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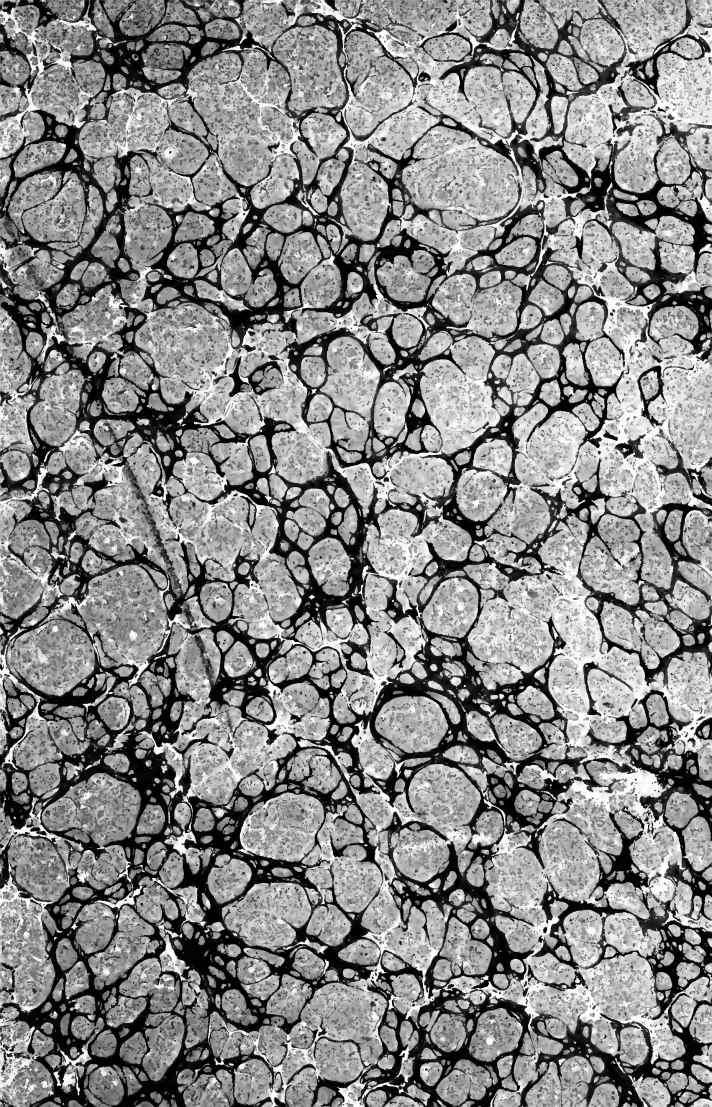
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LUCY E. PRESCOTT



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THE BERTRAMS.

A NOVEL.

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR THORNE," ETC. ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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THE BERTRAMS.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

Væ Victis!

THIS is undoubtedly the age of humanity — as far, at least, as England is concerned. A man who beats his wife is shocking to us, and a colonel who cannot manage his soldiers without having them beaten is nearly equally so. We are not very fond of hanging; and some of us go so far as to recoil under any circumstances from taking the blood of life. We perform our operations under chloroform; and it has even been suggested that those schoolmasters who insist on adhering in some sort to the doctrines of Solomon should perform their operations in the same guarded manner. If the disgrace be absolutely necessary, let it be inflicted; but not the bodily pain.

So far as regards the low externals of humanity, this is doubtless a humane age. Let men, women, and children have bread; let them have if possible no blows, or, at least, as few as may be; let them also be decently clothed; and let the pestilence be kept out of their way. In venturing to call these low, I have done so in no contemptuous spirit; they are comparatively low if the body be lower than the mind. The humanity of the age is doubtless suited to its material wants, and such

wants are those which demand the promptest remedy. But in the inner feelings of men to men, and of one man's mind to another man's mind, is it not an age of extremest cruelty?

There is sympathy for the hungry man; but there is no sympathy for the unsuccessful man who is not hungry. If a fellow mortal be ragged, humanity will subscribe to mend his clothes; but humanity will subscribe nothing to mend his ragged hopes so long as his outside coat shall be whole and decent.

To him that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. This is the special text that we delight to follow, and success is the god that we delight to worship. "Ah! pity me. I have struggled and fallen — struggled so manfully, yet fallen so utterly — help me up this time that I may yet push forward once again!" Who listens to such a plea as this? "Fallen! do you want bread?" "Not bread, but a kind heart and a kind hand." "My friend, I cannot stay by you; I myself am in a hurry; there is that fiend of a rival there even now gaining a step on me. I beg your pardon; but I will put my foot on your shoulder — only for one moment. *Occupet extremum scabies.*"

Yes. Let the devil take the hindmost; the three or four hindmost if you will; nay, all but those strong-running horses who can force themselves into noticeable places under the judge's eye. This is the noble shibboleth with which the English youth are now spurred on to deeds of — what shall we say? — money-making activity. Let every place in which a man can hold up his head be the reward of some antagonistic struggle, of some grand competitive examination. Let us get rid of

the fault of past ages. With us, let the race be ever to the swift; the victory always to the strong. And let us always be racing, so that the swift and strong shall ever be known among us. But what, then, for those who are not swift, not strong? *Væ victis!* Let them go to the wall. They can hew wood probably; or, at any rate, draw water.

Were we to ask Lord Derby, or Lord Palmerston, or to consult the shade of Lord George Bentinck — or to go to those greater authorities on the subject, Mr. Scott, for instance, and the family of the Days — we should, I believe, be informed that the race-horse requires a very peculiar condition. It is not to be obtained quickly; and, when obtained, will fit the beast for no other than that one purpose of running races. Crucifix was never good at going in a cab; Ilione never took her noble owner down to the house of Parliament; nor has Toxopholite been useful in Leicestershire.

But, nevertheless, let all our work be done by race-horses; all, at least, that shall be considered honourable. Let us have strength and speed. And how shall we know who are strong and swift if we do not train our horses to run against each other? But this early racing will hardly produce that humanity of spirit of which we now deplore the want. "The devil take the hindmost" is the very essence of the young man's book of proverbs. The devil assuredly will take all the hindmost. None but the very foremost can enter the present heaven of good things. Therefore, oh my brother, my friend, thou companion of my youth! may the devil take thee; thee quickly, since it needs must be thee or me.

Væ victis — alas! for these hindmost ones; there are so many of them! The skim-milk will always be so

much more in quantity than the cream. With us at present cream is required for everything; nothing can be well done now unless it be done by cream of some sort. That milk has been skimmed; the cream has been taken away. No matter; skim it again. There shall be something yet which we will call cream. Competitive examination will produce something that shall look to be strong; that shall be swift, if it be only for a start of twenty yards.

This is the experiment of the present day. Wise men say that when nothing but cream is accepted, all mankind, all boykind rather, will prepare itself for a skimming of some sort; and that the quantity of cream produced will be immense. It is only done as an instigation to education. Much may be said in opposition to this; but nothing shall be said here. It is merely of the cruelty of spirit that is thus engendered that we now speak. Success is the only test of merit. Words have lost their old significance, and to deserve only is not meritorious. *Væ victis!* there are so many of them!

"Thompson," says Johnson, the young poet, when he has at last succeeded in getting the bosomest of his friends alone into his chamber with him, "have you happened to look at my *Iphigenia* yet?"

Thompson can't say that he has. He has been busy; has had so many water-parties; and then, somehow, he doesn't think that he is very partial to modern poetry on subjects of old mythology. Of course, however, he means to read it — some of these days.

"I wish you would," says Johnson, tendering a copy of the thin volume. "I really wish you would; and let me have your candid opinion. The press certainly have

not noticed it much, and what they have said has been very lukewarm."

"I am sorry for that," says Thompson, looking grave.

"And I did my best with it too. You would hardly believe how hard I worked at it. There is not a line that has not been weighed and written, perhaps, three times over. I do not think I am conceited; but I cannot but believe that there is something in it. The reviewers are so jealous! if a man has not a name, they will give him credit for nothing; and it is so hard to begin."

