason to think so. He is not one of your knights, so you are not expected to tell us: he has entered himself as Knight of the Lion, to support the pre-eminence of Lady Una against all comers. We are booked." (Mr. Windham winced at the word 'booked'—it seemed so Racing Calendarish), for 'the Peerless Evelyn'—Wycherley's idea that—very happy sounding, is

it not? and the Knight of the Lily is yours. Perhaps you know who it is?"

"Not at all; I had not an idea you were really getting it up so regularly," said she, annoyed at the "Peerless Evelyn," and the nonsense of the whole thing.

"Wycherley so regrets he did not think of being a Knight of the Balloon."

"Knight of a Balloon, my dear Duke," said Mr. Windham, "such a confusion of times."

"Perhaps your Knight of the Lily is Prior Vernon," said Sir Luttrell. "He dare not for his sanctity appear openly, and yet he would gladly break a lance in your honour, I am sure. I suppose it is Prior. A soldier priest, a Palmer, or, in other words, glad of the sport, if he can take it without losing caste."

"I do not think you understand Mr. Vernon's character," said Evelyn; "he is perfectly sincere; if he thought it right to break a lance at a tournament, I am sure he would do it gallantly, and if he thought it wrong, nothing could induce him to do it."

Sir Luttrell said nothing, but the half-laughing, half-sneering expression of his countenance

changed to one of haughty vexation, and he immediately left the box.

At the conclusion of the opera, while Lady Umfraville, the Duke, and her father, were waiting for their carriages, Sir Luttrell passed them, escorting a very beautiful lady, and she heard the Duke say in a low voice to her father, who stood a little apart—

“That is Mrs. Rawson. It is a pity she has put herself out of society, for you would be so entertained by her. Poor Rawson is abroad somewhere; he cannot bear the publicity of a divorce; she is so witty and fascinating, and wonderfully clever she must be, for she has kept Wycherley among her followers longer than he was ever kept to anything else. He is so eccentric; he used to play tremendously at one time, and then, suddenly, would not touch a card, nor spend a halfpenny; he lived in steamboats, from one coast town to another. Then he said dreams were better than realities, and he lay in bed all day taking opium.”

“He nearly killed himself, I believe,” said Mr. Windham.

“Yes; and people were beginning to be

tired of him and his dreams. He took to reality again, that he might not be forgotten."

When Evelyn came down to breakfast one morning, she found Prior Vernon and her father deeply engaged with poll-books and lists of voters. Mr. Vernon was going to stand for their division of Somersetshire. She wished him success.

"I scarcely think you really wish it; you have been convinced by Sir Luttrell that my object is to make my fellow-creatures miserable."

"Evelyn was defending you against him last night," said Mr. Windham.

"Indeed!" said Prior, colouring with pleasure. "It was doing any accusation of his too much honour; it was only too flattering to me."

"There was no accusation exactly," said Lady Umfraville, "I merely said he had mistaken your character."

"It was generous of you, after I had been so angry at your quoting him against me. You are not really, then, going to have him for your knight at this tournament, that everybody is talking of."

"The tournament is all nonsense of the Duke of Plessingham's, I believe, I have nothing to do with it; and the election will employ everybody now for the rest of the summer.

"I hope you will desire all your tenants in Leicestershire to vote on the right side, Lady Umfraville."

"Yes, by-the-bye, so you should, Evelyn," said Mr. Windham, as he finished breakfast, and was leaving the room. "I will get you that list, Prior, directly."

"You can almost turn the election," continued Mr. Vernon.

"I have not the least influence, and have never been staying at any time at Umfraville. I know nothing of the people."

"But you have power over them; you can tell your agent it is your pleasure that they should vote so."

Evelyn was silent.

"Do not you think every proprietor should direct their people to vote rightly?"

"But if the people think it wrong? It would be glorious if one's clan felt such respect

for their chief that they voted as he did, sure that he must be right; but I should never think of commanding their opinions."

"Cornbury cannot hope for your interest, then."

"Is Lord Cornbury the candidate?" said she, as she felt that to be the means of gratifying Lord Rupert by assisting the return of his brother, was indeed a temptation.

"Yes; did you not know that? *The* member that should be."

"If I had a vote myself, I should give it to him of course; but I will not interfere with any one else."

"Mr. Wyndham approves of your doing so. He desires all his tenantry to vote for me."

Evelyn made no answer.

"Though you would not come to the meeting to hear Mr. —— for me, because Mr. Windham did not like it, yet now you act in direct opposition to his wishes. That is, you regard a mere worldly matter of this kind as of more consequence than the highest of all considerations—religion."

"You speak of my father as if he were a

tyrant, instead of being the kindest friend. You know very well, that if I had asked him to go to your meeting, or your church, he would have done it because I wished it."

"You acknowledge, then, that you did not wish it."

"I never denied it: I did not wish it; but if I had, I hope I should not have persuaded him to what he disliked."

"Your own opinions cannot be very well fixed, as you do not wish to influence any one else by them."

"And yet you say I ought to give up my opinions about the votes! That is," said she, smiling, "you think to obey Papa; is graceful and admirable when obedience agrees with your views, and that it is most troublesome and affected when it counteracts them. I am afraid your principles are not very well fixed—they change with your objects."

"Whatever your principles may be," cried he, in an agitated manner, "why—why can we never agree?" said he, coming up to where she sat, opening the leaves of a new book, "Are we never to agree in anything but in

spoiling little Willy? If you would but think seriously, you would perhaps agree with me in renouncing the vanities of the world, and fix your views on the world above, and use those captivating powers to save others too."

"No, Mr. Vernon, I should be sorry to suppose I could ever be so utterly false to myself as to intrude on the opinion of any human being, or ever trouble any one else with mine."

"You think me intrusive, I am sure; but that I am used to, and the profound interest I cannot but take in your welfare——"

He stopped as Mr. Windham returned at last, with his list, and Evelyn left the room. Prior would have been deeply mortified had he known that not one word was thought of by her but the name of Cornbury. She knew that she had only to write to her agents, and desire the Umfraville tenantry to vote for Lord Cornbury to ensure his return. She was perfectly aware of the powers she possessed; she was deeply anxious not to abuse it, and yet, when she pictured to herself Lord Rupert perhaps thanking her for having supported his brother, the lighting up of his countenance, the change

of his voice from the current flow of ordinary conversation, as it had changed at Windsor. The proud thought that her station enabled her to serve him, and that on such a subject, she must be in some degree connected with the business of his life, that they would be really thinking of the same thing, that she would be admitted beyond the outer court of his mind, was so enchanting, that she indulged in a long and delicious day-dream of the conversation that might ensue. She went no further, however; she thought it would not be right to torture poor people between their conscience and their farm. She only regretted that her possession was so new; had she and her father always lived at Umfraville, she was sure that kindness would have met its just reward—their people would have felt and voted with them.

When she and her father were riding in the park, Sir Luttrell joined them, beginning with his usual affectation of abruptness—"Do you think that revenge is a crime, Lady Umfraville. If Mr. Vernon were here, he would say it was unchristian, but we all know that."

"What question can there be as to its criminality, then?" said Mr. Windham, simply.

Evelyn smiled to herself, as she thought how she was thus exposed to a cross-fire between the poet and the preacher, and replied, "Revenge for the wrongs of a nation, like Zanga or Shylock, is something grand and tragic, at least; but such revenge as could be gratified in these civilized times, mere individual spite, seems too pitiful to merit the name of crime."

Sir Luttrell bit his lip, he was disappointed, it was not what he expected—to be lowered to a pitiful spite—when he intended to have been looked upon as the hero of a grand crime, was disheartening; and he was silenced for sometime.

"You seemed very attentive to the opera, the other night, Lady Umfraville?"

"Yes, it is such a pretty opera."

"You prefer the opera to the theatre; you would rather hear 'Otello,' than see Othello?"

"I should reverse the words: 'Otello,' is surely more of a spectacle, as far as the story is concerned—it is rather a pantomime, with

music interspersed, than a drama. One admires the music, and the story must touch even in dumb-show ; but who could compare it to Shakespeare ? To his 'Othello,' well performed, as you have seen it ?" said she, to her father. "Fond as I am of music, I never could like to see or hear metamorphosed, that which had in its performance touched me so much : the nature of Shakespeare is lost in opera music."

"Of all roads to fame," said Sir Luttrell, "that of an actor has always appeared to me the least satisfactory. It is always on the road, it never reaches fame. His glory is ephemeral, he lives only in tradition, we take it on trust, that Roscius and Garrick were perfection ; and the next generation will allow that there was a Siddons, and an O'Neill, but they can never know the reality of their powers."

"Yes," said Evelyn, "I can only enjoy hearing my father tell of Mrs. Siddons and Kemble, but I can read your poetry with him. A poet's fame is not mere tradition."

Sir Luttrell bowed, and said—"I shall be

quite satisfied with the fame of your remembrance."

"You had better stop there," said Mr. Windham, "the force of compliment can no further go."

"We had better change the subject," said Evelyn, gaily, "What is your horse's name, Sir Luttrell? it is a beautiful creature."

"'Firefly'—it is new, I flatter myself."

"And appropriate, I am sure. It seems so spirited," said she.

"Yet so gentle. If you were to see him at speed, you would estimate his merit in keeping to this peaceful round. The merits of many a human character are as unjustly weighed: the outward quiet demeanour may cover a heart of flame." He looked at Lady Umfraville, and went on. "The spirit which can submit willingly and cheerfully to the dull round of common-place society, while feeling itself so superior to it, is valued in inverse proportion to its endurance, the more *kindly* the yoke is borne, the less its galling is known. Some one individual only may penetrate the veil of forbearance, so slight and yet

so impervious, and see the beauty within. Some hand may be destined to kindle the concealed flame. Perhaps," continued he, in a voice that only reached Lady Umfraville, "perhaps I know the secret of your spirit as well as I do that of 'Firefly.'"

Evelyn blushed, and looked surprised and displeased, but Sir Luttrell went on, aloud, "I had once, in Italy, a project for taming the Lucciolas."

Mr. Windham laughed, "That is a good idea! And what were you to do with them?"

"Harness them to the car of a Fairy Queen, I suppose?" said Evelyn.

"No, I intended them for my own amusement. I collected a great number and tried to make them circle in glories, orb above orb, a link of light between earth and air."

"But they were refractory," said Mr. Windham, "they were too erratic, and I gave it up."

"It was a cruel project," said Lady Umfraville, "to want to trammel their free dartings and their graceful floatings to the routine of a figure."

“ It is late,” said her father. They rode home and Sir Luttrell left them only at their door. Mr. Windham was not quite satisfied with his attentions ; he was glad to be seen in the company of so very remarkable a person—but this was not the match he wished for his daughter ; Sir Luttrell Wycherley’s was not the character, or the reputation, to which he would like to trust his daughter’s happiness, and he rejoiced in the breaking up of the season, as it must interrupt their acquaintance.

Parliament was dissolved, and it was at the House of Lords, at the dissolution, that Evelyn again saw Lord Rupert : she listened to the Queen’s speech as his, and looked at him with mingled pride and sadness ; proud of his high position, sad at the insignificance of all her rank and all her consequence in his estimation, and yet once she thought his eyes met her’s : it must have been fancy, but as he turned to the peeresses’ seat, she thought he distinguished her. She was so pre-occupied, that she was unconscious of how many eyes were fixed upon her. Her beauty, her first appearance there,

her grace, her youthful dignity charmed all her beholders.

The Princess of Rheinfel's *fête* was the last of the season. Evelyn was dancing with the Duke of Plessingham.

"I fear," said he, "we must put off the tournament, if you will permit."

"But Lady Barnstaple is the Queen of the Fête. I have nothing to do with it."

"Oh, you are the soul of the whole thing. I would not say so to Lady Barnstaple, of course; but she is, whatever she may think, only Queen in name. She says it cannot be this season."

"It cannot, I am sure," said Lady Umfraville, in hopes that it might be put off *sine die*. "She moved that it be performed this day six months."

"No, not exactly; that would never do. It must wait till next year. As soon as I know when Easter is to be, it shall be fixed for the Easter holidays."

"It is to be hoped Easter will be late, then, or everybody will be afraid of the cold."

"A fine sunny day in Spring. Easter Mon-

day, the Longchamp promenade day: everybody must be warm, whether they are or not."

"It is a long time to look forward to," said Evelyn.

"We are not so old," said the boyish Duke, with his usual *insouciance*; "we may look forward that far, I hope. But between the election and the meeting of Parliament afterwards, and the fuss about Ministry and its majority, no one would have time either to practice or perform, or even to behold. And perhaps it is for the best; my knights will be better trained, and the Unknown perhaps become Known."

"That would be a pity," said Evelyn; "the mystery will have a fine effect."

"You would rather not know who they are; I am really utterly at a loss myself now; but if I do find out, I shall conceal it from you."

"Sir Luttrell has not appeared in his double character yet, has he?"

"No, no!—I should find him out directly. He has not even chosen his device—he is waiting for you to fix it, I suppose."

"What is yours?"

"The Maintville crest, Mr. Windham said

I had a right to it, and that I could not have any thing more knightly: I do not know how I come by it, I am sure."

"The tressured staff and scollopshell?" said Lady Umfraville, "It belongs to the Crusades!"

"So he said. Wycherley remembered Hercules with his club and hide—it would have looked very well, I thought," said he, as he led her to a seat. "I am going to Algiers, during the elections—I shall have time for some nice yachting and some sport there, and then make what progress I can with my recruits before the hunting begins."

"Is not fox hunting very flat after killing real wild beasts?"

"I declare I do not think so: there is quite as much diversion, much harder riding, and it is not so confoundedly hot. I shall bring home a lion's skin for you, my trophies to be laid at your feet. A lion's skin is a famous rug."

"Insulting to the king of beasts—to trample on him when fallen!"

Lord St. Leonard asked her to dance, and

everybody being determined to make the most of their last ball, it was kept up to an unusually late hour. And when Evelyn and her father met at a late breakfast, they found Mr. Vernon waiting for them, with a book in his hand, and a most lugubrious countenance.

"You were very late last night, or rather early this morning, I understand?" said he.

"Yes—my father was so kind as to stay to the very end for me ; but, he says, he was not tired, and slept delightfully."

"She was so happy, I could not be tired—and you see how fresh she is after dancing all night, as fresh as a rose."

That Prior could not deny ; but it seemed only to aggravate his grief.

"Do you leave town on Monday, as you proposed?" said he, in a solemn tone.

"We do," said Mr. Windham, "and you?"

"I go to night. I should have gone but for a Bible meeting to-day."

"Well, I shall soon join you, and do my best for you ; we are pretty sure, I think, now. Bognor has declared for us. It is well you start for my county, and not for Evelyn's—for

she will not say a word to influence her Leicestershires, for Lord Cornbury; and although her notions are somewhat flighty, she thinks she is right—and so she must act of course.”

She looked with an arch smile at Vernon, but nothing could mitigate his gravity. “It is a great pity that so much power should be given to women who do not know how to use it, while those who should overrule such whims do not do so.”

“I am too wise to attempt to govern where I have not the power,” said Mr. Windham, good humouredly, “she never thwarts my whims, and she never had a whim but this, and she is her own mistress, you know.”

“That is what I regret; having ceased to be a child, she should still act so childish a part—to dance all night and dress all day.”

“The dressing all day, I deny,” said Lady Umfraville.

“Now Prior,” said Mr. Windham, gaily, “do not forget yourself on the hustings, and begin a sermon instead of a speech.”

“I hope I shall have a more satisfactory

audience. Lady Umfraville only smiles, and my words pass by her like the idle wind."

"Not 'the soft breathings of the south,' certainly," said she, "a biting north easter, I think you are sending upon us."

"How are you to endure the country after all this gaiety?" said he.

"I am so delighted we are going home, and are not to lose all the summer in town."

"You will find it a very different thing being at Enmore, for months, without dukes or poets, or a human being worthy of your smiles."

"There are a great many human beings about Enmore who will smile upon me, I know, when I go back."

"No operas, no balls."

"You will give us an election ball of course, if you are successful," said she, with a half laughing, half playful look. "At all events, Mr. Dalton will—and it will be called the members' ball, and you will be put down as one of the stewards."

"Only say it is for the benefit of the Esquimaux converts, and it will be quite in character," said Mr. Windham.

"Will you come to the Bible meeting, sir?" said Prior, introducing two red cards.

"No, I will not go to this Bible meeting, sir," said Mr. Windham.

"It is in vain to ask Lady Umfraville then to let my mother call for her?"

Mr. Windham hesitated.—"Yes, my dear, if you do not dislike it, as I shall escape the bore of it," continued he, laughing, "you will like to hear Mr. ———, who is to speak, and Mr. Vernon too—and you must bring me word how he will do for an M.P. Take care, Prior, if she brings me a bad report of you, I cannot in conscience give you my vote and interest."

Vernon's countenance had now quite relaxed, he fairly smiled, and shaking hands with Mr. Windham, he hurried away to arrange with Lady Amery and go to his meeting.

Lady Amery duly called and Evelyn duly went, and she heard Mr. ——— and many others, and Prior Vernon who spoke well, earnestly, and ardently, if not eloquently; and though there was nothing new or startling in what he said, it was as real sincerity always is,

impressive—and Evelyn could truly praise it to his mother, who looked so anxiously for her applause.

The last days in town were the usual hurry of last calls, arrangements with friends for autumn and winter visits, and all the winding up of the season. And a curious sight London presents on one of these unexpected break-ups: the crowded club-rooms, the thousands of letters despatched in every direction, the knots of consulters, the earnest conference, and then the total vacancy. Those members whose personal safety depended on their privilege, had, with convulsive haste, started off on the first rumour of a dissolution to some place of safety. But now, instead of the usual departing from town, when it is all by degrees, day after day, families are seen to set out, and some, like laggard swallows in October, the very latest still to be seen in the deserted park, but now the immigration was universal, the whole herd taking wing at once; cabs rushing to and fro, loaded with bags and portmanteaus, hurrying to the station; furniture vans blocking up the streets; the travelling chariot and four; and the light

britschka dashing before the well-laden family coach, with little heads at the windows, with unwilling daughters and disappointed mothers within, and sulky footman and over-wrought waiting maid behind, slowly wending its way through Grosvenor gate ; the engagement-book unfilled up ; the dresses unworn : partners unproclaimable ; matches, incompleted, all at once cut short ; and the shopkeepers left lamenting.

Mr. Windham shared in some of these regrets ; he was sorry to quit a scene where all his tastes and all his pride were gratified, but he was comforted by his daughter's delight at escaping from it, and by bringing her away before the lustre of her loveliness had been in the slightest degree dimmed by the heated rooms, or the bustle of a town life.

At Enmore, as she had expected, Evelyn was received with smiles that gold can never buy, and she felt herself at home in every sense of the word, to the utmost extent of the feeling. The business of canvassing and counting votes occupied her father, and she visited her schools and her almshouses, and talked to

her old women with a satisfaction, enhanced by its contrast with the heartless existence and the gregarious amusements of fashionable life. She found herself in her accustomed window of the library, taking up the dropped thread of her former happiness with the keenest enjoyment. She had been absent but a few months, and yet they appeared a vast space in her life, much that was agreeable—some things entertaining, nothing actually unpleasant, and of the characters that had been presented to her study she could now judge at leisure. Sometimes she found herself, in her accustomed strolls, recurring to the ideal she had there formed of Lord Rupert Conway, when the vivid reality would drive away the vision, and she dwelt upon the slight intercourse they had had as the only thing of interest she had known in London, and the slightness was a matter of mere regret; there was nothing painful in the retrospection, she had seen so little of him that he was scarcely now more than he had been before she had seen him, a hero of an imaginary romance, she felt that he was in another sphere, and though her heart beat

whenever she thought of the few words he had addressed to her, she rather wished than expected that she should ever be better acquainted with him. Sometimes when she looked at the newspapers and read of the contest expected to be so severe between Lord Cornbury and Mr. Mercer, she doubted if she was right in her non-intervention principle, but re-judging her reason she abided by it, and reassured herself in her exalted opinion of Lord Rupert, certain that he was too exalted to wish for success by any indirection.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE election for North Somersetshire was concluded, and Mr. Vernon and Mr. Dalton returned by a triumphant majority. Evelyn did not go to the hustings, though her father was rather inclined that she should, as Lady Amery was to be there; he was satisfied, however, in departing himself in great pomp to grace the triumph of his party.

Evelyn had been reading very peacefully in the library for some time, when a footman came in with a note. It was from Lady Amery.

“Just as I was setting out for the hustings, Miss Champion was taken so ill, that I am quite in a fidget about her, and have, in consequence, such a dreadful headache, I can scarcely see what I write, and as you are alone, perhaps you would have the charity to come to me.”

Evelyn went directly, and found poor Lady Amery in a pitiable condition—the governess in a brain fever and herself with an attack of nervousness which made her quite helpless. She stayed all day, played with the children, sat with their mother, and saw the surgeon, who pronounced Miss Campion dangerously ill.

Mr. Windham had engaged to dine at the Town-hall, and Lady Amery sent to beg he would join them at Amery.

They came so late that Evelyn only saw her father for a moment on his return.

Prior Vernon was a man just weak enough to be extremely elated at a successful election, and actually vain of the mob plaudits at his speeches. Evelyn congratulated him when they met at breakfast, but she despised him when she heard his cant expressions of satisfaction, and saw the little that would excite him. He had bored her in London ; but she had never before been so sensible how inferior his ambition was to what she thought ambition should be. Mr. Windham dreamed not of this, and thought while complimenting the new member

that his daughter felt, with himself, that a ducal coronet even was nothing to a victorious candidate.

Prior was obliged to leave home immediately after breakfast to vote at Cambridge, and Evelyn remained at Amery. Her father stayed there also, riding over to Enmore every morning, while she was kindness itself to the pious fine lady. She was indeed one of her oldest friends; she had been attentive to her mother, and always friendly to herself. Evelyn did not regret a moment of the tiresome hours she passed with her. Her illness, though not alarming, was real and tedious, and when her son returned she was still in her room. Prior had arrived just before dinner, and had only time to visit his mother; he met Evelyn as she and Lord Amery were going into dinner; he greeted her with an unusually cheerful voice; but they were at opposite sides of the table, and only general conversation passed till she came into the drawing-room at tea-time.

“I have been so impatient to speak to you,” said he; “my father told me not to go again

to my mother. I hardly dare to ask your forgiveness, for ——”

He paused as a servant came for her cup—
“For my unpardonable impertinence that last day in London. How you have been heaping coals of fire upon my head—not only acting contradiction to every unjust word I uttered, but making me the most ungrateful of mortals. Your kindness to my mother has been so extreme, she spoke of nothing but your attentions, your cheerfulness, your gentleness!”——

“Stop! stop! pray, or I shall never have room to say that I would forgive you, if I had felt that you had injured me in the least; but it was all meant for my good, I know, and I was only surprised you should understand me so little.”