"I am sure it is," says Thompson.

"I don't expect fame; and as for money, of course I don't think of that. But I should like to know that it had been read by one or two persons who could understand it. I have given to it the best of my time, the best of my labour. I cannot but think that there is something in it." Thus pleads the unsuccessful one for mercy.

And thus answers to him the successful one, with no grain of mercy in his composition: — "My dear Johnson, my maxim is this, that in this world every man gets in the long run exactly what he deserves —"

"Did Milton get what he deserved?"

"These are not the days of Milton. I don't want to hurt your feelings; but old friends as we are, I should not forgive myself if I didn't tell you what I really think. Poetry is all very well; but you can't create a taste for it if it doesn't exist. Nobody that I know of cares a d— for Iphigenia."

"You think I should change my subject then?"

"To tell you the truth, I think you should change

your trade. This is the third attempt, you know. I dare say they are very good in their way; but if the world liked them, the world would have found it out by this time. '*Vox populi, vox Dei*' — that is my motto — I don't trust my own judgment; I trust that of the public. If you will take my advice, you will give up Iphigenia and the rest of them. You see you are doing nothing whatever at the bar," &c., &c.

And thus Johnson is left, without a scrap of comfort, a word of consolation, a spark of sympathy; and yet he had given to that Iphigenia of his the best that was in him to give. Had his publisher sold ten thousand copies of it, how Thompson would have admired it! how he would have pressed the poet in his arms, and have given him champagne up at Richmond! But who now has sympathy for failure? To fail is to be disgraced. *Væ victis!*

There is something very painful in these races, which we English are always running, to one who has tenderness enough to think of the nine beaten horses instead of the one who has conquered. Look at that list which has just come out after our grand national struggle at Cambridge. How many wranglers are there? Thirty, shall we say? and it is always glorious to be a wrangler. Out of that thirty there is probably but one who has not failed, who is not called on to submit to the inward grief of having been beaten. The youth who is second, who has thus shown himself to be possessed of a mass of erudition sufficient to crush an ordinary mind to the earth, is ready to eat his heart with true bitterness of spirit. After all his labour, his midnight oil, his many sleepless nights, his deserted pleasures, his racking headaches, Amaryllis abandoned, and Neæra seen in the arms of another —! After all this, to be beaten by

Jones! Had it been Green or Smith he could have borne it. Would it not have been better to do as others had done? he could have been contented to have gone out in the crowd; but there is nothing so base as to be second — and then second to Jones!

Out of the whole lot, Jones alone is contented; and he is told by his physician that he must spend his next two winters at Cairo. The intensity of his application has put his lungs into very serious jeopardy.

It was at Oxford, in the year 184—, that a young man sat in his college-rooms at Balliol a wretched victim to unsuccessful competition. It had been everything to him to come out as a first in classics, and he had dared to dream even of a double-first. But he had failed in both. The lists had just appeared, and he was only a second-class man. Now, a second-class man is not much thought of at Balliol, and he had lost his chance of an immediate fellowship.

But this was perhaps hardly the worst of it. Arthur Wilkinson, for such was this gentleman's name, had hitherto run his race in life alongside a friend and rival named George Bertram; and in almost every phase of life had hitherto been beaten. The same moment that had told Wilkinson of his failure had told him also that Bertram had obtained the place he had so desired. Bertram was the only double-first man of his year.

As these two young men will play the foremost parts in the following pages, I will endeavour to explain, in as few words as possible, who each of them was. As Bertram seems to have been the favourite with fortune, I will begin with him.

His father at the time alluded to was still alive, but his son George had seen but little of him. Sir Lionel

Bertram had been a soldier of fortune, which generally, I believe, means a soldier without a fortune, and in that capacity he was still in some sort fighting his country's battles. At the present moment he held a quasi-military position in Persia, where he had been for the last five years, and previously to that he had served in Canada, India, the Cape of Good Hope, and on some special mission at Monte Video. He had, therefore, seen a good deal of the world; but very little of his only child. Mrs. Bertram, George's mother, had died early in life, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Lionel) Bertram had roamed the world free from all encumbrances.

The Rev. Arthur Wilkinson, vicar of Hurst Staple, on the borders of Hampshire and Berkshire, had married a first-cousin of Mrs. Bertram's; and when young George Bertram, at the age of nine, was tossing about the world rather in want of a fixed home, Mr. Wilkinson undertook to give him that home, and to educate him with his own eldest child till they should both be sent to some school. For three years George Bertram lived at Hurst Staple, and was educated accordingly. During these years he used to go annually for one month to the house of an uncle, who in due time will also be introduced to the reader; and therefore, not unnaturally, this month was regarded by the boy as his holidays.

Now, it may as well be explained in this place that Sir Lionel Bertram, though a very gallant man, and peculiarly well adapted to do business with outlandish people, had never succumbed to a habit of punctuality in pecuniary matters. An arrangement had been perhaps rather named than made, that one hundred and thirty pounds per annum should be paid for young Bertram's needs; and as this was to include pocket-

money, clothing, and washing, as well as such trifles as the boy's maintenance and education, perhaps the bargain was not a very hard one as regarded Sir Lionel. The first seventy-five pounds were paid; but after that, up to the end of the second year, Mr. Wilkinson had received no more. As he was a poor man, with six children of his own, and little besides his living, he then thought it better to mention the matter to Sir Lionel's brother in London. The balance was instantly paid, and Mr. Wilkinson had no further trouble on that head.

Nor had he much trouble on any other head as regarded young Bertram. The lad was perhaps not fit to be sainted, and gave Mrs. Wilkinson the usual amount of trouble as regarded his jackets and pantaloons; but on the whole, he was a good boy, free and generous in his temper; quick in his parts, affectionate in disposition, and full of humour. Those who examined him most closely (among whom, perhaps, Mr. Wilkinson was not included) might have observed that he was hardly as steady as he might have been in his likings and dislikings; that he made too little of the tasks which he learnt without trouble; and that, in fact, he was not sufficiently solicitous about anything. He was, however, undoubtedly a lad of great promise, and one of whom any father might have been proud.

He was not a handsome boy, nor did he become a handsome man. His face was too solid, his cheeks too square, and his forehead too heavy; but his eyes, though small, were bright, and his mouth was wonderfully marked by intelligence. When he grew to be a man, he wore no beard, not even the slightest apology for a whisker, and this perhaps added to the apparent heavi-

ness of his face; but he probably best understood his own appearance, for in those days no face bore on it more legible marks of an acute mind.

At the age of twelve he was sent to Winchester, and as his holidays were still passed with his uncle, he then ceased to regard Hurst Staple as his home. Twice a year, as he went up to town, he stayed there for a couple of days; but he was soon looked on as a visitor, and the little Wilkinsons no longer regarded him as half a brother in reality and quite a brother in love.

Arthur Wilkinson was very nearly of the same age. He was just older than young Bertram — by three months or so; just sufficiently to give to Wilkinson a feeling of seniority when they first met, and a consciousness that as he was the senior in age, he should be the senior in scholastic lore. But this consciousness Wilkinson was not able to attain; and during all the early years of his life, he was making a vain struggle to be as good a man as his cousin; that is, as good in scholarship, as good in fighting, as good in play, and as good in spirit.

In looks, at any rate, Arthur was superior to George; and much consolation did his mother receive from this conviction. Young Wilkinson was a very handsome lad, and grew up to be a handsome man; but his beauty was of that regular sort which is more pleasing in a boy than in a man. He also was an excellent lad, and no parent could be so thankless as to be other than proud of him. All men said all good things of him, so that Mr. Wilkinson could not but be contented. Nevertheless, one would always wish to see one's own son not less bright than one's friend's son.

Arthur Wilkinson was also sent to Winchester.

Perhaps it would have been better for the cousins that they should have gone to different schools. The matter, however, had been left to Mr. Wilkinson, and as he thought Winchester good for his own son, he naturally thought the same school good for Sir Lionel's son. But Bertram was entered as a commoner, whereas Wilkinson was in the college. Those who know Winchester will understand, that though, as regarded school business and school hours, they were at the same establishment, they were not together at the much more important hours of eating, sleeping, and playing. They did not cease to be friends, but they did cease to live together as friends generally do live when educated at the same school.

At Winchester they both did fairly well; but Bertram did much the best. He got the prizes, whereas his cousin did but nearly get them. He went up from class to class above the other; and when the last tussle for pride of place came on at the close of their boyish career, Bertram was the victor. He stood forth to spout out the Latin hexameters, and to receive the golden medal, while Wilkinson had no other privilege than to sit still and listen to them.

I believe masters but seldom recognize the agony of spirit with which boys endure being beaten in these contests. Boys on such subjects are very reticent; they hardly understand their own feelings enough to speak of them, and are too much accustomed both to ridicule and censure to look anywhere for sympathy. A favourite sister may perhaps be told of the hard struggle and the bitter failure, but not a word is said to any one else. His father, so thinks the boy, is angry at his failure; and even his mother's kisses will hardly be warmed by such a subject. We are too apt to think

that if our children eat pudding and make a noise they require no sympathy. A boy may fail at school, and afterwards eat much pudding, and make much noise; but, ah! how his young heart may sigh for some one to grieve with him over his failures!

Wilkinson was unfortunate at school. It was a great object with his father that he should get a scholarship at New College, to which, as all the world knows, his path lay through the college of Winchester. When his time came, he was all but successful — but he was not successful. The vacancies in his year were few in number, only three, and of these two were preoccupied, according to the then rule of the place, by those heaven-born Wykamists, called founder's kin. He was only the second best on the list, and lost the prize.

Bertram, having been a commoner, had had no right to think of New College; but at the time when he was to be removed to Oxford, his uncle gave him to understand that money was a great object to him. His father's mind was still too fully absorbed in the affairs of his country to enable him to think much of his son's expenditure, and his uncle at this period took a fit of disgust on the subject.

"Very well," said George, "I will give up Oxford if I cannot do something for myself."

He went up, however, to Trinity, and became a candidate for a scholarship there. This he obtained to the great surprise of all the Wilkinsons and of himself. In those days, a lad of eighteen who could get a scholarship at Trinity was considered to be nearly safe in his career. I do not know how far this may be altered now. The uncle, when he heard of his nephew's success, immediately allowed him what would have been

amply sufficient for him had he been in possession of no income from his scholarship. Bertram, therefore, had been almost a rich man during his residence at Oxford.

Young Wilkinson, though he lost New College, received a small scholarship from Winchester, and he also was sent by his father to Oxford. To enable him to do this, Mr. Wilkinson was forced to make a great struggle. He had five other children — four daughters, and one younger son, and it was with difficulty that he could make up the necessary allowance to carry Arthur through the University. But he did do so, and the disappointed Wykamist went up to Balliol with an income amounting to about half that which his cousin enjoyed.

We need not follow them very accurately through their college careers. They both became prizemen — one by force of intellect, and the other by force of industry. They both went through their little goes and other goes with sufficient zeal, up to that important day on which the great go of all was to be undergone. They both belonged to the same debating society at Oxford, and though they thought very differently on most important subjects, they remained, with some few temporary interruptions, fast friends through their four years of Oxford residence.

There were periods when the Balliol man was considered by his friends to run a better chance of academic success than his brighter cousin at Trinity. Wilkinson worked hard during his three first years, and Bertram did not. The style of mind, too, of the former was the more adapted to win friends at Oxford. In those days the Tracts were new, and read by everybody, and what has since been called Puseyism was in its robust

infancy. Wilkinson proclaimed himself, while yet little more than a boy, to be an admirer of poor Froude and a follower of Newman. Bertram, on the other hand, was unsparing in his ridicule of the "Remains," set himself in full opposition to the Sewells, and came out as a poet — successfully, as far as the Newdegate was concerned — in direct opposition to Keble and Faber.

For three years Wilkinson worked hard and regularly; but the *éclat* attending on his success somewhat injured him. In his fourth year, or, at any rate, in the earlier part of it, he talked more than he read, and gave way too much to the delights of society — too much, at least, for one who was so poor, and to whom work was so necessary. He could not keep his position by dint of genius, as Bertram might do; consequently, though he was held to have taken honours in taking his degree, he missed the high position at which he had aimed; and on the day which enabled him to write himself bachelor of arts, he was in debt to the amount of a couple of hundred pounds, a sum which it was of course utterly out of his power to pay, and nearly as far out of the power of his father.

It had always been Bertram's delight to study in such a manner that men should think he did not study. There was an affectation in this, perhaps not uncommon to men of genius, but which was deleterious to his character — as all affectations are. It was, however, the fact, that during the last year before his examination, he did study hard. There was a set round him at his college among whom he was esteemed as a great man — a little sect of worshippers, who looked for their idol to do great things; and it was a point of honour with them to assist this pretence of his. They gloried in Bertram's

idleness; told stories, not quite veracious, of his doings at wine-parties; and proved, to the satisfaction of admiring freshmen, that he thought of nothing but his horse and his boating. He could do without study more than any other man could do with it; and as for that plodding Balliol hero, he might look to be beaten out of the field without an effort.

The Balliol men had been very confident in their hero up to the last half-year; but then they began to doubt. Poor Wilkinson was beaten by his rival out of the field, though, probably, not without an effort. We may say that no man ever gets a double-first in anything without an effort. But be that as it may, Wilkinson was sitting alone, a very unhappy man, in his rooms at Balliol, while Bertram was being fêted to his heart's content at Trinity.

It is a grievous thing to have to write home to one's father, and to say that one has failed when that father has so anxiously longed for success. Arthur Wilkinson would have been a made man for life — made according to the making which both his father and himself at that time thought the most desirable — if his name had but appeared in that first-class list. A double-first his father had not hoped for; but, in resolving not to hope for it, he had consoled himself with thinking that the hopes which he did form were the more certain of success; — and then there would always be that further chance of happiness in store. But now Arthur Wilkinson had to tell his father that he was neither first nor double-first. His degree was very respectable for a man who had not looked for much, for one who had not been talked of in high places; but it was not respectable for Wilkinson of Balliol.

Væ victis! He was indeed unhappy as he sat there alone, meditating how he would frame his letter. There were no telegraphs or telegrams in those days, and it behoved him to write. If he did not, his father would be at Oxford before the next night was over. How should he write? Would it not be better to write to his mother? And then what should he do, or what should he say, about that accursed debt?

His pen and ink and paper were on the table, and he had got into his chair for the purpose. There he had been for some half-hour, but still not a word was written; and his chair had somehow got itself dragged round to the fire. He was thus sitting when he heard a loud knock at his outer door.

"Come; open the door," said Bertram's voice, "I know you are there."

Wilkinson still sat silent. He had not seen Bertram since the lists had come out, and he could hardly make up his mind whether he could speak to him or no.

"I know you're there, and I'll have the door down if you don't open it. There's nobody with me," shouted the manly voice of his triumphant friend.

Slowly Wilkinson got up and undid the lock. He tried to smile as he opened the door; but the attempt was a failure. However, he could still speak a few words, heavy as his heart was.

"I have to congratulate you," said he to Bertram, "and I do it with all my heart."

There was very little heart in the tone in which this was spoken; but then, what could be expected?

"Thank'ee, old fellow, I'm sure you do. Come, Wilkinson, give us your hand. It's better to have it all out

at once. I wish you'd had more luck, and there's an end of it. It's all luck, you know."

"No, it's not," said Wilkinson, barely able to suppress the tears.