You might well have been surprised that I could ever have thought you in your element in a life of dissipation, only you became it so well.”

“I am glad you think so, for I am going into the only dissipation this county has ever afforded me. We have promised Mr. Dalton to be at his ball.”

Prior's countenance fell.

"What could possess Dalton to plan such a thing! It used to be the merit of this place that there never were such doings in this county. One nonsense of that sort brings on a hundred! It was a pity there was any election—any dissolution."

"You see how even the wisest and most reflective are liable to mistake. You were rejoicing at the dissolution for taking me out of the vortex of dissipation, and yet, you see, I have only fallen into worse—into the low amusements of the little town of ——."

"We are all apt to err, indeed, when we rely on human wisdom," said he, "I wish you would think that."

"I have just said so."

"Why, then, rely on your own wisdom, or on your father's, and do what you have, only to consider seriously, only to bring to the best of all test, to be sure is wrong."

"That is the difficulty; we do not judge by the same test, or *text* as the Princess Rheinfels says, that is, the grand *text* of one who dresses well.'"

Prior smiled, but said, "I wonder you laugh at such a use of such a word."

"I vow you smiled yourself."

"You are glad to make me do wrong, in spite of myself."

"It was wrong, but not the wrong you thought it; my wrong was laughing at a poor misguided foreigner."

They were interrupted by the bell ringing for prayers, and the entrance of the servants. Mr. Vernon expounded with great fluency, and as he was anxious to make an impression on Lady Umfraville, he was to-night very long. Lord Amery and Mr. Windham were fast asleep, but Evelyn attended; she felt that the correctness of his concluding words on enlightening the darkness of the unconverted was intended for her.

Lady Amery was to come out of her room next day, and while she was preparing, the rest took a ride.

"I wonder that you should patronise this vulgar election ball, Mr. Windham," said Prior, with some skill, laying the guilt on the vulgarity.

“When your brother member gives it, you cannot call it vulgar,” said Mr. Windham, steadily.

“We have nothing to do with such things,” said Lord Amery, “and I thought you, Windham, had always on principle avoided the society of those squires and citizens.”

“My daughter and I go to the ball to mark the triumph of our party, of your son and Dalton, who stood with him; and our being in the same room with all these worthy ‘people’ no more make us of their society, than is Jack Peters there, driving his cart, because he is on the same road with us.”

“I wish,” said Vernon, in a lower voice to Evelyn, “you would say you were going to this ball, to provoke me.”

“It would not be true. And why would you wish me to have such an unamiable motive, instead of the innocent one of diverting myself.”

“If it were innocent! But if I could think you wished to provoke me, it would show that you at least thought of me. You listen to me, but I perceive you never dwell on what I say.”

Evelyn made no answer, for it was very true.

"If you would argue with me," continued he, "I might convince you; but though you always differ from, you never oppose me."

"Because I neither want to alter your opinions nor my own."

"That is exactly what I complain of. You are satisfied to say you do not agree with me, and give no reasons for it."

"I have excellent authority for it. Coleridge says:—'Women and ignorant people often give excellent judgments, but their reasons are always absurd.'"

"You are not an ignorant person, and it is just because I so value your abilities, that I am surprised at your being so unreasonable as to say, 'I think I am right, but I will not tell you why.' Either you despise me too much to waste your reasons upon me, or you will not exert your powers to find them."

"That is a disagreeable dilemma Prior has got you into, Lady Umfraville," said Lord Amery.

"It is so flattering to be supposed to have the powers. It would be a pity now to run the risk of showing that I had not."

"That is the way you always slide out of the difficulty—you always did so," said Vernon; "when we played 'puss in the corner,' you always found a retreat."

"And left you 'fool in the middle,' eh, Prior?" said his father, laughing.

"Shall we leave you there now?" said Evelyn, shaking her reins, and cantering on. Prior was between her and Lord Amery—Mr. Windham on the other side. They started off so suddenly, that he was really left behind; and when he came up he looked rather especially annoyed, as he found his father was close to Evelyn, in earnest discussion upon curb chains; and his father kept the place till they reached the house.

Lady Amery sustained her coming out very well; and the next day was to be the last of Evelyn and her father's stay at Amery. She was walking alone when Prior joined her. He had a letter in his hand.

"My mother told me you thought well of

my speech at the meeting, at the time ; you have forgotten it now, I suppose ?”

“ I do not know it by rote ; but I recollect what it was about very well.”

“ It made no great impression, however, though I had you in my thoughts in what I said. But how little human intentions can avail : we are but humble instruments : we can only scatter the seed, we know not where it may fall—we may intend it for one, another may be chosen. This letter,” continued he, with some embarrassment, “ is from a person, personally unknown to me, on whom, it seems, my words made a deeper impression than on her for whom they were spoken. It must seem like vanity in me to show you this—be it so ; I can submit, as I have often done, to the imputation of a bad motive : I show it in hopes of serving you. I cannot let you see the name,” said he, colouring deeply, as he folded back the signature, and put the letter into her hand.

It was a lady's writing, and as follows :—

“ I was at the Bible Meeting on the 1st of July. I heard you speak : my mind has

ever since known no rest. In the agitation and distress of my feelings I have at last ventured to address you—would that I could do so personally, and pour out my whole aching heart before you, certain that you would give me peace. But when you see my name, I dare not hope that your pure mind can ever hold communion with mine; and yet, in your mercy, you will, I am sure, stretch out your hand to me a sinner.

“When I heard your description of one living in his own blindness—one, on whom the light of Truth had never beamed—for whom the Book of Life had never been opened—it startled me to attention. As you went on, it seemed to me as if in a glass, I saw darkling, my own reflection—dim at first, and by degrees, assuming a shape more and more terrific, till, in its full proportions, my own hideousness was, in all its ghastly reality, before me. I would have fled from so appalling an object! alas! from myself I can never fly. You went on: the path I had trodden, flowery as it had appeared in the mirage of passion, strewn before me now, in its brambles, and thorns, and

arid barrenness. The spectral forms of pleasures, long since dead, seemed to haunt me on every side—the enchanter's rod was broken—the vision of happiness was at an end!

“How could it ever seem happiness! has ever since been my constant thought. The worm that dieth not is gnawing at my heart; the fire burneth in my brain. Oh, could you not quench it!

“You held a Bible in your hand; you held it forth and said, ‘Here is peace, here is salvation!’ I read it, but its whispered peace is lost in the tumult of my soul; the appalling denunciations to the wicked, sound as an alarm-bell in my ears; the tinkling of the folded sheep cannot make itself heard to call the lost one home.

“My years are few, but in sins I am old already. Oh, if you can assure me I am still only on the brink—not yet in the black gulf of perdition.

“Blest in my earliest youth by no kind friend who could point the path of truth, I lived only for pleasure. I felt only passion. I cannot in a letter tell you my story. Could

I see you, I would perhaps venture ; and yet, how could you bear to hear it? Write, write to me. Tell me that I have not by thus intruding upon you, only added to my sins. Pour into my wounded heart the balm of consolation. Tell me that I may yet live ; tell me that I can burst the bonds that bind me—break them before they have eaten away my very soul ; give me strength to burst this prison-house—this lazar-house of sin, and taste the pure air of Heaven. Alas ! how lately did this loathsome prison appear a gilded palace. If oceans of tears, if a soul prostrated to the very dust, if a pierced, aching, broken heart——”

Here the paper was folded down.

“ I do not accuse you of vanity,” said Evelyn, gravely, as she returned the letter ; “ but I wonder you could show to any one what was evidently meant only for yourself.”

“ As you do not know, you are not likely to have even heard, or ever to hear of the person. I do not think there was any breach of confidence in showing you what I thought might strike you.”

It did strike her very much. Mr. Vernon had, in his speech, certainly alluded to what seemed to have so struck the writer; but she thought of what Lord Rupert had said of the French power of dressing up one's ideas so as to be much finer than the original. How much wild eloquence was there in this confession—how far superior to any thing that had been in the speech!

“I do not understand how such a person could have been at such a meeting.”

“We do not understand these things. It is not for humanity to comprehend when or how the hard heart may be at last touched. You heard the same words, but how different their effect.”

“I do not think my heart is hard, and surely you do not wish me to feel like this unhappy person. Faults I am ready to cure myself of. You see I am not like Mrs. Raby; I can allow I have faults, and I am most anxious to get rid of them; but you destroy all proportion if you put faults and sin on the same level.”

“I do not think you are wicked now; but I showed you this letter to see what the love

of pleasure may lead—to what you may come by rejecting the only sure guide of life. You say you can bear to hear of your faults: this is your greatest fault—a rash confidence in your own strength.”

“Not in my strength, but in my happiness. I have always been happy myself, and I always wished to make others so; and I must be strangely mistaken in myself, if I could ever find happiness in anything else.”

Prior gazed at her in silence as they entered the house, and said in a low voice, “You may make many miserable—unconsciously, perhaps.”

When they came into the drawing-room, Lord Amery said, “Cubitt has been here, Prior, and says that Daneshill has been bought by Mr. Folliot, after all.”

“How very unhandsome!” cried Prior, looking quite discomfited; “and how stupid of Cubitt; that is the way one’s interest is lost. There are thirty votes at least gone at one blow. It is too vexatious. How much did he give for it?” said he, in the voice of a petted child who had lost his toy. He had been a spoiled

child, and his natural ill-temper broke out on the least provocation.

"If Dalton takes office, he will be beaten at the next election. He might easily have prevented the sale."

And the loss of Daneshill and the folly of Cubitt, and the carelessness of Mr. Dalton, were talked of nearly all dinner-time, and all evening.

"Here is something to reconcile you to poor Dalton," said Mr. Windham, next morning, as he read a note he had received. "He cannot give the ball; his mother is dead, and so you are relieved from that impending danger."

"I am safe so far," said Evelyn, smiling to Prior.

"Safe by chance only," said he.

"You are dissatisfied then, that any one should be saved in any way but your own?"

"I am glad you do not go to the ball, but I had rather it had been by your own will than by a mere accident: I suppose you are grievously disappointed?"

"Not in the least—I do not think it was Mr. Dalton's fault that his mother died, though

you think he is to be blamed because another person buys an estate you wanted."

"And so he is," said Prior, in the same fretted tone; but after some moments he said, with a smile, "I am afraid you will accuse me of being sorry that my mother is well, as it is the cause of your going away. You are really going to day?"

"We really are, and immediately."

"And you are not in the least sorry to go?"

"We are only going three miles from Amery."

"It is such a different thing from being in the same house with you!" said he, earnestly.

They departed, but however different it might be, Mr. Vernon could not have perceived it much, as he was at Enmore almost every day, till he was summoned to town by the meeting of Parliament. He came the day before he was to set out; Evelyn was alone in the library.

"Did you meet my father?" said she.

"Yes, I left my father with him," said Prior, and he hesitated. "I left them speaking of you. Mr. Windham says he should rejoice—

he says he knows of no difficulty—it all rests with you——Oh, Lady Umfraville! you must know that the dearest wish of my father and mother—you have been as a daughter to to her in your kindness—— Dearest Evelyn,” continued he, taking her hand, “You must well know that I love you as—better than my own soul—that I—in short, I cannot leave you, till I can hear you say you do not hate me.”

“I think you must know that,” said she, calmly withdrawing her hand, “you are one of my earliest friends; as a friend, I have always considered you, and always shall.”

“And no more?—Oh do not, do not say so!—Is it then only as a friend?—I still flattered myself that a warmer feeling only could have permitted the intrusive part I have acted ever since I returned from abroad—ever since I saw you again, and knew that my happiness depended upon you—I still wished that you could think as I did—I struggled with myself this whole summer—every day, every hour almost, I wished to hear what were your feelings—and still I waited, still

hoped and prayed that your sentiments might—in the great, the constant subject of our conversation, all our differences—I still hoped you might acknowledge you were mistaken—I thought it—I think it wrong to wish, for an interest in your heart, when all our serious views are so opposite. I think it wrong, and yet so much with you as it has been my fortune to be. I dared to hope you might at last learn to adopt my views. I have sometimes hoped that something besides your natural kindness made you bear with me.”

“I wish you had spared us both the pain of all this,” said Evelyn, with emotion, “I knew that all your advice was from ^{my} regard for me. I was only gratified by your interest in my welfare; I considered it the interest of a friend, at least I wished it to be so. I feared sometimes,” continued she, with a deep blush, “I feared sometimes that you felt more for me than a friend——”

“Do not say feared, dearest Evelyn.”

“It was fear, the fear of just what has happened; and then I had hoped,” said she, with a smile, “that you thought too ill of me,

and that I was mistaken. I must tell you that I heard what you said one day, at Am'ery, the day you showed me that letter, as we came into the house ; I heard and understood what you said, and I dreaded what might follow. I dreaded that you should declare feelings that I could never return."

"Why—why? You have allowed me to speak to you always as if you recollected that we had been companions in childhood, and now so fascinating—so fascinating, that I could not resist you—though so grieved at the incompatibility of our views upon all important truth."

Lady Umfraville sighed—she was surprised at his attachment overcoming his sense of her want of the cant he admired ; she perceived her power, she had often vaguely feared that he was attached to her, but she had fancied he could never declare himself as a lover.

"It is quite impossible !" and she hurried on, "It is better to give you pain only now—I assure you it is quite impossible. I never can consider you as more than a friend," and she decidedly withdrew her hand.

Disappointment and his natural bad temper, changed the expression of his countenance—he could not command himself.

“You are so fond of the world and its gauds, you cannot endure those who despise them. You think I should interfere with your gaieties.”

“You know, Mr. Vernon, that it is not so; you know that to live with those I love must be my happiness.”

“And you cannot love me because I am too serious—because our opinions do not agree—you want me to be as fond of the world as yourself.”

“I should never interfere with your opinions, it is not that, if I could—if I had thought of you with other sentiments than those of friendship; I should have endeavoured to make you happy, though I am convinced that no attachment could alter my own opinion, yet I say it is not yours that influences my decision.”

He interrupted her—“Dear Evelyn, when you were at Amery—when we knelt together, when I prayed for ——, did you never pray with me?”

Evelyn was silent.

He continued—"You do not make my religious bias your objection?"

"I never should do so—I cannot see how the religious opinions of either party can interfere with such sentiments."

"If you would tell me yours," exclaimed Prior, "I am sure they——"

"I shall not tell them to you—least of all, at such a time as this—in a conversation, such as this. The mixture of such things quite disgusts me, and I have already said on the subject all that it can concern you to know, that religion is not and never could be the reason of my refusal."

"Then," cried Prior, "there is no insurmountable barrier: I shall still dare to hope: I am not in the despair I was; I am returning to the sort of confidence with which I came into this room. My father said to Mr. Windham, as we passed Exton Moor—'If this were Umfraville we might throw down this boundary.'"

The proud blood mounted into Lady Umfraville's cheeks, as she haughtily exclaimed,

“Lord Amery is most exceedingly mistaken ; and you, Mr. Vernon, I must take leave to say, most exceedingly presumptuous—Yes, it is just so,” continued she, in a tone of the bitterest contempt, “‘throw down the boundaries, and unite the estates!’” She paused, and said in her usual tone : “You have often found fault with me, Mr. Vernon, and now I must tell you how strangely inconsistent you appear. I do not accuse you of insincerity ; I am sure you never pretend to be anything you are not ; but you do not perceive how perfectly worldly-minded you are. When I was at Amery you complained for a whole day of the loss of some purchase you wished to make—Heaven on your lips, Earth in your heart ; and now, even now, with all the—I do not call them professions, because I believe you really say what you think, as far as you know it—but with all these words of affection for myself,” and she coloured deeply, “you are really in love with my estates and my title. I can truly assure you, that when I saw you so out of temper, so self-interested, I felt disappointed, shocked, and grieved ; I had always consi-

dered you superior to the low concerns of life."

Surprise, mortification, anger, succeeded each other in Prior's countenance, as she spoke; but they disappeared as she concluded, and a slight falter in her voice at the word "grieved," made his heart beat; and, endeavouring to hide his emotion, he at last broke forth: "Bless you for that word—you can be grieved for me; harsh as your expressions are I live upon that: that word is balm to all the wounds you have given! I cannot despair!"

"I did not mean to give you any hope; I repeat, Mr. Vernon, that my refusal is final and unchangeable."

"I submit, for the present. But you do not banish me from your presence?"

"You are going away?"

"And when I return, you do not forbid my visits?"

"No, surely not; only understand that I receive you always, as formerly, as a friend only."

"As a friend!" repeated he. "You will still consider me as your friend! On that

hope I shall live till I see you again. And you may trust me, that I shall not, by word or look, allude to what has past. I shall presume no further, Lady Umfraville, and entreating your pardon for having dared to use a dearer name, I promise you I shall never pronounce it to you again until I have your permission. I perfectly understand that you, at present, do not mean to give me that permission, and yet I do not despair.

They parted : and Evelyn felt that she liked him less than she had ever done before. She opened the glass-door to the garden, and was enjoying the soft autumn air, when her father joined her. He had, after parting with his co-father, remained in a state of perplexed suspense, for he did not well know what he wished to be the result of the conference. While with Lord Amery he had thought that throwing down the boundaries of the estates sounded very well, and that the match with Mr. Vernon was exactly what would be best for his daughter. But when he entered his own study, and began to consider the matter coolly, he felt a pang of regret for the duke,

and the eclat which would attend a duchess ; then wavered upon the duke's undignified ignorance of his hereditary worth ; and again, contrasting his easy good-nature with the strict notions and tiresome zeal of Prior Vernon, he felt more inclined to the ducal side. Of his daughter's sentiments he was in profound ignorance : he had, on principle, refrained from ever questioning her ; he was pretty sure she could never be in love with the duke ; but she had never shown the slightest symptom of partiality for any one. He believed she would be very easily contented, that she was not romantic—little dreaming that it was the very excess of her romance that made her so apparently heart-free ; and yet, rather fancying that the continual discussions which she and Mr. Vernon carried on, were likely to lead to an attachment. He had heard her defend him warmly when attacked ; yet, on the other hand, he had heard her very often laugh at him. He sat down, and got up, and walked to and fro, with every variation of his thought, till he heard the library door shut, and Prior's step across the hall. “He is refused, or he would

come to me. Yet he may think I am still riding with Lord Amery." He went to his daughter.

Lady Umfraville was at one end of a long walk as he entered it at the other; and before they met he had changed his mind four times as to whether she looked as if she had given an acceptance or refusal; he had by no means decided, when she joined him and said: "I am afraid Lord Amery must have misunderstood you. Did you think I could accept Mr. Vernon?"

"I had not the least idea," said Mr. Windham, very honestly; "I told him so: you have not?"

"No, I have refused him as decidedly as I could."

"On the whole I am glad, I believe, my dear child; I am sure you are right: at all events, you alone can decide; and my only fear is, the vexation to his father and mother, who are such very worthy people, and, I am convinced really fond of you, and very anxious for the connection."

"For the connection exactly," said Lady Umfraville, contemptuously.

“That is the affront,” thought Mr. Windham, rejoicing that his duke did not care a straw about connection, and was as rich as Cræsus, so that his daughter’s fortune could be no object to him, and he evidently admired only her beauty.

“We parted vastly good friends,” continued Evelyn, “and I told Mr. Vernon I should be happy to see him here on his return, on his former footing of friendship.”

“Quite right,” said Mr. Windham; and, however Prior had repeated the result of his proposal, it did not seem to have caused any vexation to his father and mother, for no allusion, in her presence at least, was made to what had passed, and the families continued to meet very harmoniously and continually during Mr. Vernon’s absence.

CHAPTER IX.

As the election ball, which was to have been so fatal to Mr. Windham's aristocratic privacy, had not taken place, he and his daughter remained in their usual quiet till they set out for Umfraville, whence they were to pay several visits.

Umfraville was a fine old castle of feudal grandeur, with an addition of Tudor comfort, which made it of picturesque irregularity. Mr. Windham was as happy and as busy as possible, presiding over the arrangements, and Evelyn lived in a romance of the twelfth century, slightly *shot* with one of the nineteenth. She took innumerable views of her lordly towers, and exact portraits of her venerable oaks; made herself intimate with the deer; adopted a favourite fawn; formed a strict alliance with

the parson and the apothecary; and endeavoured to persuade the children at the schools to sit still when she came in, and to tell her what two and two made, without curtseying. The library was small, and contained but few books, and the planning a new room and the looking over catalogues, to form a fine collection, was one of the many employments crowded into the month of October which they spent there.

Early in November they went to visit Colonel and Lady Louisa Darrell; they met Sir Luttrell Wycherley in the avenue: he merely bowed and passed on.

"Is Sir Luttrell Wycherley staying here?" said Mr. Windham, in rather a discomfited tone, to Lady Louisa.

"Yes; he came yesterday; but he is in one of his languid moods now; he did not say three words all yesterday, and now he is but just up: he is so eccentric. He has taken to chemistry, and he is going to be a Frankenstein, Colonel Darrell tells me, on a large scale; he is to hatch men and women like the Egyptian chickens in London, you know."

"It is quite true," said the Colonel; "he has taken a house, very near the Glass-works, that he may have heat, and he has been buried there these two months. I made a pilgrimage to see him; it was perfectly splendid: he was there in a furred gown and cap—a regular necromancer, and looking the part so well."

"What an industrious person he seems to be," said Evelyn; "I hear continually of his doings for notoriety."

"Does he write now?" said Mr. Windham.

"He does, and he does not," said the Colonel; "he has not published under his own name these two years; but it is well known that he wrote that bitter article on poor Quidnunc, in the 'Quarterly;' and people who see the 'Westminster'—I never do—say there is a strange article of his in the last number on — I really forget what. What was it, Poynings?"

"On training wild geese to draw cars through the air. It was very ingenious; it began upon some pamphlet on the best method of reforming railways, and very sensibly treated of acts of Parliament, and Mr. Brunel, and then, gliding into the natural history of wild

geese, ended with a profound disquisition on training them for harness."

"I lay my life he has tried it," said Darrell ; "we shall see him, I dare say, arrive some day, like the Queen of the Fairies, over our heads."

"He has given up his scheme for improving the Irish bogs, I believe," said Poynings ; "but that was first rate. He was to do it by insertion : he cut patches from his best meadows—patches some twenty feet cube, and having the place ready, stuck them into his morass ; but the worst of it was, that instead of inoculating the bog with the virtues of a good soil, the earth proved anything but too solid : down it went to the bottomless abyss of a bog-hole."

"And with it some thousand pounds good money, I conclude," said Mr. Windham.

Before dinner, when Sir Luttrell entered, it was with his eyes half shut, and shading them from the light ; he seemed scarcely to recollect Lady Umfraville, to whom he just bent his head, but shook hands with an air of sleepy *empressement* with Mr. Windham, who did not seem much gratified by his courtesy. At dinner, he sat beside Lady Umfraville, but he

never spoke, except in muttered monosyllabic replies to the attention of his host and hostess. Evelyn was hardly aware of his presence; for all her powers of listening were absorbed by her other neighbour, Colonel Darrell, and his mother-in-law, Lady Pouncefort, a vehement politician, who were discussing the late session, and extolling Lord Rupert, the leader of their party, to the skies, Colonel Darrell every now and then politely addressing Lady Umfraville with some observation which he thought suited to her capacity; for she never opened her lips on the subject which so entirely engrossed her mind.

After the Colonel and Lady Pouncefort had happily annihilated the Radicals, and had entirely agreed in their admiration of Lord Rupert, they fell out on the corn-laws. My Lady was a well-read political economist; the Colonel a great landed proprietor, and into the tangled wood of duties, and scales and bonded corn, her Ladyship fearlessly plunged, dragging after her her unwilling son-in-law, who would have declined the thorny path, and made a last effort to escape by asking Evelyn if she had

come by Matcham Cross or Hongly Down. She answered, but she only answered; there was nothing in her reply on which he could instantly hang another thread of discourse, and he was obliged to resume his attention to the political economist, who went on at the cue word "bonded corn," and Evelyn listened through it all, because every now and then occurred, "how Lord Rupert said," or "how Lord Rupert's intention is." The Colonel, irritated by the thorns, plunged deeper and deeper in the wood of words; dinner was over, dessert was passed, and the raised tones of Lady Pouncefort's theoretic voice, and the sturdy drone of Colonel Darrell's practical obstinacy were only ushered by Lady Louisa rising and withdrawing the ladies.

She was very fond of *les petits jeux*, and as soon as her mother and her set were established at whist, the rest of the party proceeded to play at magical music with the exception of Sir Luttrell, who stretched himself on a sofa apparently asleep.

Mr. Windham was unrivalled in his performance of the directive music, and a taper

had been duly placed in a Chinese joss : Colonel Darrell's picture had been turned with its face to the wall, and Lady Pouncefort's cards exchanged with her partners, by the several performers, when Lady Umfraville, having been banished to the ante-room, was recalled to play her part, and having been sound-compelled to discover, and take up, and light a long piece of Chinese incense, she was further guided to apply her torch to Sir Luttrell, but he, aware from the not very suppressed whisperings of the plotters, of what was about to be, was prepared, and having been, with apparently closed eyes, watching every movement of the half playful, half embarrassed grace with which she performed her task ; the moment she waved her torch before his eyes he sprang up and exclaiming, " Who could withstand that ethereal torch, who could be blind to that angelic light—" led her to a seat and declared his readiness to join the game.

To perform a self-sustained or self-emanating part in this game requires no small skill in the musician, and infinite patience or quickness in

the victim; the union of both was crowned with success, and Sir Luttrell having been compelled to sing a song, burst forth instantly into a comic ballad, which he sang with a spirit and humour which astonished his audience, and, the whist company having ended, the company broke up into knots of conversation. Sir Luttrell seated himself by Evelyn, "You did not think I could sing—still less, that I could sing a drollery?"

"Perhaps I had not formed any opinion on the subject."

"You are incapable of that—you are a musician I know, and you had determined that I was not musical."

"It seems that I should have been a very bad judge of musical countenance then, as I should have pronounced a very wrong judgment."

"No—you could not have been a bad judge or bad anything else, that you could judge of my musical powers by my face is nonsense."

"Why then suppose me to judge by nonsense? Shall I tell you why? Because you wanted a subject on which to begin—you took

that, as it might have the double merit of giving you a subject for eloquence and of making me ridiculous. Suppose you now take the other side and give me a lecture on musical countenances, you could do it quite as well, the adverse side you just have settled with a word. Cannot you make the favourable view longer and more entertaining?"

"What extent of skill you flatter me with the possession of."

"You must be at least very patient of labour, few ploughmen could have gone through so much exertion as you have done to night. What a farce it must have been on yourself, to lie on the sofa all night when you must have been aching to be with Lady Louisa's merry party."

"To keep my eyes shut when you approached me was, I acknowledge, an effort beyond my strength, you see it was. I was a poor enchanted half man, half marble—you broke the charm."

"But it had quite answered its purpose, you had heard several people say, in a low voice, quite loud enough for you to hear, 'how

very odd is Sir Luttrell Wycherley ;' you did not expect more did you?"

"I confess I did, I expected—just what occurred,—that Lady Umfraville would recall me to life."

Insufferable coxcomb! thought Evelyn, but she smiled unconcernedly as she replied "You have heard of the man who had the power of dying when he pleased?"

"How do you mean?"

"A man who at pleasure could become, to all appearance, perfectly lifeless—pale, pulseless, breathless, motionless—and who could again, by his own will, return to life when he pleased, but in one of his feigned deaths he died outright—'take care, you might have the same fate—' you might pretend stupidity so long that people might at last begin to think it real, and not wait for your recovery."

"As long as you are in the secret, and believe it only feigned, I am content."

"Content to live on feigning! But everybody has been so long aware of it, that it is no secret. It is only like any other acting," said she.

“Have you never,” asked Sir Luttrell, “been at a play where the illusion was so complete that you thought it reality?”

“No; the actor ‘stands confessed’ through all his pomp.”

“But the illusion may be complete to the actor; he may deceive himself, though not the audience.”

“Is it not safer, then, not to act, but to be oneself?” said she, as taking her taper, she followed Lady Louisa.

It was late in the year for sight-seeing, but, still, there were several hours of daylight which must perforce be got rid of, in some way or other; and an expedition was planned next day for seeing a Roman camp.

Evelyn and her father, and Sir Luttrell, were among the riding party. Mr. Windham made no effort to separate Sir Luttrell from his daughter; but he rejoiced that Colonel Darrell was on her other side, and that Sir Luttrell’s horse—not the docile Firefly, but a beautiful and uneasy Barb—was very unwilling to keep with her party.

“That Barbary courser of yours,” said the

colonel, "does not seem to belie the restless character of his race."

"That is what I like him for ; he gives me some employment. Laborious in everything, you see, Lady Umfraville, I do not like a tame ride where I am carried on in glorious ease, without an effort of my own, wherever I please."

"It is more suited to a solitary ride, that brute of his," said the colonel to Evelyn, as the Barb and his master were left to struggle together in their unsociable pranks.

"It quite answers his master's purpose, I should think," said she, "it makes a sensation. So he makes people wonder he is satisfied."

"People are very good-natured in always wondering at him," said Mr. Poynings, who now took the vacant place. "His ingenuity in inventing surprise has not yet exhausted the pleasure of the surprise to the grown-up children of the world."

"His speculation for a race of carriage-horses, with Arab sires and Flanders mothers, did not turn out well," said Colonel Darrell.

"Admirably—for his agents—they pocketed

some thousands of his lines. He said he sold his poem to pay for the mares. That is the modern philosopher's stone, turning their brains to gold."

"But does not it often fail, as of old," said Evelyn, "in the moment of projection? Do these coinings always pass for sterling?"

"He found it so, I believe, at last," said Mr Poynings, "and took to the safer and older method, that of turning wiser. Fortunately, his inoculatory experiments could not have the fatal effect on his land that they have sometimes on human creatures—if he did not cure, he could not kill. And as he has not very long since emerged from his miser chrysalis, he can still afford to amuse the world as expensively as he likes."

"Oh, he has a monstrous fortune," said the colonel, "and a capital head for business, for all his affectation."

The subject of their conversation just now came up with his subdued steed, but Mr. Poynings kept his place, and said, "We were talking, Wycherley, of your having the modern philosopher's stone."

"I hope I shall never find the elixir of long life."

"With so many irons as you always have in the fire," said the colonel, "I should have thought the life of Methuselah would not be long enough for you, Wycherley."

"I thought philosophers were privileged to have a long life," said Mr. Poynings.

"Not experimental philosophers—there is your mistake, taking up every grain from the hour-glass to examine it, only makes its running appear more tedious," said Sir Luttrell.

"But the elixir of long life renewed the look of youth whenever one took it," said Evelyn; "and though St. Leon, who is my only authority on the subject, makes his misery the not renewing youthful feelings too, we do not know what an improved prescription might do. As he made his in a hurry, perhaps it was not quite rightly concocted. There is a noble experiment for you now, Sir Luttrell, to out-do St. Leon."

"I should not like to succeed—would not take it," replied he, "unless I could persuade others to take it too. Fancy what it would be

to find oneself, like Nourjahad, seeing beauty turned to wrinkled age!" and he glanced towards Lady Umfraville.

"That would not trouble you much, I imagine," said she, "for it would not be an allegory, you know; in the reality, you would never look at the grandmothers."

"Oblivion was never part of the elixir, alas!" said he; "without oblivion there could not, in some cases, be inconstancy."

But at this instant his Barb reared right up in the air, in so determined a manner as nearly to settle the question of long life for Sir Luttrell at once. Mr. Poyning's horse, unused to such a companion, shied, and then plunged, and then started off so suddenly that the colonel's could not resist the contagion; and Lady Umfraville's began to dance about the road in a manner very well calculated to exhibit her horsemanship, but also to be most alarming to her father, who was behind, and most annoying to the colonel, who, endeavouring to be civil, and to make his own horse so, only increased the confusion; and the carriage just then appearing in the distance, Mr. Windham grew

quite terrified at the effect their noise might have. He and his companions had stopped, lest they should aggravate the danger ; but he now called to a groom, who, jumping off, ran up, and, seizing the colonel's bridle, stopped his plunging ; and Lady Umfraville's horse, following his example, stood still, and her father and his companions came up in great admiration of her fine seat. They rode on, but Sir Luttrell and Mr. Poynings were far out of sight ; nor did they rejoin them till they reached the camp.

The camp was duly examined. The ladies were rather cold, but they persevered in looking at all the mounds and gates that were pointed out to them ; for everybody was perfectly sensible that the longer they stayed there, the shorter would be the remainder of the day at home ; and, as it was not weather for eating out of doors, they had the double prospect of a late luncheon and dinner beside.

When they re-mounted their horses, Mr. Windham went so far as to enter a protest against Sir Luttrell's horse being beside Evelyn's.

"Certainly," said Mr. Poynings, "Colonel, it is not fair that Wycherley should have his misanthropic beast all to himself."

"Oh, yes, Wycherley, you like the taming of that unbroken Barb; but with Lady Umfraville and me, I vow you shall not ride."

"Lady Umfraville had better come home in the carriage," said Lady Louisa.

"No, no," said the Colonel, "we shall do very well, if Sir Luttrell will keep his horse out of reach."

"Do you command my absence?" said Sir Luttrell, who had not yet mounted, coming close to Evelyn.

"I command nothing. Colonel Darrell is our leader."

"You will not even say a word for my admission?"

"You must not ride by the Colonel, at all events, I insist," said Lady Louisa, from the carriage; "his horse is very unsteady."

"Come, Lady Umfraville," said Darrell, "let us be off now, Wycherley will be ten minutes persuading his animal to let him mount."

They rode home ; and luncheon was nearly over when Sir Luttrell entered.

“ We thought you had gone off as sulky as your horse,” said the Colonel.

“ I concluded we should have to send for the coroner,” said Mr. Poynings.

“ I am quite relieved to see you safe again,” said Lady Louisa, civilly.

Evelyn was just leaving the room, but Sir Luttrell said to her, “ And you ? ”

“ I am going to take off my habit,” said she.

But when they met before dinner, he renewed his question as she joined the little circle of ladies, who were standing round a table near the fire admiring some hot-house flowers, and said, from the sofa where he sat,

“ May I hope that Lady Umfraville shared Lady Louisa’s ‘ relief ’ in seeing my safe return.”

“ Does Sir Luttrell Wycherley hope for such an insult to his riding, as to suppose it possible that his horse could conquer in the struggle,” said she, gaily.

“ He would pocket the principal of the

affront, if you would afford him the interest," said Poynings.

"Very fair—very good," said Colonel Darrell.

"What is the per centage," continued Mr. Poynings; "what is the allowance for that excited by an unruly horse? How much do you charge, Sir Luttrell, in a boat, on a stormy day, all the ladies looking out of the window at the lake? or a crack in the ice, the fair spectators on the shore? Which goes the highest?"

"Let us try it by auction," cried Lord St. Leonard, who had just arrived, "did you ever play at the auction?"

"Oh, no," cried Lady Louisa, delighted at the idea of a new game, "let us have the auction to-night."

Lord St. Leonard sat next to Lady Umfraville to-day at dinner, to Mr. Windham's satisfaction, instead of Sir Luttrell; but he stood before her at coffee-time. "Do you not sympathise with me in the pleasure of subduing? Do you not like to feel you tame the unruly?"

"I think I would rather have to do with the ruly."

A dark cloud came over his countenance, and he said with bitterness, "Yes, I believe so! but do you know that those who appear so easily ruled, are not always so in reality. Those early restrained with the severe bit of a pious education, are apt to jib sometimes, and go off headlong beyond all power of curb."

Evelyn did not, till he came to the word pious, perceive that he alluded to Mr. Vernon, and she remembered his look of hatred when she had defended him at the opera, and she half smiled at his waste of anger. The smile was differently interpreted.

"You smile incredulous; but you may find my words come true."

"The auction, the auction," cried Lady Louisa. "Come, come, everybody to the auction."

Mr. Poynings was auctioneer, and mounted on an arm chair, and armed with a bronzed dagger from the curiosity table, he called out, "Going, going—*A lady's smile at a ball.*"

"For nothing—it goes for nothing," said Lord St. Leonard.

"For a partner; I'll give a partner for it," cried the Colonel.

"Going, going; who bids?—nobody bids—going—gone. Knocked down to Colonel Darrell.

"*A gentleman's word in the sale of a hunter. Going—going. Who bids?*"

"A bill on the Jockey Club," cried St. Leonard. "Will you take an order on the Jockey Club?"

"Who bids? Going—going!—gone! *A ducal coronet*, warranted not at all the worse for the wear."

"I will bid for you, Mr. Windham," cried Sir Luttrell. "I bid, Beauty ——"

"I bid," cried Lady Louisa, "Beauty and a jointure," alluding to a reported match of a rich young dowager and a widower duke.

"Going, going at beauty and a jointure—who bids?"

"Beauty and half a dozen former lovers," cried St. Leonard.

"Beauty and a broken heart," cried Sir Luttrell.

"Beauty, wit, worth and heart, and head,

and all—I'll bid," cried Lady Pouncefort, "for I am sure they would be given."

"Going—gone! *Wit*, new wit, ready wit, sharp wit, first-rate wit. Wit, wit—who buys?"

"I bid," cried Lady Louisa, "I bid—what shall I bid?" said she, looking round with an air of the prettiest fatuity.

"I would bid for you, my dear Louisa," said her mother, "but that you would not know what to do with it when you had it."

"Going, going—will nobody acknowledge they want Wit?"

"Come," cried the colonel, "I bid—knock it down to me. I will keep it safe for you, Louisa, and let you have some when you are a good girl."

"*Affectation!*—who will buy—who will bid?"

"Shall I bid for you, Sir Luttrell?" said Mr. Windham, glad to repay the attack of the ducal coronet.

"No, no!" cried Lord St. Leonard, "do not waste it upon him, "he has enough to serve us all."

"It is a pity, Wycherley," said Mr. Poynings, "that you did not think of it in time, as you like making money, you could have given one some cast off suits of your own to dispose of, they would have gone high."

"Who would they fit?" said he, "Mr Windham, you had better bid for Lady Umfraville, for Affectation is the only possession she has not."

"It is a bad article," cried Mr. Poynings, "I will lay it aside, it will do for some Birmingham dealer.—But here is *Good-humour*! Going, going—'a good, familiar creature—' going, going!"

"I will bid!" cried St. Leonard, "I am going to join now (he was in the Life Guards) when town is a desert, I am sure I shall have need of it."

"Going, going! Knocked down to Lord St. Leonard, the only one who acknowledges he wants it. But here—ladies and gentlemen, here is a prime article—rare, wonderful, unique! Everybody should be ready. I beg to state I am instructed to sell only to the very highest—I warn you, it must go high—

who bids? '*Love returned by its object,*' going, going," continued the auctioneer, fixing his keen little eyes in turn on every one of the company. The young ladies shrunk, the young gentlemen reddened.

"I bid," cried Sir Luttrell, "I bid."

"And," interrupted St. Leonard, "I bid."

"Stay, gentlemen—I beg to say that parents and guardians are particularly requested to bid for the young ladies and spare their blushes."

"No, no—Mr. Auctioneer," said the colonel, "that will never do—parents and guardians never deal in hearts: your ducal coronet did vastly well with them."

"Let the pretty dears say it at once—' let them all bid together," said Sir Luttrell, and nobody will mind."

"Who bids—who bids?"

"I bid, since nobody else will," cried Sir Luttrell, carelessly.

"I bid, I bid," exclaimed all the young men, stung at the idea of such a lot going uncontended to Sir Luttrell.

"I bid," cried Lord St. Leonard, and it

was knocked down to him, as he bid all he had in the world for it.

Which Sir Luttrell muttered—"No great bid that."

"Here is an article, who bids—'*Never to hear anything disagreeable of oneself*,' who bids?"

"Wycherley," cried the colonel, "what will you give?"

"I bid," cried Lady Erpingham, who had an ugly daughter, "I hate having what is disagreeable."

"Poynings, you should sell a Wycherley gag along with that," said Colonel Darrell.

"*A mirror*, who will buy a mirror? I address myself particularly to the ladies—who will buy a mirror?—a polite mirror, a well-conditioned mirror, that will never show a wrinkle or a freckle, or—I shall not shock the ears of my fair audience by mentioning any more of the unpleasant things it does not show; I can only say that it will always continue to reflect the lovely form of her who now selects it."

"A difficult bargain," said Sir Luttrell,

“to the very young and the very old alike unnecessary, and those between will not acknowledge they are in need of it.”

“Shall I bid?—I bid!” cried Lady Louisa, “shall I not? I may want it, may I not?”

Nobody attempted to contradict or contend with her.

“The next article,” continued the auctioneer, “is of such value, and its merits are of such virtue that they are not disclosed till the bargain is made—*A Secret for never being in Debt*—who bids—who bids?—going going!”

“I bid,” cried Sir John Erpingham.

All the gentlemen bid, except Sir Luttrell, who said—“Buying a secret! I should be sure first it was worth knowing, and this, I fancy, anybody knows and nobody practices.”

It was knocked down to Sir John.

“Here is what has been so long in an old curiosity shop—it is worth buying for its antiquity, if for nothing else. Philosophers, if we had any amongst us, would bid high—but among the fair and fashionable it is considered but a rustic concern—*Content.*”

“Add ‘and a competence,’” cried the colonel,

“and it may be knocked down to me for a penny whistle, or my little Godfrey’s copy book—it was in time I’ll swear!”

“Going, going—who bids?”

“I put a veto on Lady Umfraville’s bidding,” cried Sir Luttrell, “Lady Umfraville must not have ‘Content’—she must not be content to remain as she is.”

Lady Umfraville coloured, Mr. Windham looked annoyed.

“Going, going—” cried Mr. Poynings, “going—‘Content’ going at a penny whistle, will nobody bid more; who bids, does nobody wish for ‘Content?’”

“Stop, Mr. Auctioneer,” cried Lady Pouncefort, who piqued herself on her correctness: “Stop, Mr. Auctioneer; your sale has been illegal this quarter of an hour—it has struck twelve—it is Sunday morning.”

“Gentlemen and Ladies,” said Mr. Poynings, “I beg to announce that the sale is postponed to Monday, at ten o’clock in the evening.”

And the party broke up.

The next morning Evelyn received a letter from Mr. Vernon; it was dated—

“London, Saturday.

“DEAR LADY UMFRAVILLE,

“I avail myself of that privilege of friendship which you allow me; and I write purposely to-day, that you may receive this letter on Sunday, that it may, perhaps, in the gay scene, in which you are so brilliant a performer, recal some serious thoughts. When I find the interest which others, less likely by their character and position than yourself to do so, take in the subjects I allude to, I still wish that I might become the humble instrument of awakening your attention to your eternal welfare. I wish I could, by appealing to your feelings, induce you to take to heart the necessity of a deeper attention than you have ever yet bestowed on spiritual concerns. I wish I could, by an appeal to your understanding, induce you to weigh more seriously than you have hitherto been inclined to do, the nothingness of this world against the all-importance of the next.

“Others to whom the task would naturally appear more difficult, have not hesitated to enlarge to me upon their religious sentiments;

and I write to you, in the hope that you might, perhaps, in a letter, find it less impossible than you have found it in conversation, to tell me what are your real thoughts, in what we differ. Would that you could at length say that we agree.

“I am happy to tell you, that my mother gives an excellent account of her health.

“With best regards to Mr. Windham, and with earnest hope of a serious reply,

“I remain,

“Your Ladyship’s faithful servant,

“PRIOR VERNON.”

Evelyn showed this curious epistle to her father, who, looking at it, said, “It seems rather long.”

“You need not trouble your eyes with it,” said Lady Umfraville, “I only showed it to you as a matter of course.”

“Oh, I had better go through it,” said Mr. Windham.” And he read it.

“Well, what can you answer to this; it is impertinent enough.”

“The indomitable vanity of the man sur-

prises me, after the very severe things I said to him, he seems only to think the better of his own powers. Here is my reply."

"Stanton Hall, Nov. 12.

DEAR MR. VERNON,

"I received your kind letter this morning, and rejoice that you can give so good a report of Lady Amery's health.

"My father sends his regards.

"Your's obliged,

"Sunday.

"UMFRAVILLE."

When Evelyn came into the book room, ready for church, Sir Luttrell was alone there.

"You are commanded to go to church, I suppose."

"My father never commands me."

"I did not allude to Mr. Windham."

Evelyn took up a newspaper, but Sir Luttrell continued: "Is not going to church one of the essentials?"

"It is generally considered so."

"But particularly—you consider yourself bound to go, do you not?"

"No, not in the least; everybody is at

liberty, I should suppose, to go or stay away, as they think proper."

"Indeed! are you allowed the liberty of choice."

"I do not know who could allow it—I certainly have it," said she, as she laid down the paper, and left the room. Her father was in the hall with Mr. Poynings, who said—

"Mr. Windham says you will give me a place in your carriage."

"Lady Pouncefort makes rather a fuss," said Mr. Windham, as they drove off.

"Yes," said Mr. Poynings; "few people do these things quietly. Sidney Smith says—'Man is essentially a church-going animal;' but I observe that human nature is always in one of its most irritable moods just before church. I always endeavour to keep out of the way of my species till the moment of starting. I wonder, Lady Umfraville, that you ventured into the bookroom. I looked in and saw Sir Luttrell, and withdrew as fast as possible; for if the church-goers are irritable, the non-goers are perfectly rabid."