"Every bit of it. If a chap gets a headache, or a fit of the colic, it's all up with him. Or if he happens to have been loose as to some pet point of the examiners, it's all up with him. Or if he has taken a fad into his head, and had a pet point of his own, it's all up with him then, too, generally. But it will never do, Wilkinson, to boody over these things. Come, let you and I be seen walking together; you'll get over it best in that way. We'll go over to Parker's, and I'll stand a lunch. We'll find Gerard, and Madden, and Twisleton there. Twisleton's so disgusted at getting a fourth. He says he won't take it, and swears he'll make them let him go out in the ruck."

"He's got as much as he thought he'd get, at any rate, and therefore he can't be unhappy."

"Unhappy! who's unhappy? Nonsense, my dear fellow. Shy all that to the dogs. Come, let's go over to Parker's; we shall find Harcourt there. You know he's up, don't you?"

"No; and I had rather not meet him just at present."

"My dear fellow, you must get over that."

"That's all very well for you, who have got nothing to get over."

"And have I never had anything to get over? I'll tell you what it is; I've come here to prevent you from moping, and I don't mean to leave you. So, you see, you may as well come with me at first."

With some little hesitation, Wilkinson made his

friend understand that he had not yet written home, and that he could not go out till he had done so.

"Then I'll give you ten minutes to write your letter; it can't possibly take you more, not even if you put into it my love to my aunt and cousins."

"I cannot do it while you are here."

"Nonsense! gammon! You shall do it while I'm here. I'll not allow you to make yourself a miserable ass all for nothing. Come, write. If it's not written in ten minutes, I'll write it;" and so saying he took up a play of Aristophanes wherewith to amuse himself, by way of light reading, after the heavy work of the week.

Poor Wilkinson again drew his chair to the table, but his heart was very heavy. *Væ victis!*

CHAPTER II.

Breakfast and Lunch.

WILKINSON took the pen in his hand and bent himself over the paper as though he were going to write; but not an ink-mark fell upon the paper. How should he write it? The task might have been comparatively light to him but for that dreadful debt. Bertram in the meantime tossed over the pages of his book, looking every now and then at his watch; and then turning sharply round, he exclaimed, "Well!"

"I wish you'd leave me," said Wilkinson; "I'd rather be alone."

"May I be doomed to live and die a don if I do; which style of life, next to that of an English bishop, I look on as the most contemptible in the world. The Queen's royal beef-eaters come next; but that, I think, I

could endure, as their state of do-nothingness is not so absolute a quantity. Come; how far have you got? Give me the paper, and I'll write you a letter in no time."

"Thank you; I'd rather write my own letter."

"That's just what I want you to do, but you won't;" and then again he turned for two minutes to the "Frogs." "Well — you see you don't write. Come, we'll both have a try at it, and see who'll have done first. I wonder whether my father is expecting a letter from me?" And, so saying, he seized hold of pen and paper and began to write.

"My dearest Father,

"This weary affair is over at last. You will be sorry to hear that the event is not quite as well as it might have been as far as I am concerned. I had intended to be a first, and, lo! I am only a second. If my ambition had been confined to the second class, probably I might have come out a first. I am very sorry for it, chiefly for your sake; but in these days no man can count on the highest honours as a certainty. As I shall be home on Tuesday, I won't say any more. I can't give you any tidings about the fellowships yet. Bertram has had his old luck again. He sends his love to mamma and the girls.

"Your very affectionate son,

"ARTHUR WILKINSON."

"There, scribble that off; it will do just as well as anything else."

Poor Wilkinson took the paper, and having read it, to see that it contained no absurdity, mechanically copied

the writing. He merely added one phrase, to say that his friend's "better luck" consisted in his being the only double-first of his year, and one short postscript, which he took good care that Bertram should not see; and then he fastened his letter and sent it to the post.

"Tell mamma not to be very unhappy." That was the postscript which he added.

That letter was very anxiously expected at the vicarage of Hurst Staple. The father was prepared to be proud of his successful son; and the mother, who had over and over again cautioned him not to overwork himself, was anxious to know that his health was good. She had but little fear as to his success; her fear was that he should come home thin, pale, and wan.

Just at breakfast-time the postman brought the letter, and the youngest girl running out on to the gravel brought it up to her expectant father.

"It is from Arthur," said she; "isn't it, papa? I'm sure I know his handwriting."

The vicar, with a little nervousness, opened it, and in half a minute the mother knew that all was not right.

"Is he ill?" said she; "do tell me at once."

"Ill! no; he's not ill."

"Well, what is it? He has not lost his degree?"

"He has not been plucked, papa, has he?" said Sophia.

"Oh, no; he has got his degree — a second in classics! — that's all;" and he threw the letter over to his wife as he went on buttering his toast.

"He'll be home on Tuesday," said Mary, the eldest girl, looking over her mother's shoulder.

"And so George is a double-first," said Mrs. Wilkinson.

"Yes," said the vicar, with his mouth full of toast; not evincing any great satisfaction at the success of his late pupil.

When the mother read the short postscript her heart was touched, and she put her handkerchief up to her face.

"Poor Arthur! I am sure it has not been his own fault."

"Mamma, has George done better than Arthur?" said one of the younger girls. "George always does do better, I think; doesn't he?"

"He has made himself too sure of it," said the father, in almost an angry tone. Not that he was angry; he was vexed, rather, as he would be if his wheat crop failed, or his potatoes did not come up properly.

But he felt no sympathy with his son. It never occurred to him to think of the agony with which those few lines had been written; of the wretchedness of the young heart which had hoped so much and failed so greatly; of the misery which the son felt in disappointing the father. He was a good, kind parent, who spent his long days and longer nights in thinking of his family and their welfare; he would, too, have greatly triumphed in the triumph of his son; but it went beyond his power of heart to sympathize with him in his misery.

"Do not seem to be vexed with him when he comes home," said the mother.

"Vexed with him! you mean angry. Of course, I'm not angry. He has done his best, I suppose. It's unlucky, that's all."

And then the breakfast was continued in silence.

"I don't know what he's to do," said the father, after awhile; "he'll have to take a curacy, I suppose."

"I thought he meant to stop up at Oxford and take pupils," said Mary.

"I don't know that he can get pupils now. Besides, he'll not have a fellowship to help him."

"Won't he get a fellowship at all, papa?"

"Very probably not, I should think." And then the family finished their meal in silence.

It certainly is not pleasant to have one's hopes disappointed; but Mr. Wilkinson was hardly just in allowing himself to be so extremely put about by his son's failure in getting the highest honours. Did he remember what other fathers feel when their sons are plucked? or, did he reflect that Arthur had, at any rate, done much better than nineteen out of every twenty young men that go up to Oxford? But then Mr. Wilkinson had a double cause for grief. Had George Bertram failed also, he might perhaps have borne it better.

As soon as the letter had been written and made up, Wilkinson suffered himself to be led out of the room.

"And now for Parker's," said Bertram; "you will be glad to see Harcourt."

"Indeed, I shall not. Harcourt's all very well; but just at present, I would much rather see nobody."

"Well, then, he'll be glad to see you; and that will be quite the same thing. Come along."

Mr. Harcourt was a young barrister but lately called to the bar, who had been at Oxford spending his last year when Bertram and Wilkinson were freshmen; and having been at Bertram's college, he had been intimate with both of them. He was now beginning to practise, and men said that he was to rise in the world. In London he was still a very young man; but at Oxford he was held to be one who, from his three years' life in

town, had become well versed in the world's ways. He was much in the habit of coming to Oxford, and when there usually spent a good deal of his time with George Bertram.

And so Wilkinson walked forth into the street arm and arm with his cousin. It was a grievous trial to him; but he had a feeling within him that the sooner the sorrow was encountered the sooner it would be over. They turned into the High Street, and as they went they met crowds of men who knew them both. Of course it was to be expected that Bertram's friends should congratulate him. But this was not the worst; some of them were so ill advised as to condole with Wilkinson.

"Get it over at once," whispered Bertram to him, "and then it will be over, now and for ever."