"That accounts for the many more than

usually disagreeable things he said," replied Evelyn, laughing

However Sir Luttrell had become tame by the time they had returned, and joined a walking party in a very placable mood. They had perambulated the garden ; and Mr. Windham was examining the new construction of a stove in one of the hot-houses. Evelyn was before a large stand of plants, thinking of the day at the Horticultural, and in so profound a reverie that she did not perceive that Sir Luttrell was close to her till he spoke ; and she started as he said a little behind her—"What favoured flower is the subject of Lady Umfraville's admiration?"

She blushed, as she turned round, conscious that she had not an idea of what she was looking at.

"Lost in contemplation? I beg your pardon for startling you from a day-dream. How happy those are whose dreams are of an imaginary future, not of the painfully real past."

"Is the real past always painful?" said she.

"To one young, beautiful, and innocent, past, present, and future, are all equally

bright, perhaps—but it cannot always remain so.”

“Some people have the art, or the nature—I believe it is born with one—of finding the present always good; not being troubled about the future, and putting the past, if it is disagreeable, out of sight altogether,” said Evelyn.

“Yes, it is born with us,” said Sir Luttrell, as they followed the rest through the grounds. It is said, and justly I think, that a melancholy view of life is characteristic of my countrymen. I am Irish to-day,” said he, smiling; “Ples-singham says I alternate; but the fact is, that though I was actually born in England, my mother was Irish, and I suppose I inherit from her the practical gaiety and theoretic sadness of her nation.”

“It is really national, I suppose,” said Evelyn, “for it is so striking in your music—so merry and so plaintive.”

“How beautifully Mr. Windham played those airs the other night,” cried Sir Luttrell. “What a power it is to be able to produce such sounds.”

“It delights him to give others pleasure by it; but it is an inexhaustible happiness, a real happiness to himself.”

“It adds so much to the charm of music to me,” said Sir Luttrell, “when performed by an amateur, like Mr. Windham, who has the skill, without the indifference of an artist. One supposes, perhaps unjustly, that a hireling performer, however perfect, is but a hireling after all, executing a task, without a feeling with it.”

“Scarcely possible, I should fancy,” said Evelyn; “one can hardly imagine even the millionth repetition of a beautiful air, by a really good musician, failing to give the same pleasure to the performer that it does to the hearers.”

“Even so, it must be the mere pleasure of sound. Music is nothing, to me, without association; the words of a song, or the meaning of the air, if I may use such an expression, are all that I care for; and when a cultivated mind is joined to such artistic powers as Mr. Windham’s, the effect is perfect.”

They had reached the house, and they all

went in ; but Evelyn had never felt so little dislike of Sir Luttrell Wycherley as during this walk.

CHAPTER X.

LADY POUNCEFORT seized upon Evelyn that evening, and having beguiled her into a corner of the divan, from which there was neither egress nor regress, when she had hemmed her in by her portly person, she laid before her a pamphlet on the corn laws, telling her that, as she was a landed proprietor, she ought to study these things. She had a far more willing scholar than she was aware of; for Lady Umfraville had, ever since the argument she had heard, been anxious to see the pamphlet, because it was addressed to Lord Rupert Conway, but she had been ashamed to ask her for it. And now Lady Pouncefort proved herself a far more vigilant instructor than Prior Vernon, for he was satisfied to recommend a book to Evelyn, and take her word for having studied

it; while the political economist sat close by her victim, watched every page she turned, followed her eye along every line, and stopped her at every passage she thought above her comprehension to explain and give notes upon it. She was highly satisfied with her pupil's attention, but she would have been mortified to know that she was all the time trying to make out whether the writer was speaking Lord Rupert's sentiments, or wishing to convert him to his own,—and that when she arrived at the peroration which disclosed the fact that the author was opposed to the minister, and endeavouring to win him over, she was anything but convinced by the argument. She offered no resistance, however, upon a two-fold principle. First,—that if one has an opinion, it is better to hear the arguments against than for it; and, secondly,—because, if uncombated, the lecture would probably terminate the sooner; but here she was quite mistaken. Lady Pouncefort prosed on untired, till Lady Louisa rang for lights, and released her victim.

At breakfast Sir Luttrell said to Evelyn,

"What a complete prisoner you were last night; and yet, you appeared so resigned, one could hardly suppose you wished to escape."

"Perhaps I did not."

"You could not really like that old lady's political second-handisms."

"I fancied I was so much complimented by being thought capable of understanding her."

"She has made you her disciple, then?"

"No; quite the contrary. But I rather like to listen to what people can say on the opposite side to what I have always heard. It gives one a much clearer idea of one's own view of the case."

"That is a very new view of any case, I think; you must be a very unconvincible person. You submit so passively to the arrangements of others, I have always wished to see you show some spirit of opposition; but, now, I find that your submission is never in spirit."

"You confound such different things. How misplaced spirit would be about which side of the table one sat at, or which road one was to ride."

“If there was no spirit there might be some feeling. Are not there different people at the different sides of a dinner-table? Do you regard them no more than their chairs?”

“One would rather sit by an agreeable than a disagreeable person, of course; but few even of the most merciless dinners are more than an hour and a half, and that is easily endured.”

“I am afraid that, however advanced you may be in political, you are still ignorant of common economy—the economy of time you scorn. What a great part of a day is an hour-and-half!—how much may be said—how much may be thought, and, above all, how much may be felt in that space! and you are indifferent as to whose company you spend it in!”

“It is to be hoped that as I grow older, and have less time to spare, that I shall become more economical of it.”

“A few months ago,” continued Sir Luttrell, “I was as indifferent as to how or where my hours were to be spent; now I prize even moments—the last half hour, the present fleeting instant! How true it is, unhappily, that

there is no present," said he, as they rose from breakfast; "even as we speak the word it is gone!"

Lady Umfraville was in the billiard-room, watching a game between Lady Louisa and her father; she was marking for him, when Lord St. Leonard and Sir Luttrell came in. It was the losing game, and Lady Louisa's ball was on the very brink of the pocket—it seemed a miracle that her antagonist should send it in without his own following.

"I bet on Lady Louisa!" cried St. Leonard, laughingly, "Wycherley, will you take me up?"

"You will bet on Mr. Windham, of course, Lady Umfraville?" said Sir Luttrell.

"I am marking, and cannot bet; besides, I am so sure of his winning, it would not be a fair bet."

"Thank you, Lady Umfraville!" cried Lady Louisa. "I see your notion of my skill."

"There, you have won, Lord St. Leonard!" cried Evelyn, as her father's ball, holing Lady Louisa's, stopped and settled, quivering on the edge.

"Come, Wycherley, for the whole game—

what do you say? What odds—Mr. Windham is five a head now?”

They settled their bet. “Watch Poynings”—who was Lady Louisa’s marker—“Wycherley, I have my eye on Lady Umfraville,” said Lord St. Leonard.

“Do you suspect that she is capable of a pious fraud in favour of her father?” said Mr. Poynings.

“I should watch Lady Umfraville,” said Sir Luttrell; “for the danger is that she should forget, in her interest, and so lose some marks for my side.”

“You make me quite nervous. I played so much better before you were all looking at me!” cried Lady Louisa, adjusting her mace in a most graceful attitude, and throwing her eyes on the spectators; but their eyes were fixed on the beautiful hand which was moving the marks for Mr. Windham’s last stroke.

“Beaten hollow,” cried Lord St. Leonard.

“Will you have your revenge on my bad play now?” said Lady Louisa; and she and Lord St. Leonard began again. Mr. Wind-

ham marked for him. Lady Umfraville and Sir Luttrell looked on.

"Will you play the next game with me?" said he.

"I will; but I suppose you play as well as my father, and I cannot beat him. I do not think, though, that one cares so much about winning—the pleasure is in the skill."

"People are not so furious at losing a game of billiards as they are at chess," said Mr. Poynings.

"Because it is more a game of chance," said Evelyn; "the most perfect player cannot entirely command his balls, or foresee the course of his antagonist's: one's pride is not so much hurt to lose as when it is all skill."

"Is not there chance in chess as well as in every other game?" said Sir Luttrell, "when the combinations are infinite, the choice of them must in some degree be chance."

"In a player you are unacquainted with, or whose character one does not know, one can be pretty nearly certain, from a person's character, what their moves would be."

"My dear Evelyn," said her father, "that sounds very like nonsense."

"The character might be more surely discovered from the moves than the moves from the character," said Sir Luttrell. "But even that would only prove the more the truth of my chance theory. Who can calculate on the turns of character?"

"One cannot know the exact turn; but what the turn is likely to be is always very plain, and even those who are very erratic," said she with a smile, "one knows at least that they will try to do something surprising."

"I prefer utter chance," replied Sir Luttrell. "A cast of the dice of Fate. The interest would be gone if the numbers were foreseen."

"Unluckily for your pleasure, there are so few events in life that the dice of fate very seldom turn up with anything unexpected. All goes on with such routine."

"If an unseen hand has loaded the dice, they may take a turn, and make a character take a turn very little expected," said Sir Luttrell in a low voice, and with a dark expres-

sion of countenance that startled Evelyn, she knew not why.

Lady Louisa won, and her exclamation of childish delight brought more of the company from the next room, and they made so much noise as to put Sir Luttrell quite out. He had expected an opportunity of at least admiring Lady Umfraville in peace; while he played with her, he could not get rid of the listening markers; but he could have looked undisturbed; he was vexed and lost: Lady Louisa continued to play, and Evelyn retreated to her own room.

This evening, Lord St. Leonard, who was to depart next day, begged for a dance. Sir Luttrell Wycherley never danced, and to avoid being included in Lady Pouncefort's card-table, he left the room. Nor did any one perceive his absence or his return; for when Lady Pouncefort and Mr. Poynings were fixed at *écarté*, he had quietly returned, and seated himself so as to command a full view of Lady Umfraville, who was dancing with Lord St. Leonard; but before he had time to get very jealous of her good spirits, he was relieved by

perceiving that they were just as good with Colonel Darrell. Everybody was dancing with spirit as is usual on those unpremeditated occasions. It was the thing to like dancing to-night, and everybody might be happy without losing caste.

They kept it up till late ; and when they at last ceased, Sir Luttrell was immediately by Evelyn. "I ought to say how much I regret that I do not dance, should I not?"

"Do you regret it?"

"No ; I think I have the advantage in looking on. I see you all the time ; your partners must give you up ; and to give up is more painful than never to possess. I have been enabled to watch you all the time."

"Thinking how ridiculous we all looked, were you not?"

"On the contrary, I was admiring your gaiety, and admiring the youngness of your enjoyment. I was too well pleased even to envy. It will turn to bitterness, however, on reflection, when I think I can never feel the enjoyment of mere good spirits, and that you will one day lose it."

“And, according to your doctrine, it would be better never to have it, than to have had?”

“I do not mean a possession like that of innocent gaiety of heart, which, being lost, is not found by any one else. I meant that I would rather not have what I must resign to another. If I ever dared, I would engage my partner as they do at Bruges, for the season.”

“Do they choose these partners, or is it by lot, by your favourite chance?”

“I really do not know; but do not you think it would be better at any ball to have partners by lot, than to be obliged to give gracious acceptance to every puppy who asks you?”

“If one might decline the lot, as one can decline the puppy.”

“You do not like to give up the privilege of refusing? It is a tremendous power, certainly. I do not wonder that you like to keep it.”

He was silent for a moment, and then said—
“I had another reason for rejoicing in your dancing to-night—I was glad to see that it was permitted.”

Evelyn made no reply, and he was silenced, but he was not at rest on the subject; for the next evening he recommended privately to Lady Louisa the game of questions and replies. Mr. Poynings was appointed reader, but he could ask and reply too. The slips of paper were cut with much eagerness by Lady Louisa, and put into a basket. They were handed round; everybody wrote a question; they were replaced in the basket, and Mr. Poynings read them out. It was easy from some countenances to guess who were the writers: others were impenetrable, others looked vexed that the right question had not gone to the right person: among these was Sir Luttrell, whose question had been—"If a lady is engaged, should she conceal her engagement when she knows another proposal is impending?"

It had been meant for Lady Umfraville; but he was sure, by the answer, that it had gone to Mr. Poynings: it was—"To tell an engagement tends often only to sharpen the attentions of the daring."

The question which came to Evelyn was—

“Which is it best, to be married to a silly beauty or a wise ugly?”

She thought it was intended for Colonel Darrell; but she wrote—“Perhaps the acquired vanity of the ugly wisdom might be more tiresome than the natural vanity of the beauty.”

When the question of “Which is best, this game or the auction” was read, Lady Louisa smiled so consciously at her brilliant effort, that it was known to be her’s, though Mr. Poynings, true to his post, would not give up anybody. Evelyn was pretty sure Sir Luttrell was the answerer. “This, for the wounds, are from a concealed hand, and the confessions can be made without a blush.”

In the next round his attack was not more fortunate in its distinction. It was—“If a duke, a poet, or a preacher, run a race, which will win?”

Those who knew enough of the parties to understand the question, instinctively looked at Lady Umfraville, who blushed at the answer; “The poet, of course, on his Pegasus.”

Evelyn was too confused to examine the countenance, and she was uncertain which—

the answer or the question, or both, were Sir Luttrell's.

Her question was — “ When impertinent questions are asked, what is the best punishment to the questioner ? ”

The answer was—“The curious impertinent, as of old, always creates his own punishment.”

She thought it was her father's. The colonel's laugh at the next betrayed it as his. “ Can you give me a good name for my new hunter ? ”

To her next question Evelyn was sure Sir Luttrell replied ; he had paused a little as the basket was handed to him ; and, though Mr. Poynings cried out, “ No craning,—no looking before you leap,—no examining of writing ! ” she was sure that he had selected hers ; it was —“Which is the happiest person in company?”

The reply was—“The writer of this question.”

Everybody exclaimed a different person, and attacked the reader to betray so interesting a secret, but in vain.

One of the slips contained, “ What is the pleasantest time of the day ? ”

The answer elicited a laugh: "Breakfast, luncheon, and dinner."

Sir Luttrell asked, "Is not an easy temper a sign of a cold heart?"

"It may be—but any one would prefer to live with the easy temper, and take the heart as it might be," was the reply, from whom did not appear.

In the last round one of the queries was—"Could not you tell, in an enigmatical expression of which he only has the key, who is the favoured individual?"

The rejoinder was—"If the individual did not know it without words, he does not deserve to be the favoured."

"Which is hardest, to ask or to reply?" was Evelyn's query.

"The answer—"To reply, for a gentleman—they are used to ask; the ladies understand answering."

"Do not you envy the reader who knows the secrets of all hearts?" came to Evelyn; she wrote:

"I think he only knows the secrets of all hands."

“Would you rather have the first blush, or the first sigh?”

“The first sigh, for it might be for a lover; the first blush is probably at her own image in the looking-glass.”

“If A suspects that B has an X, how is the unknown quantity to be discovered?”

“Oh, this is too bad!” cried the colonel, who had drawn this slip—“It reminds me of the algebra hour at Sandhurst; what am I to say? I am sure this is by ——”

“Order, order!” cried Mr. Poynings: “you must not read your query aloud, nor make your guesses audibly.”

His reply was—“As A and B are as unknown to me as X, I cannot make an equation of it.”

“Will chemistry or love carry the day?” was so personal a question that it seemed to have found its way as naturally, as the reply could be now no other than Sir Luttrell. “They are not necessarily opposed; the highest art of the ancient adept was to obtain a magic influence over the heart.”

Mr. Poynings had purposely kept to the last,

a query which he knew to be Mr. Windham's, and the answer Lady Pouncefort's—"Has not our catechism lasted long enough?"

"Yes, indeed; we have had nonsense enough for one night."

Lady Louisa was energetic in her applause of this perilous game; Mr. Windham said nothing, but he was extremely annoyed at his daughter being so publicly marked as the object of Sir Luttrell's attentions. Sir Luttrell was vexed at not having succeeded in obtaining a single answer from Lady Uufraville. He took one of the slips from the basket, and, laying it before her said, "Do you know the hand?"

He had laid the back of the slip upwards, it was larger than the rest, and was part of a cover directed to himself. She just looked at the writing, but immediately turned up the other side. It was the algebraic query.

"A very good answer of the colonel's, was it not?" said she.

"What would your answer have been?" said he.

"I should have made this if I could."

“Do not you know what A and B represent here?” She did know that they meant Sir Luttrell Wycherley and Lady Umfraville, and that X was to him Prior Vernon; and she thought how utterly undiscernable the real quantity of X was; while she turned to Mr Poynings and said, “You ought to burn these slips, or the secrets you have kept so well will all be discovered.”

“Could you not guess pretty nearly, as you heard them, who was who?” said he, looking at her, as he took the basket and threw its contents into the fire. She was not obliged to reply, for everybody was exclaiming at the burning, and guessing the writers; and as there was much laughing and talking, most people were quite satisfied.

“I am leaving Stanton to-day,” said Sir Luttrell to Evelyn at breakfast next morning, and they were almost the only words Mr. Windham had heard from him with any satisfaction since he had been in the house.

“I am leaving Stanton to-day.”

“We go on Thursday,” said she.

“I know that,” answered Sir Luttrell, “or

I should not have departed on Wednesday. As it is, I lose hours that are days to me. Will you not say you wish I had fixed Thursday too?"

"It would be hard on our hosts to lose all their guests at once."

"That is easily supplied to them, provided the stage is well grouped, they do not care who are the dramatis personæ. I had rather, however, go before than stay after—rather depart with the halo of the brightness round me than stay in the drear of disenchanted scenes."

"An' you talk in blank verse, God be wi' ye," said Evelyn, laughing.

He laughed too, but went on, "You only show the truth of what I say, when the feelings are touched, they naturally express themselves poetically. The most awkward and stupid people are often graceful and eloquent when in a passion."

"Do you think everybody, Colonel Darrell, for instance, would speak eloquently when in a passion?"

"I never heard him eloquent in the House."

“But not in the field?” said Evelyn, “in the House he is out of his element and could never speak naturally, but in a battle he would speak as shortly as possible—the Duke’s ‘up Guards, and at ‘em,’ would hardly do in blank verse.”

“A battle is, and is not, a case in point—a man would not speak blank verse to a troop of Dragoons, but he would be eloquent according to the situation; eloquence in a field of battle is to say as much as fully as possible in the fewest words: a man in battle is not in a state of feeling, but in a state of excitement.”

“That distinction would do if it were not for Shakespeare, but Hamlet for instance, in a state of excitement?”

“Exactly: when he is excited and kills Polonius he speaks short common place, almost vulgar language—of his father, always with poetical passion. I have often wondered, as I have looked at the unmeaning features of most of the men and women I see, how they could be moved, as all have been or will be in their turn by the usual good and ill fortune,

and love, and hate that all feel in their time—but when I see those smiling eyes,” continued he, fixing his own upon hers, and lowering his voice almost to a whisper, “when I look at those eyes, whose expression is such light-hearted sweetness, I wish so exceedingly to see how passion could light them up, or to watch their liquid moisture melting into——”

“Good heavens, Colonel Darrell, what is the matter?” cried Evelyn, as the colonel came in and came towards her quite pale. He had left the room with most of the gentlemen as soon as breakfast was over. Lady Louisa was still at the table, with some of the ladies about her, examining patterns for worsted work. Evelyn and Sir Luttrell were also at the table, but apart from the rest. Mr. Windham was at the fire apparently reading the newspaper.

“Good heavens, Charles! what is the matter?” cried Lady Louisa, starting up, “what has happened?”

“That scamp, Beamish, has got on your mare, Lady Umfraville, and staked it, taking the fence!”

“Oh is that all—was he hurt himself?”

“Deserved to break his neck,” cried Mr. Windham, whose usually fine temper had been disturbed at the interest his daughter seemed to take in Sir Luttrell’s conversation, and being alarmed at the deep blush which had mantled on her cheek just before the colonel entered, and at the provocation of the injured mare, his spite against Sir Luttrell broke out on young Beamish.

“He is not hurt the least, though he richly deserved to be,” said the colonel, “I sent him while I was finishing my breakfast to hurry the fellows with the dogs and have the guns ready. He asked Lady Umfraville’s groom to run to the kennel, and the moment his back was turned, he clapped the first saddle he could find on her mare, and he was off at the avenue fence; the groom missed her the instant he came back, and when I got into the yard he was leading her in all covered with blood.”

“Poor ‘Rainbow,’ she was able to walk then? It can be cured, do you think? Pray have her shot if she is to linger in misery.”

“It is not so bad as that, I hope,” said the

colonel, "but I am really quite floored at the idea of such an accident happening here—such a beauty as it is."

"Simply the best trained lady's horse in England," said Mr. Windham.

"If I could have caught that scamping boy, I would have licked him first and then insisted on his coming to beg your pardon."

"That would be too cruel—he seems so fond of horses that I am sure having injured such a fine animal is punishment enough for him. Pray find him," said she to her father, who was leaving the room to enquire into the state of the case, "pray find him and assure him of my forgiveness."

"Very well," said Mr. Windham, "I will tell him that—and then that he has not my forgiveness in the least, and that I heartily wish he had broken his leg, if not his neck."

"I never was more vexed," said the colonel.

"Pray do not vex yourself," said Evelyn, "it was no fault of yours; the wound will be cured by your Attock, who is so skilful, and all will be right in a few days."

"You meant to have ridden to Hartbrook too, to-morrow—did you not?"

"Yes—but it will very likely be a wet day, and then I should have to go in the carriage, at all events."

"I declare it makes me fifty times more sorry that it should have happened to you—if you would be angry and scold that puppy soundly, it would be a relief to me."

"Daniel, the groom, would look him dead, I dare say, if he could; but I beg you will not waste a vexation upon it. You will be quite late for your shooting party—do not lose any more time," cried she, as she led the way from the breakfast-room. She turned to Sir Luttrell as they passed through the hall, and said, in a low voice, "Excitement only in the colonel, I suppose you would say, for he did not speak very Shakespearian—but I am sure he showed a very great deal of feeling for me, only more than the occasion required."

"The loss of a horse is the greatest misfortune he can imagine," said Sir Luttrell, who thought the loss of the end of his own speech was much greater.

“His britschka was at the door. “I must assure myself that poor Rainbow is not in danger, before I go,” said he.

When he returned to take leave, Lady Umfraville was intrenched on a sofa, with two other ladies, and he could make no particular farewell.

Attock pronounced the wound severe, but not dangerous.

Lady Louisa piqued herself on the mystery of her arrangements ; she always endeavoured to keep the arrivals of her guests a profound secret, so that this evening, just before the dressing-bell rang, everybody was surprised by the door being flung open, and “Lord Rupert Conway” being announced.

Evelyn was at a distant table reading, so that her start, and her heightened colour were unobserved. He looked towards her, however, before he reached Lady Louisa, but he only bowed, and she was glad to remain in her retreat.

“You must have left Boldero early,” said Lady Louisa. “Did you come the whole way to-day?”