And then they arrived at Parker's, and there found all those whom Bertram had named, and many others. Mr. Parker was, it is believed, a pastrycook by trade; but he very commonly dabbled in more piquant luxuries than jam tarts or Bath buns. Men who knew what was what, and who were willing to pay — or to promise to pay — for their knowledge, were in the habit of breakfasting there, and lunching. Now a breakfast or a lunch at Parker's generally meant champagne.

Harcourt was seated on the table when they got into the back room, and the other men were standing.

"Sound the timbrels, beat the drums;
See the conqu'ring hero comes,"

he sung out as Bertram entered the room. "Make way for the double-first — the hero of the age, gentlemen! I am told that they mean to put up an alabaster statue

to him in the Common Room at Trinity. However, I will vote for nothing more expensive than marble."

"Make it in pie-crust," said Bertram, and let Parker be the artist."

"Yes; and we'll celebrate the installation with champagne and *paté de foie gras*," said Twisleton.

"And afterwards devour the object of our idolatry, to show how short-lived is the fame for which we work so hard," said Madden.

"I should be delighted at such tokens of your regard, gentlemen. Harcourt, you haven't seen Wilkinson."

Harcourt turned round and shook hands warmly with his other friend. "Upon my word, I did not see you, Master Wilkinson. You have such a habit of hiding yourself under a bushel that one always misses you. Well; so the great day is over, and the great deed done. It's a bore out of the way, trampled under foot and got rid of; that's my idea of a degree."

Wilkinson merely smiled; but Harcourt saw at once that he was a deeply-disappointed man. The barrister, however, was too much a man of the world either to congratulate him or condole with him.

"There are fewer firsts this year than there have been for the last nine years," said Gerard, thinking to soften the asperity of Wilkinson's position.

"That may be because the examiners required more, or because the men had less to give," said Madden, forgetting all about Wilkinson.

"Why, what noodles you are," said Bertram, "not to know that it's all settled by chance at roulette the night before the lists come down! If it's not, it ought to be. The average result would be just as fair. Come, Harcourt, I know that you, with your Temple experiences

won't drink Oxford wine; but your good nature will condescend to see the children feeding. Wilkinson, sit opposite there and give Twisleton some of that pie that he was talking of." And so they sat down to their banquet; and Harcourt, in spite of the refinement which London had doubtless given to his taste, seemed perfectly able to appreciate the flavour of the University vintage.

"Gentlemen, silence for one moment," said Harcourt, when the graver work of eating began to lull, and men torpidly peeled their pears, and then cut them up into shapes instead of eating them. "It is always said at all the breakfasts I go to —"

"This is not a breakfast," said Bertram, "it's a lunch."

"Well, all the lunches, then; and God bless you. It's always said at these matutinal meals — which, by-the-by, would be the nicest things in the world, only, one doesn't know what on earth to do when they're over."

"It's time to go to dinner then," said Twisleton.

"That may do for the '*dura ilia*' of a freshman, but now that you're a B. A., you'll find that that power fails you greatly. But, for heaven's sake, let me go on with my speech, or you'll not get away either to dinner or to supper. It is commonly declared, I say, that there should be no speaking at these delicious little morning repasts."

"Do you call that a little repast?" said Madden, who was lying back in his chair with a cigar in his mouth, of which he hardly had strength enough left to puff out the smoke.

"I mean no offence to the feed, which, of its kind, has been only too good. If I'm to be allowed to go on,

I'll say, that this rule, which is always laid down, is always broken; and therefore I feel no hesitation in breaking it on this occasion. A long speech is a long bore, and a little speech is a little bore; but bores must be endured. We can't do very well without them. Now my bore shall be a very short bore if I'm allowed to make an end of it without interruption."

"All right, Harcourt," said Bertram. "Go ahead; we're only too delighted to hear you. It isn't every day we have a London barrister here."

"No; and it isn't every day that we have a double-first at old Trinity. Gentlemen, there are, I think, five, six Trinity men here including myself. It will be a point of honour with you to drink health and prosperity to our friend Bertram with all the honours. We have many men of whom we can boast at Trinity; but if I have any insight into character, any power of judging what a man will do" — it must be remembered that Mr. Harcourt, though a very young man in London, was by no means a young man at Oxford — "there have been very few before him who have achieved a higher place than will fall to his lot, or whose name will be more in men's mouths than his. There are also here four gentlemen of other colleges; they will not, I am sure, begrudge us our triumph; they are his old friends, and will be as proud of the Oxford man as we are of the Trinity man. Gentlemen, here is prosperity to our friend the double-first, and health to enjoy the fruits of his labour."

Whereupon the toast was drunk with a great deal of fervour. It was astonishing that ten men should make so much uproar; even Wilkinson, whose heart the wine had just touched sufficiently to raise it a little from

the depth to which it had fallen — even he cheered; and Madden, overcoming by degrees his not unnatural repugnance to rise, produced from certain vast depths a double-bass hurrah.

“Bertram,” said he, when the voices and glasses were once more silent, “you’re a credit to your college, and I’ve a regard for you; so I don’t mind running the risk for once. But I must beg that I may not be asked to repeat it.”

Bertram of course returned thanks to his guests with all the mawkish modesty which usually marks such speeches — or, rather, with modesty which would be mawkish were it not so completely a matter of course. And then he sat down; and then, with a face rather heightened in colour, he got upon his legs again.

“In spite of Madden’s difficulty of utterance,” said he, “and his very visible disinclination to move —”

“I’m not going to do any more shouting,” said Madden, “even though you propose the health of the chancellor, vice-chancellor, and two members.”

“Not even though he throws the procter’s into the bargain,” said Twisleton.

“You may shout or not as you like; but at the risk of giving some temporary pain to as good a friend as I have in the world, I will ask you to drink the health of one whom on this occasion fortune has not favoured — I mean my cousin, Arthur Wilkinson. The lists as they come down are, I dare say, made out with tolerable fairness. It is not at any rate for me to grumble at them. But of this I am quite sure, that did there exist some infallible test for finding out the best man, no man’s name in this year would have been placed before his. He is not so jovial as the rest of us now, be-

cause he has partly failed; but the time will come when he will not fail." And then Arthur Wilkinson's health was toasted with a somewhat bated enthusiasm, but still with sufficient *éclat* to make every glass in Mr. Parker's house ring on its shelf.

Poor Wilkinson's ears tingled when he heard his name pronounced; and he would at the moment have given anything to be allowed to be quiet. But it may be doubted whether he would not have been more hurt had he been left there without any notice. It is very hard to tune oneself aright to a disappointed man. "I'll break the ice for him, at any rate," said Bertram to himself. "When he's used to talk about it, he will suffer less."

Wilkinson had been accounted a good hand at speaking in the debating society, and though rather more prolix than Bertram, and not quite so vivacious, had been considered almost more than a match for his cousin on account of his superior erudition and more practised delivery; but now his voluble gift of words deserted him. "He was much obliged to them," he said; "though perhaps, on the whole, it was better that men who placed themselves in a mediocre condition should be left to their mediocrity. He had no doubt himself of the justness of the lists. It would be useless for him to say that he had not aspired; all the world" — it was all the world to him — "knew too well that he had aspired. But he had received a lesson which might probably be useful to him for the rest of his life. As for failing, or not failing, that depended on the hopes which a man might form for himself. He trusted that his would henceforth be so moderate in their nature as to admit of a probability of their being realized." Having uttered

these very lugubrious words, and almost succeeded in throwing a wet blanket over the party, he sat down.

"Now, you're not going to do anybody else, are you?" said Madden.

"Only Twisleton, and Gerard, and Hopgood," answered Bertram; "and Fortescue looks as if he expected it. Perhaps, however, he'll let us off till the day after to-morrow."

And then, with a round of milk punch, another cigar apiece, and a little more chat, the party broke up.

Bertram and Harcourt remained together, and Bertram endeavoured to induce Wilkinson to stay with them. He, however, wished to be alone, and got home to his college by himself.

"You always overrated that man," said Harcourt.

"I think not; but time will show. After all, a good degree is not everything in the world. Who in London cares about senior wranglers and double-firsts? When all is done, I don't see the use of it."

"Nobody cares much about wranglers and double-firsts; but these are the men, nevertheless, who get the best of what's going. Wood that will swim in one water will swim in all waters."

"You'll find Wilkinson will swim yet."

"That is, he won't sink. I don't say he will. Nine-tenths of the men in the world neither swim nor sink; they just go along with their bows above the wave, but dreadfully water-logged, barely able to carry the burdens thrown on them; but yet not absolutely sinking; fighting a hard fight for little more than mere bread, and forgetting all other desires in their great desire to get that. When such a man does get bread, he can't be said to sink."

"Ah! Wilkinson will do more than that."

"Something more, or something less, as the case may be. But, believe me, he is not the man to make other men fall before him. Industry alone never does that, and certainly not that sort of industry which breaks down once in every six months. But come, Mr. Parker's champagne makes my head puzz: let us take a walk up the river; Twisleton's idea of going to dinner requires far too much pluck for me."

And so they walked out along the towing-path, discussing many things of much importance to them.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."

In nine cases out of ten, this flood-tide comes *but* once in life, and then in early years. A man may have a second or a third chance for decent maintenance, but hardly a second chance for fortune's brighter favours. The horse that is to win the race needs not make all his best running at once; but he that starts badly will rarely do so. When a young man discusses what shall be his future walk in life, he is talking of all that concerns his success as far as this world is concerned. And it is so hard for a youth to know, to make even a fair guess, as to what his own capacities are! The right man is wanted in the right place; but how is a lad of two and twenty to surmise what place will be right for him? And yet, if he surmises wrong, he fails in taking his tide at its single flood. How many lawyers are there who should have been soldiers! how many clergymen who should have been lawyers! how many unsuccessful doctors who might have done well on 'Change, or in Capel Court!

Bertram had an inkling of this; and Harcourt had more than an inkling. His path in life was chosen, and he had much self-confidence that he had chosen it well. He had never doubted much, and since he had once determined had never doubted at all. He had worked hard, and was prepared to work hard; not trusting over much in his own talents, but trusting greatly in his own industry. But Bertram, with double his friend's genius, had, at any rate as yet, but little of his friend's stability. To him the world was all before him where to choose; but he was sadly in want of something that should guide his choice. He had a high, but at the same time a vague ambition. The law, the church, letters, art, and politics all enticed him; but he could not decide of which mistress the blandishments were the sweetest.

"Well, when shall we have you up in London?" said Harcourt.

"In London! I don't know that I shall go to London. I shall go down to Hadley for a few weeks of course" — Bertram's uncle lived at the village of that name, in the close vicinity of Barnet — "but what I shall do then, I don't in the least know."

"But I know you'll come to London and begin to keep your terms."

"What, at the Middle Temple?"

"At some Temple or some Inn: of course you won't go where anybody else goes; so probably it will be Gray's Inn."

"No, I shall probably do a much more commonplace thing; come back here and take orders."

"Take orders! You! You can no more swallow the thirty-nine articles than I can eat Twisleton's dinner."

"A man never knows what he can do till he tries.

A great deal of good may be done by a clergyman if he be in earnest and not too much wedded to the Church of England. I should have no doubt about it if the voluntary principle were in vogue."

"A voluntary fiddlestick!"

"Well, even a voluntary fiddlestick — if it be voluntary and well used."

"Of course you'll be a barrister. It is what you are cut out for, and what you always intended."

"It is the most alluring trade going, I own; — but then they are all such rogues. Of course you will be an exception."

"I shall do at Rome as Romans do — I hope always. My doctrine is, that we have no immutable law of right and wrong."

"A very comfortable code. I wish I could share it."

"Well, you will some of these days; indeed, you do now practically. But the subject is too long to talk of here. But as I know you won't go into the church, I expect to see you settled in London before Christmas."

"What am I to live on, my dear fellow?"

"Like all good nephews, live on your uncle. Besides, you will have your fellowship; live on that, as I do."

"You have more than your fellowship; and as for my uncle, to tell you the truth, I have no fancy for living on him. I am not quite sure that he doesn't mean me to think that it's charity. However, I shall have the matter out with him now."

"Have the matter out with him! — and charity! What an ass you are! An uncle is just the same as a father."

"My uncle is not the same to me as my father."

"No; and by all accounts it's lucky for you that he is not. Stick to your uncle, my dear fellow, and come up to London. The ball will be at your foot."

"Did you ever read Marryat's novel, Harcourt?"

"What, Peter Simple?"

"No, that other one: I think of going out as another Japhet in search of a father. I have a great anxiety to know what mine's like. It's fourteen years now since I saw him."

"He is at Teheran, isn't he?"

"At Hong Kong, I think, just at present; but I might probably catch him at Panama; he has something to do with the isthmus there."

"You wouldn't have half the chance that Japhet had, and would only lose a great deal of time. Besides, if you talk of means, that would want money."

They were now walking back towards Oxford, and had been talking about fifty indifferent subjects, when Bertram again began.

"After all, there's only one decent career for a man in England."

"And what is the one decent career?"

"Politics and Parliament. It's all very well belonging to a free nation, and ruling oneself, if one can be one of the rulers. Otherwise, as far as I can see, a man will suffer less from the stings of pride under an absolute monarch. There, only one man has beaten you in life; here, some seven hundred and fifty do so, — not to talk of the peers."

"Yes, but then a fellow has some chance of being one of the seven hundred and fifty."

"I shall go in for that, I think; only who the deuce

will return me? How does a man begin? Shall I send my compliments to the electors of Marylebone, and tell them that I am a very clever fellow?"

"Exactly; only do something first to show that you are so. I mean also to look to that; but I shall be well contented if I find myself in the house in twenty years' time, — or perhaps in thirty."

"Ah, you mean as a lawyer."

"How else should a man without property get into Parliament?"

"That's just what I want to know. But I have no idea, Harcourt, of waiting twenty years before I make my start in life. A man at any rate may write a book without any electors."

"Yes, but not have it read. The author who does any good must be elected by suffrages at least as honestly obtained as those of a member of Parliament."

CHAPTER III.

The New Vicar.

POOR Arthur Wilkinson was in a very unhappy frame of mind when he left the party at Parker's, and, indeed, as he went to bed that night he was in a state not to be envied; but, nevertheless, when the end of the week came, he was able to enter the parsonage with a cheerful step, and to receive his mother's embrace with a smiling face. God is good to us, and heals those wounds with a rapidity which seems to us impossible when we look forward, but which is regarded with very insufficient wonder when we look backward.

Before he left Oxford he had seen the head of his college and the tutor; and had also felt himself bound to

visit the tradesmen in whose black books he was written down as a debtor. None of these august persons made themselves so dreadful to him as he had expected. The master, indeed, was more than civil — was almost paternally kind, and gave him all manner of hope, which came as balm poured into his sick heart. Though he had failed, his reputation and known acquirements would undoubtedly get him pupils; and then, if he resided, he might probably even yet have a college fellowship, though, no doubt, not quite immediately. The master advised him to take orders, and to remain within the college as long as the rules permitted. If he should get his fellowship, they would all be delighted to have him as one of their body; there could — so thought the master — be no doubt that he might in the meantime maintain himself at the University by his pupils. The tutor was perhaps not quite so encouraging. He was a working man himself, and of a harder temperament than his head. He thought that Wilkinson should have got a first, that he had owed it to his college to do so, and that, having failed to pay his debt, he should not be received with open arms — at any rate just at first. He was therefore cool, but not generous. “Yes; I am sorry too; it is a pity,” was all he said when Wilkinson expressed his own grief. But even this was not so bad as Arthur had expected, and on the whole he left his college with a lightened heart.