“I started early, and came on very fast.”

"Have you had much hunting?" said Colonel Darrell.

"Excellent. I was there five days, and we 'bolted' as much exercise as would serve for a year. We were at cover every day at ten, and never in till quite dark."

"There are the Mawtree hounds, and the Boldero, but what others?"

"The Yearsley Park, fifteen miles to cover from Boldero; so we were very energetic you see."

"Plessingham there, I suppose, and roused you all."

"No, indeed; it was our own unassisted vigour. He will regret losing such a week's sport, but he has not returned; he was expected, however, at Melton yesterday, Cornbury wrote to me."

"We have had Wycherley here; he went to-day," said the Colonel.

"Quite pleasant he was," said Lady Louisa; "he was so languid when he came that I was in despair: he never spoke the first two days; but at magical music, Lady Umfraville wakened him with a torch, and he never relapsed."

“Is he really turned chemist-conjuror now?” asked Lord Rupert. He was so placed, that Evelyn could not see his countenance.

“He is, I saw him at it,” said the Colonel; “but he never alluded to it here himself, and did not seem to relish any mockery about it.”

“I wish he would be of some use. We wanted to have him chairman of some of the scientific committees, but he would not be tied, he said, to any thing; and all the time he is the veriest slave—no mill-horse works harder in his round than Wycherley does, to keep out of every beaten track.”

Evelyn, while dressing, calculated that Lord Rupert must take her in to dinner—and he did; and whatever his merits might really be, and however little she had seen of him, she felt that the romance—the interest of her life was with him. Though she had seen him in public, she had not been in his company since the evening on the Keep at Windsor; the enchantment of that hour was so full in her thoughts, that she was not assured of the reality of the present, till he said: “I have to thank you, Lady Umfraville, for my brother’s return.

The Umfraville tenantry voted for him to a man."

"But you have not to thank me for it," said she, eagerly; "it was their own doing entirely. It was all Lord Cornbury's own merit, or yours," continued she, with a blush. "I did not interfere; I had no acquaintance with them; there could be no kindly influence; and I did not like to use the mere authority of their landlady; and I fancied you would prefer their spontaneous votes."

"It is the greatest gratification to me; and however obliged my brother and I felt for what we supposed your good influence, I am infinitely more obliged by your good opinion of me."

"I confess, however," said she, "that I should have felt guilty if Lord Cornbury had lost his election: I could not have been quite satisfied with myself in that case."

"Impolitic candour!" said he, smiling. "Candour has a very fine effect in a speech sometimes—politic candour I have seen used very successfully."

"It might be a politic acknowledgment;

but could it be candour when done with a purpose?"

"Do you suppose a politician ever without a purpose?" said he, gaily.

"I should suppose them delighted to be able to be without one. I cannot fancy their really being '*politique aux choux et aux raves*.'"

"To keep the hand in; they might get out of practice otherwise."

"Would not the hand be *out* for great business after working only at small?" said she.

"The elephant picks up a sixpence, and draws a cannon," said he. He does not pick up the sixpence by way of practice for the cannon; nor are you talking to me by way of practice for the House, but just to divert yourself."

"I was talking nonsense, indeed. I must have the 'candour' to acknowledge the 'politic candour,' for I have a purpose in saying so; I wished you not to think I was talking of myself—about the elephant."

"It would not be very vain; it is but the half-reasoning after all—it only does what it is bid.*

"It does it sensibly, though : it would be well if those who are to obey ever did it as sensibly as the elephant."

"Their obedience, as well as his, depends on the sense of their driver, does it not?"

"On his kind influence—he manages much better by his voice than by his goad. Like you, he does not exert authority unnecessarily; but the rod may be hung up too long. It is well to make one's horse know the bit now and then."

The words "horse and bit" recalled to Evelyn the mischance of the morning, and she coloured with shame at her own selfishness—she had, in the engrossment of her own thoughts, never even asked after Rainbow, far less for poor Mr. Beamish, who had never appeared all day. She looked round for him. He reddened the instant she looked at him. Oh, Mr. Beamish," said she, "how unkind I have been in never speaking to you; you must have thought me most unforgiving, but you perceive, I not only forgave but forgot—I did not even ask how Rainbow was this evening; however the last bulletin was so

favourable that I am sure you need not have the least anxiety about her." And she smiled so kindly, that the poor boy's eyes filled with tears, and he made an effort to answer, but he looked so confused and ashamed that she relieved him by turning to Colonel Darrell.

"Mr. Attock thinks well of her case still, I hope."

"He did at five o'clock; I shall see him presently, and bring you word."

She turned towards Lord Rupert—his eyes were fixed upon her. Her real anxiety to re-assure the culprit, gave even additional charm to the usual sweetness of her countenance. Her eyes were of that deep and liquid blue, which, of all others, most expresses that union of gaiety and sensibility, which is woman's greatest fascination.

"Has your horse been hurt?"

"Yes," said she, in a low voice; "it was an accident, but it will be of no consequence; it will only serve to display Colonel Darrell's skill and good nature."

"I hope you do not consider good-nature and good-temper the same thing?"

“ Good nature is more common.”

“ So common, as to be of no value. Good temper is invaluable.”

Evelyn recollected to have heard that Lord Rupert had never been known to lose his temper in the House.

“ You do not, then, like to see a person in a passion?” said she, wondering whether he, as well as Mr. Vernon and Sir Luttrell, would be angry with her for not being angry.

“ Who does?” said he.

“ I have heard people say, they wished to see another cross.”

“ Unless it was a physiological curiosity, like Lady Honoria Pemberton, to see what ugly faces they would make, I cannot imagine such a taste.”

Evelyn laughed as she thought of Sir Luttrell's fine speech about lighting up eyes, put into the reality of the ugly faces inseparable from a bad temper.

CHAPTER XI.

THE instant Lord Rupert appeared in the drawing-room, Lady Pouncefort pounced upon him, and kept him prisoner all evening. Evelyn's only resource was to get near them, and, holding some worsted for Lady Louisa to wind, she could hear, but not well; for Lady Louisa kept up an incessant chatter with her or with those about her, and, at last, said to her, "Is not Lady Amery a very harsh, stern person?"

"Oh, no, not the least! she is the mildest, gentlest person."

"I thought she was one of the serious."

"She is very serious, and not at all amusing or clever; but she is most amiable."

"When one hears of a person *affichée* that

sort of thing, one concludes they must be *acoriatre*; but I do not know her at all."

"I have known her all my life, and know her to be thoroughly kind-hearted and charitable, even to those who are not of her way of thinking."

Lady Umfraville had spoken from the impulse of the moment, and disgust at hearing an unjust accusation; but she thought she saw a malicious smile from Lady Louisa, which recalled to her that her defence of Lady Amery might be misconstrued, and she felt a pang at the idea that Lord Rupert—in the pause of Lady Pouncefort's voice, which just then took place, as she looked over a report on the corn-laws,—had heard what she said, and had settled, like Sir Luttrell, that she was engaged to Prior Vernon—but a bitter pang succeeded: what could it be to Lord Rupert?—and she told herself that its being nothing to him could be nothing to her; and skein after skein was wound, and Lady Pouncefort continued, and Colonel Darrell came and told Evelyn that Rainbow was doing well; but the evening passed away, and Lord Rupert was only dis-

engaged by the general separation. It was a great satisfaction to Evelyn that he was to go, as well as themselves, next day. The colonel was to be at Melton on Friday, and the party was breaking up.

Evelyn was seated at breakfast before Lord Rupert came in; there was a vacant chair beside her, but there were others too: he, however, took that.

“You will be in London this evening?” said Lady Louisa to him.

“To dinner, I hope.”

“Going back to your labours?” continued she.

“Yes; my hunting is over till Christmas week. I know my appointed times as well as any school-boy.”

“You cannot be as sure of them, though,” said the colonel; “you may be detained by affairs of state at any moment—you are never free. The death of the Cham of Tartary—if there is such a person—may interfere with your hunting party.”

Evelyn thought of what it must be to have the destiny of worlds depending on one: she said to him:

“Can you ever be free enough to enjoy your holidays?”

“I should be ashamed of being free from care. But, in the very fervour of the chase, one is carried away from all but the object of the moment: that is its great merit, but it is, and ought to be, only momentary.”

“And perhaps, at that moment, some throb of the world’s pulse, at the most distant corner, may be set in motion to reach you. What a proud idea!” said she, colouring at the unusual earnestness with which she spoke, as the long-cherished notion of her soul seemed to force itself into words to the hero of them.

He smiled, and replied, “It is a proud idea that England must be affected by the most distant events of the universe; but that the Cham of Tartary’s death should stop my hunt is rather a *bathos*!”

“So few people think of anything more in the greatest events, than some such little selfish disaster.”

“If they were honestly occupied with their selfish disasters, it would save a great deal of trouble; but one is surprised sometimes at the

little objects that are at the bottom, so frequently, of the finest seeming views, the coarse thread of the canvass through all the embroidery."

"It must be the most disheartening thing in public life, to have to do with these coarse minds."

"Not necessarily because of their coarseness — there is a straightforward honesty, that is easily dealt with. The common yellow clay one makes the brick-work of, and one expects no more: it is the would-be 'porcelain' that shivers at the touch."

"It must be worse," said Evelyn, "with the *should-be* porcelain—those high-born and high-bred who are unworthy of their height."

"Yes," said he, with feeling, "those who are unworthy of their order, as well as their place, do disgust one with one's very existence."

Lord Rupert's horses were announced; he shook hands with Evelyn, and was gone. They had not even shaken hands before; and she dwelt so intently the whole morning on the expression of his countenance at that moment, that her absence of mind might have been

apparent to her companions ; but she had fortunately been asked for some favourite Russian air, and was occupied in copying that “so obligingly,” while she felt it the greatest relief not to be forced to speak.

Rainbow was pronounced convalescent ; she was to be left in Mr. Attock’s care till recovered, and Evelyn and her father were to depart for Hartbrook, as it was only ten miles off, late in the day.

As Evelyn entered the book-room to tell her father she was ready, she heard the colonel’s voice, evidently at the wind-up of a budget of scandal ; “that was the case with Wycherley and her, I assure you, and how he stands now even with Mrs. Rawson, I have not ——” He stopped on seeing Lady Umfraville.

She and her father departed ; and after they had cleared the park he said—“You were quite right, Evelyn, in not wishing to have Sir Luttrell Wycherley at dinner in town : he is a man totally without principle—very artful and dangerous.”

“My dear father, do you tell me this by way of warning ;” and her pride rose at the

idea that Colonel Darrell had thought Sir Luttrell's attentions so pointed, that he had been advising Mr. Windham against encouraging him. "Could you fancy I could ever like such a man?"

"He is a man of genius, certainly, and is what is called very successful."

"I think him so disagreeable; entertaining he is, and he talks well; but he is so impertinent, so intrusive; and he is not the sort of person I could ever like."

"I am very glad of it," said her father; "I did not think he was; but he is very much in love ——"

"With himself," said she: "he is vanity itself."

"He is very designing—he is a bad man," said Mr. Windham.

"If he is so well known to be so bad," said Lady Umfraville, "I wonder people ask him to their houses."

"He is a poet and an eccentric, and the fashion; he has done nothing absolutely disgraceful—not flagrant enough to shut him out of society."

“Well, we are not likely to meet him at Hartbrook, and that is a comfort,” said Evelyn.

And with this consolation her father went to sleep, and she resumed her meditations on Lord Rupert. She did not like to admit, even to herself, that her heart was safe from the most dangerous of geniuses by being pre-occupied ; she would not allow, even in the utmost secret of her thought, that her affections were engaged ; she chose to believe that Lord Rupert was still a hero of romance, and that seeing him had made no difference in her feelings, though she was considering the whole day what the precise meaning of the expression of his countenance was, as they parted ; though his commanding figure, his simple, unpretending manner, his distinguished air, his eye, which spoke the energy of his character, were, waking or sleeping, constantly before her.

Their visit to Hartbrook and some other places passed without any interest, and they returned early in December to Umfraville, where they remained the greater part of the month quite alone, till one morning, as Evelyn

was with her father in the woods, busily employed in directing the workmen, who were cutting, and thinning, and planting, they saw a gentleman coming through the trees, and before they perceived who it was, the joyous voice of the gay young duke was heard. "Oh, here you are. Tracked you, you see. I always find you out; what a true scent I have," continued he, as he joined them; "do you remember my finding you out at ——'s? I have ridden over from Melton; we are all idle this frosty day."

"You will stay with us, then, I hope," said Mr. Windham.

"Delighted to do so, if I may," said he looking at Evelyn.

"Pray do so," said she, "how long have you been in England?"

"Just three weeks—came down to Melton direct, the very day I landed—such fine open weather, I would not lose an hour—my horses were there. We had such runs. The frost, ten days ago, stopped us, and I came down to Plessy Canons; only returned on Wednesday, had a splendid field on Thursday;

and yesterday I met one of your people, and finding that you were at home, I seized the first leisure moment to come and see you. This woodland life appears to agree charmingly with you—how well you look, Lady Umfraville.”

“Had you a pleasant expedition?” said she.

“Oh delightful! If it had not been for Melton commencing, I should never have left my dear Halcyon.”

“Your yacht was all that you expected.”

“A perfect beauty, ‘walks the water like a thing of life,’ as the song says, really; and I had a storm too, a capital storm, coming home.

“Where did you go?” asked Mr. Windham.

“To the Mediterranean—to Sicily: never was there before—the finest shooting I ever saw! One bird was such a size I am having it stuffed for my hall—and such a climate! How any one lives in summer there! It was so hot in October, I lost a stone weight in the shooting there! And then I was at Port Mahon: kept by bad weather a week there, it lost me Algiers, and such lots of dancing, and

I laid a bet I would walk round the island every day I stayed, and I did."

They reached the house, and he went to the stables with Mr. Windham.

"So sorry for Rainbow's accident," said he, as he took Lady Umfraville to dinner, "George Beamish, was it—the Harrow boy? I never heard of such an audacious act! I would have written to Dr. ——— to give him such an imposition as I once had—the second book of Livy to translate from beginning to end! That would have cooled him, I think."

"Did you do it?" said Evelyn.

"No indeed—as you may believe! Rupert Conway did it for me, and so fast was I in durance till it was done—I never forgot it to him. I never missed a house, or at least giving my proxy when he told me he wanted a Bill through the Lords; and it was the greater proof of my gratitude that I never by any accident attend but when he desires me," said he, laughing.

"It is a long time to remember even such a kindness," said Evelyn, who felt as if it was an attention to herself.

“That was the hardest job he got me through, but it was always the same; and at Oxford, there was a life about him that could make me do anything. It is just the same now—in his office he will stir up a poor devil of a clerk to do ten times as much as anyone else can get out of them.”

“Were you at Gibraltar?” said Mr. Windham, “the ‘seventh’ is there now, is it not?”

“Yes—I went to give Phillips a call, of course, and we had such an adventure! Got into an *emeute* at Seville.”

“You went into Spain?”

“We meant to ride to Madrid—we hoped we should be waylaid at least—Phillips and Honiton, and I. I was to pass for one of the ‘seventh’, in a frock of Honiton’s—he is an immense fellow, six feet six—he really is—and Phillips is very little less than I am; so I thought we should startle any common robbers, and indeed we had no fun till we got to Seville, but the whole town was in arms, beating one another, and when they saw us they thought it was a pity not to beat us too. But we were armed, and we fairly took the Posada by storm

and got our horses fed; we could not find a morsel for ourselves except some eggs—I saw a girl in the street with a basket of eggs, and throwing myself half out of the window I just snatched them from her with one hand, holding on to the sill with the other, and dropped a dollar from between my teeth on her head; all the mob cried ‘*Viva,*’ and we stood over the old Maritornes till she fried them, and by this time half Seville were in the street; so all we had for it was to mount our horses and make a dash through; so, sword in hand, we charged them, and a desperate looking set they were—but we looked so determined, and Honiton, when he rode in his stirrups, looked like seven Don Quixotes in one, and so through we went, and such a gallop we made of it, never stopped or looked which way we went, but when we drew bridle at last we were on our way back to Gibraltar; so back we went, and lucky it was, or, detained as I was by the storm afterwards. I should have lost all the fine weather at Melton.”

“And the storm,” said Evelyn, “was that in the ‘Bay of Biscay O?’”

“Yes—we had nearly cleared it when the Rattlesnake frigate hailed us and said there was a storm coming on, and by Jove a storm it was—we had but just time to haul in and lie to : when such a rattler of a blast was upon us. Poor little Halcyon—you would have thought she would be swallowed up every minute, but the way she went up and down the waves it was perfectly beautiful !—just like an easy hunter up a hill ; she kept her own pace all the time, and we ran into Bordeaux and waited till the storm was over, as safe as could be : she was a little strained but not the least damaged.”

“Did you think you were to be drowned,” said Evelyn.

“They said we should—my boatswain, an old hand, told me quietly nothing could save us—but I had such trust in the Halcyon, I was sure we should weather it ; and I declare I was so interested watching her ways, I never remembered the danger.”

Lady Umfraville smiled so sympathizingly at the duke for this speech, that her father was quite pleased and the duke rattled on—

"You would enjoy such a thing, I am sure, Lady Umfraville."

"I do not suffer at sea, but I never was in the least danger, and ladies are so much in the way on these occasions, I should be thinking how troublesome I was all the time."

"You would not scream, I am sure, and then it would not signify, you would be safe in the cabin."

"So much live lumber stowed out of the way, like the hens and chickens," said she, laughing.

"I wish they stayed as quiet as you could; an unfortunate hen in her ecstasy of fright got out of her coop and she kept such a pother fluttering over our heads and whirling in the sheets and settling anywhere and staying nowhere, and keeping such a cackling, a waiting maid could not have made a greater fuss. I sent for my gun and was going to shoot her, but the men said it would be unlucky, so I gave it up, and so one fellow at last, at the risk of his life, for we had to hold on as hard as we could, knocked her down with his cap, and rammed her into a locker, and that did silence her."

"It would have been unlucky certainly, to have albatrossed the poor hen," said she.

"I never like to cross my men in these fancies, but I did crow or cackle as much as the hen, over Tomkins, the boatswain, when we had the Halcyon safe and sound in harbour—he says he would go to the world's end in her now."

"It is very well for you," said Mr. Windham, "to have weathered such a storm—for you are rated now as lucky, and your crew will believe in you whatever you order. Do you mean to go out next summer?"

"As soon as the tournament is over. Will Lady Umfraville and you come and try my luck? I will go anywhere you command."

"To the Antipodes, now?" said Lady Evelyn.

"To the Antipodes, if you will," said he, "It would be the first yacht that ever touched at New Zealand! Is not that our Antipodes?"

"I do not think we shall incumber you," said Evelyn, as she left the room.

"Mr. Windham declares off as to the antipodes," said the duke, when he and her father

rejoined her in the saloon ; “ but he is so kind to say he thinks you will come with him to Plessy Canons, Christmas week—or the week after Christmas, whichever it is called. He says you are determined to dine at home on Christmas-day, but that you will come on the thirtieth. Will you ? ”

“ I should like it very much.”

“ Then, that is settled, and let us dance out the old year. Will you engage yourself to dance out 18— with me ? ”

“ I will ; but I would rather call it dancing in the new—it seems cruel to be dancing at the death of our old friend.”

The duke laughed. “ Well, we will dance in the new.”

“ The thirtieth,” said Mr. Windham, calculating, “ we promised to stay a day in town if we could, Evelyn, to see my sister ; we can easily manage that going to Kent.”

“ Are you not proud of being one of the Kentish loyal men and true ? ” said she to the duke.

“ Yes, very ! but I had much rather Plessy Canons was in Leicestershire or Yorkshire :—

Kent may be the garden or orchard, or whatever it is, of England—it certainly is not the hunting ground.”

He spoke at random, as usual, but Mr. Windham thought how exactly it would suit him to have Umfraville for his winter seat, within a ride of Melton,—and Plessy Canons the summer, not far from the sea.

“Does not the sea,” said Evelyn, totally unconscious she was speaking her father’s thoughts — “Does not the sea overbalance anything a mere inland county can afford?”

“Plessy Canons commands a view of the sea, but it is not a ‘marine villa,’—I wish it was; and it always seems to me behind the world: having to pass through town to get at it makes people think it such a way off.”

“I think you speak very disrespectfully of one of the finest old places in England,” said Mr. Windham, on whom the duke’s careless modernism was bringing the cold fit against his grace. “Is not the antiquity and splendour of Plessy Canons more valuable than the finest coast of champaign country in the world?”

"It is so very respectable," said the duke, laughing and pretending to yawn, "that, like many other respectable things, it would put me to sleep, if I did not fill it with a merry party, and grace and fashion," bowing to Lady Umfraville, who bowed in return, saying, gaily :—

"Then the honour of being one of your party there, is just about as complimentary as it would be to have all our pictures, provided we were young enough and dressed modernly, hung in the gallery, instead of the antiquated portraits of your forefathers and foremothers."

"Silent pictures! Even yours, Lady Umfraville—where is Lady Umfraville's picture? has —— finished it?" said he, looking round the room.

"The picture is mine," said Mr. Windham, "and is at Enmore."

"But even ——'s picture of Lady Umfraville would be a poor exchange for the reality."

"It would make no noise, certainly," said Evelyn.

"Exactly," said the duke; I like a cheerful noise of a happy set, and I know I could do

something for them : give them a sail, or a hunt, or a dance; but when I had hung their picture in the best light, I could do no more for them, nor they for me."

"Well," said Evelyn, "I never considered it so before, but it is very true : admiring pictures all by oneself would be a very misanthropic, selfish amusement."

Mr. Windham was rather disgusted with the duke's want of taste, but, nevertheless, satisfied that his daughter should do justice to his social good nature.

"You Kentish men were beaten at your last cricket match, I think," said he to the duke.

"Yes, by five innings. It is not the season, but we might have some cricket, there will be two or three good players with us. Did you ever see a good cricket match, Lady Umfraville?"

"Never more than passing by, but I do not understand about the innings and outings."

"In summer I could show you the best play in England ; but we will have some amateur sport for you, if it is fine weather."

Lady Umfraville thanked him ; but seeing

that her father looked tired of their conversation, she opened the pianoforte. Mr. Windham took his violoncello, and the duke turned over the leaves of the music-books very good humouredly, and then, at the first pause, said—

“You do not hunt, Lady Umfraville?”

She shook her head as she began to play again.

“I wonder you do not; to be true Leicestershire, you should.”

“But I am only half; I have no right to set up for a thorough-bred.”

“Well, then,” said he, laughing, “you will ride to cover, and see us throw off; that will be all fair. On Tuesday the Darrells are at Melton; on Tuesday, Lady Louisa and her party are to be at cover. I wish you would grace the scene.”

“It is a sight to see once. I should like to see it. If I was sure I should not go off after the hounds, and find myself, like Dr. Syntax, at the review, in all the dismay of an unintentionally glorious position.”

“We will take care of that,” said Mr. Windham, “if you can submit to the ‘inglorious

safety' of having your horse held, as I shall have mine: I have not the least idea of *assisting* at more than the throw off."

He was pleased at the duke's wishing for his daughter's presence, even at a hunt; and though he was so tired of his company for even one evening, he looked forward with satisfaction to Evelyn's having it for life.

Tuesday came: a foggy, but soft morning, and just as the company began to assemble, the sun came out, and shone bright upon the gay and gladsome scene. There was a great field; the ladies occupied a rising ground; Lady Louisa, like the Commander-in-Chief, with her staff around her; her especial acquaintance, like the aides-de-camp, riding up to her post. The splendid horses, the fine looking men, the busy huntsmen and whippers-in, the eager dogs, looking as they were crowded below them like some *parterre* of curious plants. So even were their heads, and in such regular lines did their bent tails and broad backs appear, so simultaneous were their movements, it had rather the effect of a breeze passing over a flowery field, than the motion of things of life.

There is too much *apparel* now in sportsmanship, especially at Melton; everything is too studied—too much of a science; but in spite of modern corruptions and modern slang which has found its way even into the vocabulary of the fox-hunt, in spite of all the affectations and finical finery which now degrades the pastime, a fox-hunt is a fox-hunt still—an English, manly, noble sport.

The Duke of Plessingham, on a powerful animal, suited to his size and weight, now rode up to Evelyn.

“Oh, you are come. I am so glad—such a fine day. Do not we look splendid? Is it not a gay scene? Your horse seems quite pleased at least. That is a fine thing Darrell is on, is it not?”

But Lady Umfraville's eyes did not follow his, they were fixed on a horseman, who just then rode up the knoll: her heart beat; could it be—no, it was not, yet how like—Lord Rupert Conway.

“Cornbury, that is,” said the duke, following her look. “Do you not know him? There is no better fellow than Cornbury. The

brains are all gone they say to Rupert; but ——”

Lord Cornbury looked at her, said something to Lady Louisa, and then rode up and begged to be presented to Lady Umfraville, and he had just said “My brother,” when the duke exclaimed—“The hounds are loosed, they will find in a moment;” and making a signal to Evelyn’s groom, who was at her horse’s head, to stand fast, and keep steady, he and Lord Cornbury rode down to be near to the scene of action.

The hounds dispersed were scattered on every side so earnestly, and decidedly doing their duty, and their whole attention seeming so intensely given to their purpose, their mazy tracks mark the wet grass, they are busy in the gorse, they stop, they puzzle, they rush into the stubble, the branches are stirring over that covert brook, they hurry back, a long broad trackway in the grass left behind: that furzy break they’re in—they’re out—he’s found!—they’re off. The burst, the rush, the crash of that first start is spirit-stirring as a fiery fight.

Evelyn forgot to think whether her horse would stand—forgot everything in the interest of the moment—so completely was she absorbed in the performance of the dogs, that when the whole army of riders galloped off, and the earth resounded under their hoofs, she scarcely felt the convulsive start of her horse, but gazed as eagerly as if the world depended on the dogs and men, and fox, that speeded up the fields before her. Now a long long line of scarlet coats, and bay, and gray, and chesnut, mixed in picturesque confusion; now a fence, and they break and scatter; no pause, no stop; over they go, and flying up the slope beyond their gallant horses go. And now, group after group, single horseman after horseman top the crest of the bank, and disappear; the last is over, and the fields are still, and empty and silent.

They are gone to hurry on in reckless haste in the intoxication of rapid motion, violent exercise, and constant danger; for what purpose—to what end? To make them men, Englishmen—the hardy, daring, fearless race, indomitable victors of the world. From the

beardless boy to the grey-headed sexagenarian, all equally earnest—the school-boy, having his first day at Melton, and “the hero of a hundred fields,” alike fearless, and eager to be the foremost.

Lady Louisa Darrell and her party came back with Evelyn to Umfraville to luncheon, and they were just mounting their horses on their return, when one of the grooms cried out —“There’s Pug;”

“There he is,” cried another, “just by Maxley Mill.”

And far off, just visible against the black mill-wheel appeared poor reynard as fast as he could go, but as if it was his last effort, across a low meadow. It seemed as if he had, in honour of Lady Umfraville’s first appearance at the hunt, determined to pay his respects to her before his death.

The hounds were close behind; the ladies stood on the terrace; few were the riders now, but these held gallantly on. The fox made a spring at the wall of the miller’s garden—failed, and turned to take the copse beyond; but the hounds were up, and he was killed.

The duke waived his hat to the group on the terrace, who waived their handkerchiefs in return, and he and two others rode up to the castle.

"How well-bred of our fox to come this way!" said Colonel Darrell, as he and the duke and Lord Cornbury followed Lady Umfraville to the eating-room.

"It was very kind of him," said she; "now I can say I have seen a whole hunt."

"I was going to tell you," said Lord Cornbury, "how much gratified I was by ——" he hesitated, and began again—"Your tenants, Lady Umfraville, did me the honour, my brother tells me ——. Indeed, it was returning him, in fact; for I am only as the representative of his policy. In fact, even as my father's ——my father's property here—he never liked the Lees; his conservatories, and all that sort of thing, are at Billingsly, and none of us—so that but for your interest—though, indeed, Rupert ——"

Mr. Windham—in pity to the confusion the shy, awkward, amiable young man was in, between his gratitude to Lady Umfraville for

doing nothing, and his regard for his brother, and his own humility—asked him what wine he would have ; and Evelyn even felt relieved, though she had, ever since the tenants had started, been wishing for the end of Lord Cornbury's speech about "my brother ;" and his voice was so like, that had he been able to speak, and speak on such a subject, she could have listened to him all day. But as he struggled through his tangle of words and ideas, and while she looked at him because of his resemblance to Lord Rupert,—the very resemblance tormented her : he was so like in feature, and so different in expression, it was like looking at a bad cast of a fine bust, or a wax figure—exactly the original body, but no soul.

"That was a neat tumble of poor Graisberry," said the duke to the colonel ; "he made a regular somerset, and lighted on his legs as well as a harlequin could, and looked so surprised. Did he ever get up to us ?"

"Yes, till the gate at the lane ; I passed him there, and did not see him since ; he was making such a face of it."

"Graiseberry's fall is a regular thing every day we are out," continued the duke; "but he never breaks even his collar bone."

"That you consider nothing," said Evelyn, laughing; "you say 'even his collar bone,' as as if it was quite a failure its having escaped."

"Because it is scarcely anything; if a fellow wanted the *éclât* of a hurt, it is the safest thing to break, as Darrell can tell you. Such a tumble as that was! Two years ago—I think it was at Bognor—poor Darrell, coming down Danby Steep, regular Yorkshire mud a foot deep, going the pace, the poor beast stuck his off-hind leg as if it was glued, and then gave such a tug he lost his fore feet, and over he went, and Darrell under him. Such a figure he was: I passed him—I was on Godolphin; you remember, Cornbury, that great chestnut,—and he knew those hills so well he gathered his legs and slid down! Down I went, like a *Montagne Russe*, and on we went, a forty minutes' run after; but, indeed, I thought I had seen the last of poor Darrell."

"And yet you went on, Duke?" said Lady Louisa, with a sensibility look. "How cruel!"

"Oh, not the least! Stevens, old Bognor's family surgeon, was behind. I was very sure he would leave all the foxes in Yorkshire for a patient; and when we got back, there was the colonel, like Mother Hubbard's dog, sitting up in an arm-chair—so interesting!—till Stevens said, 'Oh, it's nothing—only a collar bone fracture—well again in a day or two!' and so he was."

"But you thought he was killed," said Lady Louisa, with the prettiest shudder; "and you did not even stop to extricate him from the horse?"

"Of course not, it is not the thing to do; besides, it was not my department."

"It would not do for a general in battle," said Evelyn, more sarcastically than her father liked towards the duke, "to stop and enquire after every officer he saw fall. The leader must be at his post. When a victory or a fox-hunt is at stake, who ought, or can, think of such casualties?"

"It is such comfort to think that Honeywood, so skilful as he is, is always with the hounds here," said Lady Louisa, plaintively.

“Very little comfort to the rest of his patients, if he has any,” said Mr. Windham.

“And if Honeywood broke his own bones,” cried the duke, “what would happen?”

Nobody seemed to know, and the party left Umfraville.

CHAPTER XII.

LADY UMFRAVILLE and Mr. Windham set off immediately after an early breakfast, the morning after they arrived in town, to walk through the park to Kensington, where Miss Windham lived. As they passed down one of the broad walks in Kensington Gardens, a lady and gentleman entered from a cross-walk and seemed to be coming towards them, but instantly turned into another path. Evelyn was sure the gentleman was Prior Vernon, for she saw him look at her—and she thought she had seen the lady's face before, but could not remember who it could be.

“Was that not Mr. Vernon?” said she to her father; he did not answer, he was intently looking at some men who were carrying away a fallen tree. “What a pity that fine tree should be gone,” said he.

“A great pity,” said she in an absent tone, for she was sure her father had not only seen Mr. Vernon, but had heard her question; he evidently did not mean to answer it, and she said no more. Mr. Vernon seemed to avoid them intentionally and looked confused, but she thought very little of it; and by the time their visit was paid, and they were on their road to the duke’s, had forgotten all about it.

“Is it not a shame of the duke to laugh at the respectability of such a noble old place as this?” said Mr. Windham, as they approached the vast pile of Plessy Canons.

It had been an Abbey, and was a long straggling, very old irregular picturesque building.

“It is a beautiful old place,” said Evelyn, but Umfraville is finer—do not you think so? Besides a castle is always grander. It may have been in the family since the Conquest—but an Abbey tells its own modernness at once; a desecrated Abbey pillaged from the monks—no older than Henry VIII; its very name tells us its little antiquity.”

This was aristocracy with a vengeance, and

Mr. Windham was confounded as many wiser fathers are at finding the effect of their lessons coming against their own plans, the doctrines they have so sedulously inculcated, brought up in a full array just when they wanted to make quite a different impression.

The Duke of Plessingham welcomed Mr. Windham quite affectionately, and held Lady Umfraville's hand for an instant after he had taken it, and was for a moment silent as he gazed upon her.

"Picturesque is it not; Plessy Canons from the hill, just before the gates."

"Beautiful! and the last of the sunshine was just upon it, and on those fine old trees?"

"Yes, the Monks, my predecessors, left me a good legacy of those trees and of the orchard; there are the finest standard pears in England in the orchard. Oh would you like to see what I was just looking at, when I heard your carriage; is it too cold for you, Lady Umfraville? there is just light enough."

"Do not take Lady Umfraville out after sunset," cried Mr. Poynings, who just then came into the hall. "Really, duke, you are

too bad ; shut the hall-door for Heaven's sake ; talking of going out again, when the thermometer has not been above 25° all day."

"It is such a beautiful old stone altar piece, do you not say it is, Poynings? Dug up in the orchard. I am afraid of the men injuring it, so I will consign Lady Umfraville to you," and he ran off.

"He must be at something," said Mr. Poynings, "it is a pity he can never sit still ; a pity," continued he, as they entered the library, "that of all his possessions this is the only one in which he takes no sort of interest, though he has 'every new work of merit,' as the advertisements say, sent down to him. I suppose he never opened one, voluntarily, in his life."

"It is so much more really dignified," said Evelyn, "to be just what he is, his unaffected self, and not attempt to be what he cannot be ; every body need not have the same tastes."

"Among all his excellencies—and he has many"—said Mr. Poynings, "I never heard his grace accused of dignity."

"The dignity of ignorance," said Evelyn,

smiling. "Well, it is dignity to acknowledge want of knowledge, rather than to endeavour to disguise it."

"Or to improve it? You dignify it by too grand a word: it is indolent honesty."

"It is more civil, when we are his guests, to call it dignified candour."

"Do you always defend your host, Lady Umfraville, with such spirited kindness? I shall hope, then, some day to persuade you and Mr. Windham to honour me with a visit at Linwood, and then I may hope to find all my faults turned into amiable virtues."

"I never heard of your faults; perhaps you have none?"

"What signify the faults of old Jack Poynings; if they were noted in a book, who would con them; the faults of the Duke of Plessingham, the world are willing to make much of, or to be blind to, as the case may be."

There was a large party, and the duke was happy. There were beauty and fashion, and talking and laughing, and, if nobody else made a noise, he did.

"Oh, here are the new almanacks," cried he,

when he came out with the rest of the gentlemen after dinner. He went to a table where lay some parcels of books from town.

“Here we have 18—; how does it look—very pleasing, I think. I suppose, Lady Umfraville, you will not admire the look of next year till we have done with this. You would think it incivility speeding the parting by welcoming the coming. Here it is,” continued he, turning over the leaves, “here is Easter. . Very good. April 4. Then we will have Thursday the 8th. Lady Barnstaple, do you agree—Thursday, the 8th of April for the tournament?”

“Thursday, the 8th: Easter holidays—excellent; everybody will be at liberty,” said Lady Barnstaple.

“And everybody will catch cold,” said Mr. Poynings. “Think of sitting in fancy dresses out of doors in snow or sleet at least. I am sure I have often seen snow on the ground in April.”

“Once or twice in half a century, Poynings,” said the duke; “but it cannot be so ill-bred as to snow or even sleet on such an

occasion. 'All hail!' would be appropriate," said he, laughing.

"Even in that polite country, France, I have seen some ladies *en calèche* at Longchamps, who looked as if—if it was possible to suggest such an idea—as if their noses were red and their cheeks blue; but they were, to do them justice, smiling, and looking delightfully, with a nosegay in their hands, with all their might. However, if even at Paris such distressing sights could be seen, what are we to expect in our boorish climate."

"That unbecoming Longchamps you speak of must have been some very early Easter," said Mr. Windham. "The last week in March, even in Paris, is different from the first week in April."

"Yes, yes," said the duke, "when March in her 'lamby mood,' has fairly 'ba-ad' off the stage, we are privileged to have 'calm and light airs from the south,' as the log-books say."

"You forget April showers," said Evelyn, "which shower on for a whole day very often."

"Yes, on the 7th; there will be light

showers to lay the dust: the 8th all sunshine and smiles," said the duke.

"Will you have a few stoves under the galleries, duke?" said Mr. Poynings; "a little hot air all around us in our stalls? I hope I may appear in at least a *demi saison* toilette?"

"He may be Lord Keeper, in a farred gown," said Evelyn.

"Capital," cried the duke. "It would suit you excellently well, Poynings. You shall have a stall to yourself, warm and dignified, looking with complacency on the sports in which you excelled in your youth!"

"You have not seen the terrace, Lady Umfraville," said Lady Barnstaple; "it is just the very thing for it."

"To-morrow you shall choose your place—the Queen of Beauty," said the duke, bowing to Lady Barnstaple, "has settled where her throne is to be, but subject, of course, to the Earl Marshal's approval. We defer entirely to you, Mr. Windham.

"I defer entirely to you, Mr. Windham," said Evelyn; "you shall place me where you please."

“Oh, I hope you will not change my seat, my Lord-Marshal!” cried Lady Barnstaple, who was too seriously pleased with her title to give up an iota of her power. Mr. Windham was dissatisfied at her being queen of beauty instead of his daughter, whom he at least thought merited the situation so much more. However, he liked being marshal very well, and he answered: “The Queen of Beauty and Lord-Marshal must confer together; of course, your ladyship’s chosen place is sacred, and you will undertake the costumes?”

“Yes, yes,” said the duke, “Lady Barnstaple will have all the ladies’ dresses correct and superb.”

“Oh, I only presume to fix my own, and that of my attendants,” said she.

“You will fix on mine, then,” said Evelyn; “we are all in your train. It would never do, unless you directed the whole dress; it is the only way to have it all in proper keeping.”

Neither the duke nor Mr. Windham intended that Lady Umfraville should be merely one in Lady Barnstaple’s train; so while she, seated beside Evelyn, began with a countenance of

profound reflection to talk of velvets, and silks, and colours, they retreated to the other end of the room.

“That will never do,” said the duke; “it was merely in compliance with Lady Umfraville’s request that I asked Lady Barnstaple to be Queen; but all our lances are to be broken for Lady Umfraville.”

“Yes, I understand,” said Mr. Windham; “I shall take care to have her in her right place. Let the queen have the giving the prizes, and Evelyn all the glory.”

“By the bye,” said the volatile duke, “we must be very *recherché* in our prizes;” and he went back to Lady Barnstaple, but she could not be interrupted now—the matter under consideration was too serious, and the duke was obliged to disturb somebody else.

The next morning, at breakfast, however, he brought on the question of the prizes.

“Victory is enough in itself, is it not?”

“But bearing away the prize gracefully is quite essential; receiving the crown on the point of the lance is the etiquette,” said Mr. Poynings.

“We are going to have the cricket match to day,” said the duke. “And to-morrow, being New-year’s-day, we shall celebrate it by ‘running at the ring ——’”

There were some players in the house, and some from the neighbourhood joined. It was a fine frosty day. The ladies walked about. Mr. Poynings took charge of Lady Barnstaple and Lady Umfraville, and explained the game.

“I do not understand it in the least,” said Lady Barnstaple, “but it looks very pretty—only I am afraid of the balls going astray, and hitting some of us. How fast the duke runs.”

The duke did run amazingly for so large a man, and he played with great skill,—so well that Evelyn became quite interested in the game. He had in Lord St. Leonard a well-matched opponent. They kept it up long.

“Come, Lady Umfraville,” cried Mr. Poynings, “you will catch cold standing still so long.”

“Oh, I must see this out.”

“Will you bet?” said Lord Barnstaple, who was one of the players, running up to them for a moment. “Do you not think the duke will win?”

"No," said Evelyn, "I rather think Lord St. Leonard will put him out."

"I bet on the duke!" cried Lady Barnstaple. "Go back, Barnstaple, you will be wanted. Will you bet on Lord St. Leonard?"

"It is so interesting, I cannot think how you can care for a wager about it," said Evelyn.

"I quite agree with you," said a voice behind them, which made the others look round, and caused Evelyn's heart to thrill—it was Lord Rupert Conway.

"I quite agree with you: it is a pity to profane such a noble game of skill with betting."

"When did you come?" cried Lady Barnstaple.

"I have been at Billingsly some days."

Billingsly was not more than an hour's ride from Plessy Canons.

"Did you come to see the duke only, or did you know we were here?" said Lady Barnstaple, who always wished to have all the attention of everybody to herself.

"I heard that Lady Barnstaple was here," said Lord Rupert, with a bow.

A shout from the players proclaimed the duke's being out. Lord Barnstaple took his place, and the duke ran up—

“How kind of you, Conway! You will stay to-day, I hope; I know it is in vain to ask you for to-morrow. Lord Ipswich will not part with any of you to-morrow. Is Lady Matlock arrived?”

“She came yesterday. I cannot stay more than to dinner to-day.”

“But you will come on the second?”

“Unfortunately, I must return to town.”

“Come,” said Mr. Poynings, “do, for heaven's sake, pay your compliments walking about—this is very cold work.”

He had Lady Barnstaple's arm, and she expected Lord Rupert would offer his; but the duke took one, and he gave the other to Evelyn. She very well knew the vicinity of Billingsly, and she had seen in the papers that Lord Rupert had “joined the family circle for Christmas week;” but she scarcely hoped to see him.

“Why did you not come earlier to have taken a bat?”

"How could I dream of cricket at this season? I had heard nothing of your cricketing, though I knew of your last arrival."

Evelyn coloured. He had been aware that she was there. He meant to point out that he came because she was there? Did he? "

"Will you join us now," continued the duke.

"Oh, no; I am a spectator."

"Was not there some capital bowling?" said the duke to Lady Umfraville.

"It is a charming game; I think I understand it nearly now."

"Poynings instructed you. He belongs to the Marylebone Club, and was a good player, I believe in ——"

"Plessingham," cried Lord Barnstaple, "you are wanted."

He ran down to the cricket-ground, and Lord Rupert and Evelyn followed Mr. Poynings and Lady Barnstaple.

"What a large party you are," said he.

"Are not you a large party at Billingsly?"

"Yes, it is 'a large,' but the newspapers could not say 'a distinguished party,' for we are only ourselves, my sisters, my nephews and

nieces. My father likes to have all his grandchildren about him, and dowager aunts: it is the only time we are all sure of being together, and we enjoy it so much."

"A regular old English home hospitality."

"There can hardly be a 'merry Christmas' without children. I left them all rehearsing."

"Are not you allowed a part now?"

"No, no; the difficulty is not for actors; there are only too many for the characters. Perhaps you have figured in Christmas Pantomimes in your day?"

"I never made my appearance on any stage."

"You never felt that you could move the audience as you pleased? You never can boast, as my little niece did to me this morning, that I saw a tear, a real tear, in the corner of grandpapa's eye at the 'Babes in the Wood,' when I did the 'little girl.'"

"It is a greater triumph, is it not?" said she, "to make your audience 'be carried off in strong hysterics,' than to make them laugh. Laughing is so catching, if one laughs, all are pretty sure to follow. But I think the actor

must go home happier after a comedy than after a tragedy: he has made every one else happy."

"I do not know; I think I should be better pleased with myself," said Lord Rupert, "after having acted in a fine tragedy—I have exalted my audience: anything will make people laugh, as you say. I should be ashamed of the stuff with which I had been moving ideal laughter. I would rather make my audience cry about kings and princesses, than laugh at Tom Thumb or Jerry Sneak. One is in much better company in tragedy."

"You judge by your individual experience of courts; but princes are not usually reckoned the safest company, or the finest examples."

"But in my tragic parts, I exalt my hearers by their sympathy with the unfortunate great."

"And after having been made to cry, and very uncomfortable, we console ourselves by thinking it is all impossible, we can never be in the situation of those unfortunate great, and put them out of our heads. Do you not think *Les Precieuses Ridicules* did more good than all Racine?"

"There is always something personal in satire which I dislike. The good is doubtful; the bad is certain: it is gratifying people's worst feelings—malice and envy," said he, smiling.

"Falstaff," said she, "as you do not like French examples, I know very well I shall be more satisfied with myself after, not only laughing, but being the cause of laughter in others, in acting Falstaff, than if ——"

Lord Rupert laughed—"You say, Lady Umfraville, in acting Falstaff, as if it was a common part with you; the idea of your doing Falstaff has totally overthrown my tragedy. I acknowledge I was only arguing for diversion—only going on myself that you might not stop. I really think, as the children say, 'both's best—' I like to see people happy—to make every body so, if one could."

"Only you think it right to make them a little miserable for their good."

"I do not think it does make people really miserable to see tragedy, or to read a melancholy novel. If ——"

"Are you only going on now that I may

not stop," said Evelyn, gaily, "or are you saying your opinion?—because if I knew, it might make a difference in my answer."