Nor were his creditors very obdurate. They did not smile so sweetly on him as they would have done had his name been bruited down the High Street as that of a successful University pet. Had such been his condition, they would have begged him not to distress their ears by anything so unnecessarily mundane as the men-

tion of his very small account. All that they would have wanted of him would have been the continuation of his favours. As it was, they were very civil. Six months would do very well. Oh! he could not quite undertake to pay it in six months, but would certainly do so by instalments in two years. Two years was a long time, certainly; would not Mr. Wilkinson senior prefer some quicker arrangement? Oh! Mr. Wilkinson senior could do nothing! Ah! that was unfortunate! And so the arrangement for two years — with interest, of course — was accepted. And thus Mr. Wilkinson junior began the swimming-match of life, as so many others do, with a slight millstone round his neck. Well; it may be questioned whether even that is not better than an air-puffed swimming-belt.

When he got home, his mother and sisters hung about him as they always had done, and protected him in some measure from the cold serenity of the vicar. To his father he said little on the subject, and his father said as little to him. They talked, indeed, by the hour as to the future; and Arthur, in spite of his having resolved not to do so, told the whole story of his debts, and of his arrangement for their payment.

“Perhaps I could do something in the spring,” said Mr. Wilkinson.

“Indeed, father, you shall do nothing,” said the son. “I had enough, and should have lived on it; as I did not, I must live the closer now.” And so that matter was settled.

In a very few days Arthur found himself going into society with quite a gay heart. His sisters laughed at him because he would not dance; but he had now made up his mind for the church, and it would, he thought,

be well for him to begin to look to those amusements which would be befitting his future sacerdotal life. He practised singing, therefore, fasted on Fridays, and learnt to make chessmen with a lathe.

But though his sisters laughed at him, Adela Gauntlet, the daughter of the neighbouring vicar at West Putford, did not laugh. She so far approved that by degrees she almost gave over dancing herself. Waltzes and polkas she utterly abandoned; and though she did occasionally stand up for a quadrille, she did it in a very lack-a-daisical way, as though she would have refused that also had she dared to make herself so peculiar. And thus on the whole Arthur Wilkinson enjoyed himself that winter, in spite of his blighted prospects, almost as well as he had on any previous winter that he remembered.

Now and again, as he walked along the little river bank that ran with so many turnings from Hurst Staple down to West Putford, he would think of his past hopes, and lament that he could talk of them to no one. His father was very good to him; but he was too cold for sympathy. His mother was all affection, and kindly suggested that, perhaps, what had happened was for the best: she kindly suggested this more than once, but her imagination carried her no further. Had she not four daughters, hitherto without husbands, and also, alas! without portions? Was it not enough for her to sympathize with them? As for his sisters — his sisters were well enough — excellent girls; but they were so gay, so light-hearted, so full of fun and laughter, that he could not talk to them of his sorrows. They were never pensive, nor given to that sober sadness which is prone to sympathy. If, indeed, Adela Gauntlet had been

his sister—! And so he walked along the river to West Putford.

He had now fully made up his mind to go into the church. While yet thinking of high academical honours, and the brighter paths of ambition, he also had dreamed of the bar. All young men I believe do, who have high abilities, a taste for labour, and scanty fortune. Senior wranglers and double-firsts, when not possessed of means for political life, usually find their way to the bar. It is on the bench of judges, not on the bench of bishops, that we must look for them in after life. Arthur, therefore, had thought of the joys of a Chancery wig, and had looked forward eagerly to fourteen hours' daily labour in the purlieus of Lincoln's Inn. But when, like many another, he found himself disappointed in his earliest hopes, he consoled himself by thinking that after all the church was the safer haven. And when he walked down to West Putford there was one there who told him that it was so.

But we cannot follow him too closely in these early days. He did go into the church. He did take pupils at Oxford, and went abroad with two of them in the long vacation. After the lapse of the year, he did get his fellowship; and had by that time, with great exertion, paid half of that moiety of his debt which he had promised to liquidate. This lapse in his purposed performance sat heavy on his clerical conscience; but now that he had his fellowship he would do better.

And so somewhat more than a year passed away, during which he was but little at Hurst Staple, and very little at West Putford. But still he remembered the sweetly-pensive brow that had suited so well with his own feelings; and ever and again, he heard from

one of the girls at home, that that little fool, Adela Gauntlet, was as bad as a parson herself, and that now she had gone so far that nothing would induce her to dance at all.

So matters stood when young Wilkinson received at Oxford a letter desiring his instant presence at home. His father had been stricken by paralysis, and the house was in despair. He rushed off, of course, and arrived only in time to see his father alive. Within twenty-four hours after his return he found himself the head of a wailing family, of whom it would be difficult to say whether their wants or their griefs were most heart-rending. Mr. Wilkinson's life had been insured for six hundred pounds; and that, with one hundred a year which had been settled on the widow, was now the sole means left for the maintenance of her and her five children; — the sole means excepting such aid as Arthur might give.

“Let us thank God that I have got the fellowship,” said he to his mother. “It is not much, but it will keep us from starving.”

But it was not destined that the Wilkinsons should be reduced even to such poverty as this. The vicarage of Hurst Staple was in the gift of the noble family of Stapledean. The late vicar had been first tutor and then chaplain to the marquis, and the vicarage had been conferred on him by his patron. In late years none of the Wilkinsons had seen anything of the Stapledean family. The marquis, though not an old man, was reported to be very eccentric, and very cross. Though he had a beautiful seat in the neighbourhood — not in the parish of Hurst Staple, but in that of Deans Staple, which adjoins, and which was chiefly his pro-

perty — he never came to it, but lived at a much less inviting mansion in the north of Yorkshire. Here he was said to reside quite alone, having been separated from his wife; whereas, his children had separated themselves from him. His daughters were married, and his son, Lord Stanmore, might more probably be found under any roof in the country than that of his father.

The living had now to be given away by the marquis, and the Wilkinson family, who of late years had had no communication with him, did not even think of thinking of it. But a fortnight after the funeral, Arthur received a letter with the postmark of Bowes on it, which, on being opened, was found to be from Lord Stapledean, and which very curtly requested his attendance at Bowes Lodge. Now Bowes Lodge was some three hundred miles from Hurst Staple, and a journey thither at the present moment would be both expensive and troublesome. But marquises are usually obeyed; especially when they have livings to give away, and when their orders are given to young clergymen. So Arthur Wilkinson went off to the north of England. It was the middle of March, and the east wind was blowing bitterly. But at twenty-four the east wind does not penetrate deep, the trachea is all but invulnerable, and the left shoulder knows no twinges.

Arthur arrived at the cold, cheerless village of Bowes with a red nose, but with eager hopes. He found a little inn there, but he hardly knew whether to leave his bag or no. Lord Stapledean had said nothing of entertaining him at the Lodge — had only begged him, if it were not too much trouble, to do him the honour of calling on him. He, living on the northern borders of Westmoreland, had asked a man in Hampshire to

call on him, as though their houses were in adjacent streets; but he had said nothing about a dinner, a bed, or given any of those comfortable hints which seem to betoken hospitality.

"It will do no harm if I put my bag into the gig," said Arthur; and so, having wisely provided for contingencies, he started for Bowes Lodge.

Wisely, as regarded probabilities, but quite uselessly as regarded the event! Hardy as he was, that drive in the gig from Bowes did affect him unpleasantly. That Appleby road has few sheltered spots, and when about three miles from Bowes he turned off to the right, the country did not improve. Bowes Lodge he found to be six miles from the village, and when he drove in at the gate he was colder than he had been since he left Hurst Staple.

There was very little that was attractive about the house or grounds. They were dark and sombre, and dull and dingy. The trees were all stunted, and the house, of which half the windows were closed, was green with the effects of damp. It was large enough for the residence of a nobleman of moderate pretensions; but it had about it none of that spruce, clean, well-cared-for appearance which is common to the country-houses of the wealthy in England.