"Only answer," said he, "and I ——"

"Do not care what I say, do you mean," said she laughing, "you just require me to give the one word, and then you can go on."

"I am quite sure of your saying what I shall be the better for hearing—but I am not sure that I could always go on. In the pleasure of listening one loses the power of reply."

"The duke called out, "I am sorry you cannot find a word to say, Conway; Lady Umfraville thinks you are like most politicians, not a very amusing companion! Cannot you find anything to say; cannot you praise our play?"

"Lady Umfraville," cried Lord Rupert, in a loud voice, "do you not think that Plessingham is the best bowler in England?"

"When I have seen all the others I will tell you," cried she in the same tone. Lady Barnstaple now came up and, in spite of poor Mr. Poynings—would stop and speak to Lord Rupert; she felt it her duty to do so, for Lord

Barnstaple was in the opposition, and she felt she ought to make use of her slight acquaintance with Lord Rupert, to show that there were no party enmities—besides he was so handsome and so young, and so distinguished, she had no notion of not having his attention. She told Mr. Poynings to go in and warm himself, and then Lord Rupert was obliged to offer her his other arm, and they walked on round the terrace.

“The duke has fixed the eighth of April, Thursday, in the Easter week, for the tournament,” said she.

“It is to be then?”

“Will you be there, Lord Rupert?”

“It is too far beforehand to foresee what one will do; but everybody that can will come here to it of course?”

“It will be very splendid, I am sure, and Plessingham would make anything pleasant.”

“Lady Umfraville has agreed to my ideas of the costume! At least as far as I can arrange it now.”

“There is time enough between Easter and Christmas for the most dilatory performers to

have even as many attractions as suit the occasion completed in time."

"Mr. Poynings threatens us with snow in April," said Evelyn.

"No, it will not snow," said Lady Barnstaple, decidedly, as if that, at least, was an arranged affair, "it will be a fine sunshiny day, you may depend on it."

"It always is for a party of pleasure," said Lord Rupert, smiling.

"I am so very fortunate," said Lady Barnstaple, as if it was a privilege she was born to, or a tribute due to her beauty. "I have been on so many picnics and so forth and it never rained except once, and I foresaw a bad day, and advised against going."

"I hoped Plessingham asked your opinion before he named the day."

"He asked my consent—he could not well think of a day without it."

"He must be well trained, indeed, not to think without your consent."

"Of course," said Lady Barnstaple, "when one does undertake to preside over such an affair it must be *tout ou rien*."

“It is very kind of you to undertake the trouble.”

“I like the sort of thing—I may say I understand it; the duke does not mind trouble, but he wanted experience, and so he came to me for advice. I like the sort of thing, and I was the more *au fait* to the matter, as I had seen a good deal, or at least something, of the kind at Vienna.”

I do not think I can allow the duke to have all the merit of applying to you, Lady Barnstaple, for when he was talking it over to my father, I suggested his asking your opinion,” said Evelyn.

“Did Plessingham originate the plan of the tournament himself?” said Lord Rupert.

Lady Barnstaple had just said, that he had come to ask her advice about it, so she could not well say she had suggested the idea to him. Evelyn said—

“No—not entirely—it was little Georgiana Vernon. They were at Archery, and she said something about prizes and tournaments—and then the duke took it up.”

“In fact,” said Lady Barnstaple, taking

advantage of little Georgiana—"in fact, he just knew the word, but of the details he had not a notion; indeed"—

Here the cricketers' "Bravo!" as the game ended, put a stop to their conversation, and the duke came to be congratulated on winning.

When they went into the saloon, the duke, Lady Barnstaple, and Mr. Windham, went into a committee of costume. Several of the party stood at the other side of the table, looking at the illustrations of "Ivanhoe", "Johnes's Froissart," and "Queenhoo Hall."

"This Rowena is not very graceful," said Lord Rupert to Evelyn.

"No," said Lady Barnstaple, as if she was afraid that, even by implication, she should lose her dignity of Queen of Beauty; "no, indeed, I shall not study her attitude, I assure you."

"I am afraid you will know all the claimants for your prizes too well," said Evelyn.

"Do you know my 'great unknowns,'" said the duke to Lady Barnstaple; "St. Leonard keeps his secret if he is one."

"He is certainly," said Lady Barnstaple, decidedly, and not liking to acknowledge her ignorance of the other, she resumed her discussion in the committee.

"How awkward those great swords are," said Evelyn, pointing to a figure of a knight drawing his sword over his shoulder.

"And mean, I think," said Lord Rupert. "I should think it much finer 'to shred the foeman's limbs away,' by a one-handed blow of my scimitar, than come lumbering down with this great thing in both hands. One does not like to say anything against Cœur de Leon, particularly in this Chivalric company, but I fear Saladin had the best of it in their trial of skill."

"But not here," said Evelyn, turning to a print of the 'Combat in the Desert,' "Saladin is like a privateer against a noble frigate; he seems as if it was just touch and go—as if he was trying only to escape—Richard is so self-possessed, and immovable."

"It seems so foolish to be cased up in that blazing armour, in such a hot climate," said he,

"Just as the French always say—we ought

not to have conquered, but still we did ; and so did these armoured men."

"Do not accuse me of saying anything of England like France," said Lord Rupert, smiling. "You think I shall say—it was mere brute force ; but it was not, it was all our national spirit, our indomitable determination, in both cases."

"However, it was grander in Cœur de Leon's time, when each individual showed his indomitable spirit. There is greater courage, surely, in single combat, than in all the men in a regiment standing to be shot at."

"You will admire these tournament heroes, then, and look down with contempt on those who do not break a lance, while the heralds cry, 'Fight on ! Fight on ! bright eyes behold your deeds.'"

"A messenger has come on with this, my Lord, from Billingsly," said a servant, as he gave a red box to Lord Rupert.

"Come, Conway, this is too bad," cried the duke ; "this must not take you away. Here," said he, opening the door of a little cabinet,

“you can read and write a despatch ; but do not tell me you are to leave us.”

Lord Rupert entered ; but though he stayed to dinner, he was placed quite at the other end of the table from Lady Umfraville, and she could not, through the duke’s incessant chatter, hear one word he said.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE duke had with his usual good-nature—but not at all with the docility to her ordinances, of which Lady Barnstaple boasted, for it was quite contrary to her opinion—asked his country neighbours to his last-year's-night's ball. Lady Barnstaple did not “like that sort of thing ;” so, to reconcile her to the mob of the night, the duke came from the dining-room immediately after the ladies, and, saying the ball-room was ready, begged Lady Barnstaple to honour him with her hand, that they might have their own *recherché* dancing first.

“Good night,” said Lord Rupert.

“No, no, Conway!” cried the duke; “you have plenty of time; you will not be an hour going back to Billingsly. Just stay and join the ‘light, fantastic toe;’ no one shall repeat it

of you—you shall not be called ‘the dancing chancellor’ nor even the dancing secretary. I saw you reeling away last Easter with the children at Billingsly. Take Lady Umfraville.”

“I shall be too happy,” taking her hand; but the fact is, I am come to that time of life that I ‘only stand up to complete a set with the children.’”

“Nonsense!” said the duke, “you are not six months older than I am. Come along! In honour of Barnstaple’s Highland chieftainship, shall we have a reel, Lady Barnstaple? What diversion you had teaching me last—no, the autumn before last, at Dunniedoune.”

“Yes, yes! let us have a reel. It flatters Barnstaple to call him a chief.”

“Remember,” said the duke to Evelyn,—“remember, you are engaged to me for the midnight—Country dance, we will have it, that it may include everybody.”

The quadrille was over.—“I must go, my father wishes us to be all together to-night. I hope he will not have been annoyed at my staying, but I cannot regret it. I shall probably never dance with you again.”

"It is an honour I shall never forget," said Evelyn.

"Honour!" said he, smiling, "not pleasure?"

"Honourable pleasure—pleasurable honour," said she, smiling in return.

"Pleasure, indeed!" said he, earnestly; "if I were not going home, I could not go —— Good bye."

He went, and with him went Evelyn's interest in the night. Not so to the duke, whose spirits rose in proportion to the numbers about him. Before twelve he took Evelyn's hand—"Now a country dance; but, no, you wish for a touch of sentiment, Lady Umfraville, about the old year. Suppose we have a minuet?"

"Slow and solemn, full of state and ancientry," said she.

"But I never could learn a minuet—there is the misfortune. We can promenade it, however, that will be serious enough. Let us walk a polonaise."

They made a solemn polonaise, the duke keeping his eyes fixed on the minute hand of the pendule; the instant it marked twelve:—"Strike up a country dance—fall in, ladies

and gentlemen. Farewell to the old—welcome the new year!” The waits were heard in the hall, and away the duke flew down the forming ranks of the country dance, as if the new year had given new life, and as if Evelyn must enjoy it as much as he did.

“Lovely creature, she is!” said Mr. Poynings to her father.

“Yes, I was just thinking so,” said he.

“I augur well of our tournament, duke,” said Lady Barnstaple, with her patronizing air at dinner, “from your ring prowess. With some practice, Barnstaple will do it very well, and Lord St. Leonard, I suppose, will appear in his own character at the ring.”

“I learned it at Königsberg,” said the duke. “We had quite a scene there: the young Count de Thordval twisted himself off his horse, and Alfred Rheinfels was so close behind, he rode over him before he could stop his horse, and almost before we could see what had happened, they had their swords drawn, and they were cutting each other’s heads off full drive. I was not used to German students at that time; I did not know

this was *en régle*—so I ran in, and, to save their lives, knocked them both down.”

“ ‘For love knocked them down,’ ” said Mr. Poynings.

“ Exactly as the song says ; but they had not the least notion there was any love in the business, and I should have had the whole university to fight one after the other—and no joke either ; for, though I could have floored the whole set—one down and the other come on—at boxing, I had not an idea of the broad sword, and I should never have had the honour of tilting in Lady Barnstaple’s presence, but the whole thing was put a stop to for the time. In spite of my friendly knock down, Thordval and Alfred would fight it out, and poor Thordval lost his right arm.”

“ That was past a joke,” said Mr. Poynings.

“ The old count, his father, thought so, I assure you ; and he made Government interfere, and the whole thing was stopped for the time. I learned the broadsword, and offered before I left to fight it out, but they thought the pleasure was not worth the penalty of royal displeasure, and they consoled themselves

with their beer and their metaphysics; and so, as I had no taste for either, I was happily removed to Christ Church."

"Having learned to play at the ring," said Evelyn, "I did not know that they learned anything so graceful."

"It was not part of the university course. I do not know how it began: there were a set of fellows who called themselves Knights Templar, or something of that sort; and they were always ringing and tilting Moors—I believe it was Moors and Christians—and they had banners and devices. If I could remember it all, it would stand me in good stead now."

"Regretting the neglected opportunities of your youth, duke?" said Mr. Poynings.

"I did not neglect what I could learn, though, you see—but the fact was, I never understood what they were at. I never saw a man look more relieved than my tutor was when I took leave of him. He saw the case was quite hopeless; he used to give me long things to write about, I never knew what, the Dorians and innate ideas, and heaven knows what;

and I learned the character, that is to write it, but I never could read a word of what I wrote in German."

"At Vienna it is all French and delightful," said Lady Barnstaple.

* * * *

"What is this?" said the duke, at coffee-time, as he looked over the letters and packets arrived per coach. He undid a flat, thin parcel, and, glancing over a note, held a splendidly bound volume to Evelyn.

"Homage for Lady Umfraville," said he, opening it before he gave it to her, he read out:

"The Spell-bound: by Sir Luttrell Wycherley. Dedicated to Evelyn, Baroness Umfraville."

"By permission, of course," said Lady Barnstaple, spitefully, for she was vexed at homage being paid to any one but herself.

"No, indeed," cried Evelyn, "I thought a dedication was never made without asking leave. This is most impertinent;" and, taking a pen, she printed "*without permission*" under the word "dedicated." It was inscribed, in Sir Luttrell's hand, "*Etrenne* for

the new year, from the author, for Lady Umfraville."

"It should have been so, certainly," said she, showing her insertion to Lady Barnstaple.

"Certainly," said she; "but one never expects good taste in anything from Sir Luttrell."

He had had the bad taste not to admire Lady Barnstaple; he had affronted her, and she never forgave him.

"That is a just rebuke," said Mr. Windham, much displeased as he looked at the words "without permission."

"It is well you are so prompt in your disapprobation, Lady Umfraville," said the duke, "for you can show it to Wycherley himself; he will be here to-morrow."

"Why do you let him come?" said Lady Barnstaple; "he is so disagreeable."

"I thought he was vastly admired," said the duke; "for my own part, I do not understand one word in ten that he says."

"Why ask him here then?" said Lady Barnstaple.

"I did not ask him; he asks himself."

"Cannot you say you cannot receive him?"

“Not unless I send an express to stop him on the road. Shall I? ‘Dear Wycherley,—I regret that I cannot receive you, for Lady Barnstaple says you are disagreeable.’”

Lady Barnstaple reddened. “Nonsense, duke; but is it too late for the post. Surely you can tell him civilly that you are engaged, or have no room for him; there can be no difficulty in putting off a person you do not like to receive.”

“But I do like to receive him,” said the duke, smiling with his usual good humour, but obviously determined to invite or refuse his guests for himself; “the post has been gone these two hours, and, besides, he is one of our tournament, and he really understands all these things. Indeed, I never knew him much till I consulted him about the thing, and that he fancied belonging to my *troupe*. You will find him a most able assistant in your costume committee.”

“But he is not fit for a knight,” said Lady Barnstaple, unsubdued in her dislike; “he is not tall enough.”

“He is not tall, but he rides well,” said the

duke ; “ he is not well made, but he is a monstrous tough build—thin and wiry, and active ; he is excellent at his exercise, I assure you.”

“ He is remarkably ugly, I think,” said she.

“ He has fine eyes, has he not?” said Mr. Poynings, “ or at least he thinks them fine.”

“ They will glare at you, Lady Barnstaple, through the bars of his vizor, and frighten you,” cried the duke, laughing.

“ ‘ Will love or chemistry carry the day,’ was one of our questions?” said Mr. Poynings, in a low voice to Evelyn ; “ his having had leisure to write this poem—answers the question.”

“ It is prettily got up,” said she, looking at the illuminated borders and fantastic initials.

“ Splendidly. Worthy of the dedicatee. Will you not read it ? ” said he, as she laid it down, after having looked over the embellishments.

“ I do not feel favourably inclined to it.”

“ But when you are to see the author to-morrow ? ”

“ I shall not begin the subject to him ; and if he asks me about it, it is easier to say that I have not read, than I do not like it.”

"Quite ridiculous, duke," was now heard from Lady Barnstaple; "I shall not patronise such an idea."

"Well, Lady Umfraville, what do you say?" cried the duke, turning to her. "I want to introduce Lady Barnstaple and you to my Halcyon; she is at Chatham; and it seems to me the simplest thing in the world to go there, only we must set off early."

"And go in a boat to her, and take a sail to sea," cried Mr. Poynings. "Really, my dear duke, one would think you had been at Botany Bay, and used to summer at Christmas. It seems quite suspicious. What sent you to Sydney? Do recollect, that you are now in England, in respectable society, and in the month of January."

"Consider what fine weather it is," said the duke, laughing; "even in England, and in civilised society, we may enjoy a fine day in January as well as in June."

"It would be quite dark before you could get back," said Lady Barnstaple.

"It is a hard frost, you might be frozen up," said Mr. Poynings. "A sail in January!

You might be stuck in the Channel till Easter, and how would you practice your tournament?"

"My dear Poynings, if you say I come from Botany Bay, you must have been living with the Esquimaux. Pray, when did you ever hear of the Channel being frozen?"

"Mr. Windham, said Mr. Poynings, in a piteous accent, "I am sure you denounce the plan? Open boats and a yacht in January! I shudder at the idea."

Mr. Windham had no love for hardships, but he wished to assert the party's independence of Lady Barnstaple, and he said—"It is not a long drive; I dare say it will be calm in this frost, and the row cannot be very long, nor the sail either. I am at your orders, duke, I should like to see your adventurous Halcyon very much."

"Thank you," said the duke, "the Earl Marshal must be right, Lady Barnstaple."

She looked fretted, and turning her beautiful eyes as a last appeal, "Barnstaple, I beg you will not go."

"I am booked, Caroline—I must go if Ples-

singham does. What say you, Lady Umfraville? Poynings has raised such a combustion you have not been allowed to speak."

"Oh, I have no dependence on Lady Umfraville," said Mr. Poynings, in a resigned voice. "She stood looking at the cricket match, as if she did not know what cold was."

Lady Barnstaple was still more vexed, for she had laughed at Mr. Poynings for shivering on the cricket day. "But this is quite a different affair," said she, "such a long drive and a long row, and I dare say the water rough, and you will all be sick."

"You are not obliged to go, my dear Caroline," said Lord Barnstaple.

"I have not the slightest idea of going myself—I am only anxious for the rest of the party: consider, duke, what it will be to have them all laid up in rheumatic fevers."

"The Miss Fanshaws have not a notion of rheumatism attacking anybody under fifty," said the duke, turning to some of the young ladies, "come, we will put it to the vote—let us have a show of hands. Let all who are patriotic, all who admire 'Rule Britannia.'

We shall see Chatham Docks. I am sure Mrs. Fanshaw will patronize anything instructive for the young people: there is a 100-gun ship building there. Consider all that you may see, and the Halcyon besides—the hardy Halcyon who has ‘battled with the breeze.’ We can have an ode upon it from Wycherley, from description—as neither he nor you, Lady Barnstaple, will have seen it—he shall dedicate it, with permission, if you please, to you. Let every one that will visit the Halcyon, with her captain, hold up their hands!”

There was a great majority of hands held up—all the gentlemen, except Mr. Poynings, and all the young ladies.

“Thank you, Lady Umfraville. Poynings, did not your hand convulsively rise from your side to join all these fair ones?”

“Not at all—the convulsion was of grief at the melancholy fate of so many interesting young persons.”

“You will stay with the grave and respectable portion of society and take care of them,” said the duke.

“There, Caroline,” said Lord Barnstaple,

laughing, "see what you are come to—you are considered respectable."

Lady Barnstaple had taken up 'The Spell-bound,' and affected to be reading it attentively.

"I shall employ myself writing a paragraph," said Mr. Poynings, 'Melancholy catastrophe in high life,' or 'Awful event and frightful loss of life,' or 'It is our painful duty to record a fatal occurrence which puts in mourning the noble houses of Plessingham, Barnstaple, Umfraville, St. Leonard, &c., &c. We fear that the rashness of the gallant young duke _____,'"

"No no, leave the 'gallant' for me, if you please," said Lord St. Leonard, "Plessingham does not serve her Majesty—he only commands a Privateer."

"'This unfortunate young nobleman,'" continued Mr. Poynings, "'in the prime of life.' Oh, it is very moving—I shall blot my narrative with tears, but the most touching part is to come: 'The interesting Miss Fanshaws, the young and lovely Lady Umfraville.' Wycherley will be here before we receive the sad intelligence, and he will compose such a

heart-rending monody; but on me devolves the painful task of announcing the distressing calamity to the papers. Where was I?—I must have a different epithet for everybody.”

“Come,” cried Lady Barnstaple, “I think this is quite wrong: Mr. Poynings, you are making a joke of such frightful ideas.”

“The widow’s cap she will have to wear for me,” said Lord Barnstaple, “terrifies poor Caroline *à faire dresser les cheveux*.”

The widow’s cap—such a vulgar notion—it cut her to the heart; it was the finishing stroke to all the wrongs she had endured. “It is very late for good people who are to start so early, I recommend your all going to bed.”

It was a glorious day—the drive was very pleasant—some of the gentlemen rode—the Duke drove his own barouche with several of the ladies—his boat was ready—the Halcyon was visited—she weighed and stood out—the sea was like glass—the sun was bright—a splendid collation—a friend of the duke’s had lent a regimental band; some of the officers joined the party—there was singing and dancing, and they all triumphed over the

terrors of Lady Barnstaple and Mr. Poynings, and no one recollected that it was January. The day, however, drew to a close as soon as days in January do ; and, just as they put back, a thick fog came suddenly on—it was a dead calm, the *Halcyon* just moved—nothing was to be seen even at a yard's distance : the man at the helm strove to make out where they were ; Mrs. Fanshaw and the young ladies looked aghast ; there was a white look of inept terror in all the countenances of these helpless,—the most helpless animals in the creation—fine ladies in a fright. Mr. Windham advised them all to go below ; Lady Umfraville assumed the command of the cabin ; deposited Mrs. Fanshaw on one sofa ; made the young ladies lie two and two to keep each other warm ; summoned the duke's page, had bottles of hot water laid at their feet, and all the cloaks and blankets that could be mustered thrown over them. A tremendous shock and shout,—“ There, we have struck on a rock ! we shall all be drowned ! ” screamed the ladies.

Voices were heard through speaking trum-

pets. Mr. Windham appeared at the cabin door. "There is no danger, we have only carried away the figure-head of a steamer!" The agitated necks sunk again on their couches.

He was pleased to see Evelyn smiling and looking so superior to her companions; he considered courage, and taking unexpected circumstances with calmness, as one of her aristocratic privileges—part of the dignity of high descent.

"I will go up with you," said she, "here is a spare boat cloak."

"Capital diversion, is it not?" said the duke to Evelyn, "we shall not be in Chatham till seven o'clock; Lady Barnstaple will have given us up; Wycherley will have full time for his monody. How well you take it; I knew you would make a famous sailor——"

"A light!" cried the man at the helm.

A boy stood by the side of the duke with a candle, but it was the last on board—

"Stupid of my steward not to think we might be in the dark," cried the duke.

The taper was burnt down to the boy's

hand. "Here," cried Evelyn, seizing a 'Guide to Chatham,' which they had been studying in the peaceful hours of the morning. The duke tore out page after page, and the short blazes were kept up. A second light appeared beside the first, as if in answer to their signal. It seemed to be bearing direct to the Halcyon. The outline of a vessel appeared cleaving the mass of mist; a bell was heard: a faint tinkle, as if from a vast distance: The sound seemed to choke in the heavy air. Again a distinct ring. The duke shouted—the vessel was alongside—it was a small steamer. "We are come to tow you in," cried a voice through a speaking trumpet, in a hoarse and heavy, strange, unnatural cry.

Lady Umfraville ran down to re-assure her bewildered companions. The steward, who though he had not candles, had fire, had made some tea, and the young ladies were, with hysteric giggle, scrambling in the dark for their cups. Evelyn returned on deck. They were now in tow: other lights appeared one after another; as it seemed at regular distances, showing a pale, yellow halo, indistinctly

visible, as if suspended in the air—a faint glow-worm appearance, as if unsupported beacons in the palpable obscure.

“There’s the floating buoy, we are in,” cried the duke—and, in a few minutes, they had anchored. The boat was lowered, and the party, in far other guise than they had come on board, descended the side, and reached the shore. Tired, frightened, and cold, the ladies who had set out a few hours before so gay and flaunting, were now thankful for the fog-drenched cloaks over their silks and satin sheen, and crept, silent and dismayed, into the long-expecting carriages.

But as Lady Umfraville was getting in, she heard one of the officers say that which made her stop upon the step; he was speaking to the duke, who exclaimed, “Conway!” and the officer went on, “Yes, there was a dinner at the Town Hall to Lord Rupert and ——”

“Have you left anything behind?” said Lord St. Leonard, who was handing her into the carriage, surprised at her stopping. She was obliged to get in, and they drove off. The last moment, and the idea that Lord Rupert

was, perhaps, in the crowd of gentlemen, near the boat, and that she had not seen him—the only really disagreeable sensation of the day.

Lady Barnstaple had “suffered agonies of anxiety,” and, beautifully dressed, was lying on a sofa, so languid from the agitation she had gone through, that she could not rise to greet the party, several of whom very wisely went to bed. Sir Luttrell, when they entered the sitting-room, was at the farthest end, at a little table, apparently profoundly wrapt up in a book; the duke busy with laughing and talking to Lady Barnstaple, and congratulating her on the success of her prophetic warnings, and telling the story of their adventures, and declaring how hoarse he was from bawling, and how hungry he was after his exertions, and, ordering dinner to be served directly, was going out of the room to dress, before he recollected Sir Luttrell’s existence. “Oh! Wycherley!—you are come—how d’ye do?—Where is your monody?—you have dined, I find!”

Sir Luttrell, as if unwillingly roused, came forward, touched the duke’s hand, and bowed

to Evelyn, who had been detained by Lady Barnstaple's sentimental hand beside her sofa, in her affected anxiety to be sure that she had not suffered. She smiled rather contemptuously at Sir Luttrell for his absurd getting up of indifference.

"I beg your pardon for interrupting your ethereal studies!" said the duke.

"Which have lasted," said Mr. Poynings, "exactly five minutes, for he was in the Hall when you arrived; but as soon as he saw——"

"As soon as he saw we were safe," cried the duke, "he ran back to his form, and was 'discovered reading.' Very well, Wycherley, it is a pity, for your sake, there was anybody to tell of you,—I confess, for my own part, I prefer your anxiety to your philosophy."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE duke and all his party told the history of their adventures in separate tales—the whole epic beginning middle and end—in full, in extracts, and abridged or enlarged, and with or without notes or comment as suited the narrator—but it was long before the duke arrived at what Evelyn wanted to hear—Lord Rupert's name—at last it came: “But we should have been later still, or perhaps have been sticking in the fog to this moment, but that Conway was at a public dinner, and some of the officers were there, and said how their comrades were at sea and of the fog, and so Conway, with his usual zeal, sent off and had a steamer despatched and lights in the fishing smacks till we got to the regular harbour lights. I assure you, Poynings, I felt

very much as if we had been frozen up as you prophecied, when the steamer came up and pulled us out of our fog. But where is your paragraph, or where is Wycherley's monody? It would be pleasant to see how we were regretted. Wycherley," cried the duke, raising his voice, "Wycherley, are you asleep? What is that confounded book you are poring over? You have acted uninterested long enough now. Poynings came so affectionately to look at us at dinner, to see if we had lost our appetites; and now we are going to bed and you might as well be there for anything you contribute to society. What is this wonderful book," continued he, going up to Sir Luttrell, "To the Landholders of Kent on the Deficiency in the Hop Harvest."

"Just listen!" exclaimed the duke, as he read the title, "'Deficiency in the Hop Crop!' this interesting work has absorbed Sir Luttrell Wycherley's attentions for the last two hours. How many pockets of hops go to an acre now? Come let us see if you know it after all: What is the average number of pockets in a good season?"

“That book appears to you to be about hops, replied Sir Luttrell, “that is merely because you have not the key: that is the effect of

“———glamour might
Could make a lady seem a knight,
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in a lordly hall.”—

To unenlightened eyes, this appears to be about crops and seasons, and prices: but I have all the while been reading of how bright eyes may beam, and in their lustrous sweetness kindle a flame they never pity. How the gay sweetness of a voice may wound the heart its softness may not heal, how———”

“Heyday!” cried the duke, pretending to turn the book backward and forward, and holding it to the light, “is all that to be found here? I look at it up and down and sideways, and every way, and still it reads hops, nothing but hops, to me! Well, it is a wonderful thing to have a key; but unluckily we want a key to your key, Wycherley—at least, I am sure I have not an idea of what you mean.”

“Egad, the interpreter is the hardest to understand of the two,” said Mr. Poynings.

"Such it is to be acquainted with the art-magic," said Sir Luttrell.

"But you have your magic all to yourself," said the duke, "cannot you give us a specimen of your powers more suited to our comprehension: you can do anything you please, I suppose?"

"Alas! No. Like all magicians, my power has its limits. I cannot undo the force of the enchantment: there is always another gifted hand which must undo or ratify the charm."

"You tell us the dream," said Mr. Poynings, "will you not give us the interpretation thereof?"

"Would that I could! All my art has been exerted, but hitherto in vain."

"What a pity," said the duke, "but could you not give us a ghost or two? or tell our fortunes, or something suited to our capacity? Lady Barnstaple, you are a great prophetess—you foretold, not exactly to be sure, but you made a very near guess at our adventures of to-day—would you not like to have a prophecy now about yourself from this accomplished conjuror?"

"As by his own account, he does not understand his own incantations, I shall not trouble him," said she, "I shall leave him to be 'spell bound' alone," and she took up a taper preparing to leave the room.

"Very true," said the duke, laughing, and looking round for the book. "Perhaps, now we can treat you to a little specimen of your own art—perhaps there is something in this book that you are not aware of, for all you wrote it. Can you *spell* and put together these words?" and he was opening the book.

"Yes, I can tell you—two words have been interpolated ——"

"Oh, ho! you have seen it—that accounts for your retirement from the world," said the duke.

"I found, indeed, that an enchantress ——" he stopped, for Lady Umfraville was gone with Lady Barnstaple.

I am sure, thought she, as she reflected on the events of the day,—I am sure if Sir Luttrell is a bad, Lord Rupert is a good, enchanter—coming to the rescue just at the moment it was wanted. The thought suggested itself—Was it mere good nature to the

duke—to all the party, or—her heart beat—had he known she was on board?—probably not.—How unlikely, in the short snatches of acquaintance he has had, that ——! Am I never to see him for longer than a day—an evening. If I had Sir Luttrell's art-magic, I should soon transform him. Oh, how great a change! How disagreeable he is!—the moment he comes into a house he makes everything uncomfortable.

“You vanished, indeed, last night, like an evoked spirit that one could not bid stay beyond its hour,” said Sir Luttrell to Evelyn, at the first opportunity. “I wanted to confess my fault, in hopes of—dare I hope, for absolution?”

“A confession of what everybody knows, cannot expect absolution,” said she.

“Forgiveness, then?—or can I have neither, except after penance? Impose any penance you please: I will submit to any penance short of banishment. Banishment would be annihilation. Any torture is better than non-existence—‘still let me burn, but burn alive.’”

“I am not going to impose any penance,” said she.

“An unpardonable, unreclaimable crime ;— no offering, no oblation, to reconcile the offended deity ? ”

“What do you mean by non-existence, Sir Luttrell, and annihilation ? So philosophic as you are, I wonder you use such vague terms.”

“My philosophy is only of material things. Physical philosophy is all I pretend to. I can be accurate as to the force of a lever, or the weight of a gas ; but metaphysical philosophy becomes poetry : it is too much connected with the feelings, it belongs rather to the heart than to the head.”

“Does it ? ” said Evelyn, quietly.

“I have always found it so,” said he ; “but I shall be better instructed. Teach me. In the pure, calm light which you will shed around the subject, perhaps, I may at last learn true philosophy. Perhaps the very cause of my error may teach me the truth ; the very light that led me astray may in its intensity become the guiding star to the right path.”

Evelyn was silent.

“You do not think that what has existed can ever cease to exist ? ”

"I think the words non-existence have no meaning—we cannot form the idea. We use the word nothingness, but what meaning has it?" said she.

"How came the word? Is there a word that has no meaning? What caused the word? The highest poetry, the lowest slang, have by association or implication some meaning."

"They are meant to mean, of course. I 'meant to mean,'" said she, smiling, "that we attempt to express what we cannot think, and, therefore, can have no words for."

"Yes, your meaning is always clear; but I, unfortunately, cannot, either by words or actions, express my meaning. Your words 'without permission,' are distinct as the fiery motto in the 'Antiquary;' while my unfortunate dedication, which meant only the most respectful devotion, has been taken as impertinence."

"I thought it was never done; I thought that, unless permission was asked, it was the rule to say that a dedication was without permission."

"Is one never to step out of rule? What makes the rule? The trammels in which com-

mon minds love to move. That A did it is a sufficient reason for B to do the same. Those who can only copy are right to do so. Originals cannot be copied; they stand alone. Who could copy Lady Umfraville? Who else is in such a position? To whom else could I have wished to inscribe the embodying of my feelings? I had hoped that a 'bright particular star' would not hide its lustre in the common path of the fixed orbs."

"If one particular star runs out of its road, what mischief it occasions! You aspire to be a comet; but even comets have their recurring times."

"As long as they are sustained by attraction, when the sun of their system turns away the light of its countenance, the comet falls into the abyss of space ——"

"And is no more seen. Drops out of the 'heavenly host,' altogether; therefore, you see it is safer to keep the homely track the good old fashioned planets have stuck to so long. Their rising and setting are known; and to me the constant recurrence is more sublime than any erratic movement on which one cannot cal-

culate. Ever-recurring belongs to eternal ; that which shines, blazes, falls, and is seen no more, is perishable, mortal, unsatisfactory."

"If constancy is required, only prove it—only try me ; you will find that I stand the test."

"You have chosen your comet path," said she, gravely ; "I prefer the more common beaten track, our orbits can never approach."

"Oh, do not say so ! I will keep any, every path you point out—only command, I wear my chains willingly, gladly, proudly ; only let them be harnessed to your car, and command me the road."

"I command nothing."

"You will not command—you will not accept my penitence—you will not grant my pardon. Are you superior to all weakness, even to that 'sweet weakness to forgive?'"

"To forgive, I must have been injured. Who has injured me, that I can forgive?"

"I acknowledge the impropriety of the word, of the supposition that in your unapproachable height, it was in the power of a mortal shaft to wound. I see the audacity of supposing that I had the power to injure. I

have displeased ; I have done that which you did not approve. You will not punish, you will not accept my penitence. Will you acknowledge my reparation. I have done the only thing I could to repair my faults. As soon as I saw those fatal words, and knew that they were your insertion, I wrote to ——, and desired the dedication to be cancelled—to be taken out of the whole edition. Could I do more ? Perhaps you will say I could do no less.”

“Thank you,” said she with a smile, which, if it was not one of forgiveness, had all the effect of it. It came from a kind and gentle heart, unwilling to give pain, delighted to give pleasure. “Thank you. It relieves me from a most presumptuous place. Believe me, I am perfectly sensible of the honour of going to posterity in a page of Sir Luttrell Wycherley’s poems ; but it was a painful pre-eminence.”

“I may hope, then, that you approve of the poetry which you think worthy of posterity ? ”

“I have not read it,” said she, “but now I will.”

“And would my unfortunate inscription have prevented your honouring the work with even a look ? ”

“Curiosity would have got the better of vexation, I suppose,” said she; “but I did look at it; I thought the embellishments——”

“Oh, here you are, Wycherley?” cried the duke. “I want you to come and make out this old stone for me. Poynings has done all he could for me, and he swears nothing more can be made out. I bet upon your skill. Come along.”

Sir Luttrell went, because he was in hopes Evelyn would read “The Spell-bound,” which she did. But it had not the gratifying effect that was intended. She had evidently sat for the portrait of the heroine: she was so distinctly painted, that she blushed as she read it, and felt that everybody that knew her, must recognise her. She was sure her father would be seriously displeased, and she took the book to her own room, in hopes that, at least, till Sir Luttrell was gone, she might prevent her father from seeing it.

“I have read ‘The Spell-bound,’” said she, when she met Sir Luttrell again; “it is very beautiful, of course; but I am afraid that, like the duke, I cannot understand it.”

“For ‘cannot,’ read ‘will not,’” said Sir Luttrell. “If you will not understand it, it is purposeless.”

“It is splendid poetry,” said she; “and, as I said before, will enchant all posterity.”

“*A bas la Posterité!*” cried Sir Luttrell. “I was not thinking of posterity when I wrote it.”

“Well, you cannot prevent posterity from thinking of you.”

“I am very much obliged to it,” said he. “But when one draws a draft at sight, one does not like to have it made payable a hundred years hence.”

“I should have thought you would. I thought the present paltry current coin of compliments was quite unworthy of genius.”

“Of compliments, the coin is usually counterfeit. But praise—approbation, at least—with the inimitable mint-mark of truth, is all I wish for. Not coin that may pass to every hand, that may belong to anybody; but an individual medal of merit, struck for the occasion, from one, for one only, and to be kept in the most secret recess of my cabinet of treasures.”

"Put by, and forgotten," said she.

"If I had it, and it was permitted, I should wear it openly and ever. Will you not say that there is one line even that you like?—not that you think others a hundred years hence will like, but that you like yourself."

"Oh, I admire every line. I said I thought it splendid."

"You think me pertinaciously vain, irritatingly egotistic, I know," said he. She did, indeed. "But I also know you are never irritated; and it is not vanity, it is the vehement wish to know if I have fulfilled a most earnest purpose. If it is egotism, it is the egotism of the heart."

Lady Umfraville laid down the music which she had been looking at, as they stood by the pianoforte, and joined the party at the other end of the room, where the duke was getting up a round game. Sir Luttrell consoled himself at *écarté* with Mr. Poynings.

"I wonder you authors do not put down this practice," said Mr. Poynings to Sir Luttrell, as he opened the '——' the next

morning at breakfast. "Here is 'The Spell bound' reviewed before it is published!"

Evelyn blushed, and felt that Sir Luttrell and her father saw it. She wished the fire, before which Mr. Poynings held the paper, might burn it unread. She dreaded that the "person alluded to" should be dragged forth to light. Why should she so fear to see her name in print? She had seen it thousands of times in fashionable intelligence; but it was the being paraded as the object of Sir Luttrell's admiration that terrified her. It was a covert, insidious, and yet public display, of his wish to be thought her lover, which disgusted her.

"We are very much gratified by it, I believe," said Sir Luttrell, nonchalantly, "at least our booksellers are."

"This man is determined to please the booksellers, at least," said Mr. Poynings, as he glanced over the article. He made no further observation, and Evelyn breathed more freely.

"Do you mind all the severe things the Reviews have said of you, Sir Luttrell?" said Lady Barnstaple.

"Not in the least."

"To be unreviewed, I suppose, is worse?" said she; "to be past over altogether, the most unbearable cut."

"Heartless praise wounds me more," said he.

"I should have thought praise was praise, be it never so homely," said Mr. Poynings.

"Homely implies heartily," said Sir Luttrell, "that is all I ask."

"You must write a little more commonplace, then, my dear Wycherley," said the duke. "We homely-minded people cannot praise where we do not see what you are at. Do you always know it yourself?"

"Yes, perfectly well. I know what I aim at, perfectly. only it is too excellent for me to attain."

"How does your chemistry get on?" said Mr. Poynings. "Do you remember the question in the game at Stanton, which would carry the day?"

"I must fall back upon the chemistry, I am afraid," said he. "I would fain have had its place taken."

"You will blow yourself up some day," said the duke.

“Suppose you write an epitaph *d'avance*,” said Mr. Poynings, “telling how you and your retorts were quivered to atoms—the cracking glass, the splitting crucible—the detonating battery—magnetic influences—galvanic shocks—reduction of all things to their primary elements—chaos—and yourself blown into nothingness. Upon my life, Wycherley, you may make a grand thing of it.”

“I am instructed that nothingness is an improper expression. I never use improper expressions. But I shall make a note of the rest of your hints, Poynings; I think they will have quite a sublime effect.”

“I do not advise you to make use of them for your own epitaph beforehand, though,” said the duke; “or else the jury on the inquest will inevitably bring it in *felo de se*.”

“But when the body is dispersed in empty air, how can an inquest sit on it?” said Mr Poynings; “there is the beauty of the contrivance, quite unique.”

“It really is admirable,” said Sir Luttrell. “It is quite surprising, considering how many people have put themselves out of the world

in all ages and countries, how very stupidly they still do it! I think I shall give this age a few hints on the subject. 'The Suicide's Manual'—it would take in France prodigiously. They do these things in such a business-like way there. Eating a good supper first, and remembering the picturesque all the time. And it is curious that the French, who laugh so much at our John-Bull love-of-money and eating, generally blow out their brains, or jump into the Seine, because they have spent their last Napoleon, or staked their last five-franc-piece at rouge-et-noir, and are likely to starve. In England, people kill themselves because they are tired of life—for broken hearts, and such mental misfortunes."

"So that we show our superiority even in our way of killing ourselves," said the duke.

"You forget, Sir Luttrell," said Lady Barnstaple, "that you will never hear the applause of your striking exit—that would be an immense loss to you, I am sure."

"You cannot come back as great actors do," said Mr. Poynings, "who, after having made their farewell-speech, find it so pleasant to

take leave, that they do it half-a-dozen times."

"But once you have acted your dying scene in earnest," said Lady Barnstaple, "we cannot have any more of it"

"Unless I come back as a Vampire and haunt you with my horrors."

"Vampires are only sent to prey on their particular friends," said Mr. Poynings.

"I am safe, then," said Lady Barnstaple.

None of the company were aware of Sir Luttrell's allusion about nothingness, but though Evelyn rejoiced at it, as a sign that he felt her discouragement; she was surprised, how inconsistent it appeared for a man at one moment to profess the highest admiration for her, and the next to say the most sarcastic things against her! He is a very disagreeable person, was always the result of her reflections about him.

The duke was displaying his dogs before the hall door: the party were scattered about; Sir Luttrell came up to Evelyn—"Are you a dog fancier, Lady Umfraville?"

“I am very fond of dogs as you perceive,” said she, caressing a beautiful spaniel, who came up and put his head on her hand, “this fine animal would not come so goodnaturedly to me if he did not know I should like him. It is melancholy that brutes should understand who likes and who dislikes them, better than human beings.”

“Because they trust to instinct—we wait for words, which only ‘disguise the thoughts,’” said Sir Luttrell.

“What a fine creature this is,” said she to the duke, as she patted the spaniel.”

“Is he not? He is not so grand, but I prefer him to this Pyrennean.”

“The Pyrennean stalks about as if he thought our plains very prosaic,” said Sir Luttrell.

“I brought him over from Spain. My brother had two at Gibraltar, and he very generously gave me one. He had leave the spring before, and went across to Barége, and brought back these dogs and a guitar. He was very sentimental with his guitar for some time, Honiton told me, but he could not

keep it up. He got across Spain, and back again, just in a sort of lull there was between the last revolution and the one coming on. But he found his serenades to some fair donna, beyond the lines, woefully spoilt, by people being shot all about him, &c. &c.—such unpleasant doings, it quite broke the harmony of the scene.”

“Inconstant Philip,” said Sir Luttrell; “he could not stand the test of revolutionary proceedings.”

“It is hard upon the curious in guitars,” said Evelyn, “that the weather here, and the revolution abroad——”

“Have quite cut up the trade,” said the duke, “and no great loss to the ladies, I should think.”

“I dare say many a poor serenader would much rather that the lady did not like music o’ nights,” said Evelyn, “and would much rather be snug at home in his bed, than like Lovelace, with his frozen wig.”

“What fine times those were, Plessingham, when a man must be always full-dress, and the lady expected him to watch all night, freezing in silk stockings, under her window,” said Mr. Poynings.

“The duke wants to go back still further—to go back into the remoteness of antiquity, and despising the peaceful attentions of guitars and silk stockings, he is ready to break a lance and wear armour for the Queen of Love and beauty,” said Sir Luttrell.

“For ——,” Lady Umfraville, the duke was going to have said, when the Queen of Beauty, hearing her name, joined them, anxious to restore the balance of power, having long viewed with discomfort, one lady appropriating three gentlemen.

“Are you not going to show us your kennel, duke?” said she; “it is not far, is it?”

“Just a quarter of a mile: it is a pretty walk. Lady Umfraville, will you come?” But, perhaps, this little specimen of the canine family will do for you. Perhaps you have no fancy for pursuing the fancy wholesale?”

“I shall like to see it,” said she.

Lady Barnstaple was surprised at Sir Luttrell's offering his arm to her. He intended to pique Lady Umfraville; but he would have been cut to the heart had he known the sense of relief with which she saw herself freed from

him; and how he would have despised her taste had he known how much she preferred the duke's company to his.

"Pink keeps beside me," said she, patting the spaniel, "which flatters me."

"You shall have his brother, Dash, if you like; but I think you overlook Roswal, my Scotch wolf-dog, too much. I consider him the finest thing I have."

"He is beautiful, but I prefer that noble English mastiff: he is a much rarer animal, and more suited to Kent; he looks so stalwart and true ——"

"Take care, Wycherley, of Roswal!" cried the duke, "I think he has taken a dislike to you. I suspect he is something of a blood-hound—" Jackson! call off Roswal!"

Roswal had rushed up growling. The huntsman, endeavouring to reclaim Roswal, let go the stalwart mastiff, and the Pyrennean, who fell upon Pink and Roswal, and a general *melée* ensued. Lady Barnstaple was most genuinely frightened—Sir Luttrell brandished his cane—and the duke laughed, delighted at the scene.

Jackson, at last, brought them into order,

but Lady Barnstaple demurred—"I am quite afraid of the kennel now, duke,—if four dogs can put one in such fear, what will a whole pack do?"

"That is a most just deduction," said Sir Luttrell, "as four is to a fright, so is fifty-two to a faint—less than a faint cannot be expected, I think."

"It would be a faint dead, I fancy," said the duke, "if the whole pack were to come about us like these; but Jackson will be there before us, and he has his boys and their whips; you need not be under the least alarm."

They proceeded and admired the twenty-six couple of fine hounds, and their sleeping apartments, and dining room, and court for exercise, and all their perfect appointments, and the serious, business-like superiority of the duke's prime minister, so gravely sensible of the dignity of his high office. Lady Barnstaple could not help admiring the beauty of the dogs; and, as they were kept in complete subjection, there was nothing to occasion even a pretended fear; but she was

discomfited (in spite of Sir Luttrell's sedulous attention,) because she heard the duke desire Jackson to take care that Pink's brother was given to Lady Umfraville's servant, while he made no offer of a puppy to her.

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