When he descended from the gig he thought that he might as well leave his bag there. The sombre-looking servant in black clothes who opened the door made no inquiry on the subject; and, therefore, he merely told his Jehu to drive into the yard and wait for further orders.

His lordship was at home, said the sombre, dingy servant, and in half a minute Arthur found himself in

the marquis's study and in the marquis's presence, with his nose all red and moist, his feet in an agony of cold, his fingers benumbed, and his teeth chattering. He was barely allowed time to take off his greatcoat and, as he did so, he felt almost disinclined to part with so good a friend.

"How do you do, Mr. Wilkinson?" said the marquis, rising from his chair behind the study table, and putting out the ends of his fingers so as to touch the young clergyman's hand. "Pray take a seat." And Arthur seated himself — as, indeed, he had not alternative — on a straight-backed old horsehair-bottomed chair which stood immediately under a tall black bookcase. He was miles asunder from the fire; and had he been nearer to it, it would have availed him but little; for the grate was one of those which our grandfathers cleverly invented for transmitting all the heat up the chimney.

The marquis was tall, thin, and gray-haired. He was, in fact, about fifty; but he looked to be at least fifteen years older. It was evident from his face that he was a discontented, moody, unhappy man. He was one who had not used the world over well; but who was quite self-assured that the world had used him shamefully. He was not without good instincts, and had been just and honest in his dealings — except in those with his wife and children. But he believed in the justness and honesty of no one else, and regarded all men as his enemies — especially those of his own flesh and blood. For the last ten years he had shut himself up, and rarely appeared in the world, unless to make some statement, generally personal to himself, in the House of Lords, or to proffer, in a plaintive whine

to his brother peers, some complaint as to his neighbour magistrates, to which no one cared to listen, and which in latter years the newspapers had declined to publish.

Arthur, who had always heard of the marquis as his father's old pupil, was astonished to see before him a man so aged. His father had been only fifty-five when he died, and had appeared to be a hale, strong man. The marquis seemed to be worn out with care and years, and to be one whose death might be yearly expected. His father, however, was gone; but the marquis was destined to undergo yet many more days of misery.

"I was very sorry to hear of your father's sudden death," said Lord Stapledean, in his cold, thin voice.

"It was very sudden, my lord," said Arthur, shuddering.

"Ah — yes; he was not a prudent man; — always too fond of strong wine."

"He was always a temperate man," said the son, rather disgusted.

"That is, he never got drunk. I dare say not. As a parish clergyman, it was not likely that he should. But he was an imprudent man in his manner of living — very."

Arthur remained silent, thinking it better to say nothing further on the subject.

"I suppose he has not left his family well provided for?"

"Not very well, my lord. There is something — and I have a fellowship."

"Something!" said the marquis, with almost a sneer. "How much is this something?" Whereupon Arthur told his lordship exactly the extent of his mother's means.

"Ah, I thought as much. That is beggary, you know. Your father was a very imprudent man. And you have a fellowship? I thought you broke down in your degree." Whereupon Arthur again had to explain the facts of the case.

"Well, well, well. Now, Mr. Wilkinson, you must be aware that your family have not the slightest claim upon me."

"Your lordship is also aware that we have made none."

"Of course you have not. It would have been very improper on your part, or on your mother's, had you done so — very. People make claims upon me who have been my enemies through life, who have injured me to the utmost of their power, who have never ceased striving to make me wretched. Yes, these very people make claims on me. Here — here is a clergyman asking for this living because he is a friend of Lord Stanmore — because he went up the Pyramids with him, and encouraged him in all manner of stupidity. I'd sooner — well, never mind. I shan't trouble myself to answer this letter." Now, as it happened that Lord Stanmore was a promising young nobleman, already much thought of in Parliament, and as the clergyman alluded to was known by Arthur to be a gentleman very highly reputed, he considered it best to hold his tongue.

"No one has a claim on me; I allow no one to have such claims. What I want I pay for, and am indebted for nothing. But I must put some one into this living."

"Yes; your lordship must of course nominate some one." Wilkinson said so much, as the marquis had stopped, expecting an answer.

"I can only say this: if the clergymen in Hampshire

do their duty as badly as they do here, the parish would be better off without a parson."

"I think my father did his duty well."

"Perhaps so. He had very little to do; and as it never suited me to reside there, there was never any one to look after him. However, I make no complaint. Here they are intolerable — intolerable, self-sufficient, impertinent upstarts, full of crotchets of their own; and the bishop is a weak, timid fool; as for me, I never go inside a church. I can't; I should be insulted if I did. It has however gone so far now that I shall take permission to bring the matter before the House of Lords."

What could Wilkinson say? Nothing. So he sat still and tried to drive the cold out of his toes by pressing them against the floor.

"Your father certainly ought to have made some better provision," continued Lord Stapledean. "But he has not done so; and it seems to me, that unless something is arranged, your mother and her children will starve. Now, you are a clergyman?"

"Yes, I am in orders."

"And can hold a living? You distinctly understand that your mother has no claim on me."

"Surely none has been put forward, Lord Stapledean?"

"I don't say it has; but you may perhaps fancy by what I say that I myself admit that there is a claim. Mind; I do no such thing. Not in the least."

"I quite understand what you mean."

"It is well that you should. Under these circumstances, if I had the power, I would put in a curate, and pay over the extra proceeds of the living for your mother's maintenance. But I have no such power."

Arthur could not but think that it was very well his

lordship had no such power. If patrons in general were so privileged there would be, he thought, but little chance for clergymen.

"As the law stands I cannot do that. But as you are luckily in orders, I can put you in — on this understanding, that you shall regard the income as belonging rather to your mother and to your sisters than to yourself."

"If your lordship shall see fit to present me to the living, my mother and sisters will of course want nothing that I can give them."

"Ah — h — h — h, my young friend! but that will not be sufficient for me. I must have a pledge from you — your word as a gentleman and a clergyman, that you take the living on an understanding that the income is to go to your father's widow. Why should I give you five hundred pounds a year? Eh? Tell me that. Why should I nominate a young man like you to such a living? you, whom I never saw in my life? Tell me that."

Arthur Wilkinson was a man sufficiently meek in spirit, as ordinary meekness goes — the ordinary meekness, that is, of a young clergyman of the Church of England — but he was not quite inclined to put up with this.

"I am obliged, my lord, to say again that I have not asked for so great a favour from you. Indeed, till I received your letter desiring me to come here, I had no other thought of the living than that of vacating the house whenever your nominee should present himself."

"That's all very well," said Lord Stapledean; "but you must be a very unnatural son if on that account you refuse to be the means of providing for your unfortunate mother and sisters."

"I refuse! why, my lord, I regard it as much my duty to keep my mother and sisters from want as my father did. Whether I am to have this living or no, we shall live together; and whatever I have will be theirs."

"That's all very well, Mr. Wilkinson; but the question I ask you is this: if I make you vicar of Hurst Staple, will you, after deducting a fair stipend for yourself as curate — say one hundred and fifty pounds a year if you will — will you make over the rest of the income to your mother as long as she lives?"

This was a question to which Wilkinson found it very difficult to give a direct answer. He hardly knew whether he would not be guilty of simony in making such a promise, and he felt that at any rate the arrangement would be an improper one.

"If you knew," said he, at last, "the terms on which my mother and I live together, you would perceive that such a promise is not needed."

"I shall not the less think it necessary to exact it. I am putting great trust in you as it is, very great trust; more so perhaps than I am justified in doing." His lordship here alluded merely to the disposition of the vicarial tithes, and not at all to the care of souls which he was going to put into the young man's hands.

Arthur Wilkinson again sat silent for awhile.

"One would think," said his lordship, "that you would be glad to have the means of securing your mother from beggary. I imagined that you would have been in some measure gratified by my — my — my good intentions towards your family."

"So I am, my lord; so I am. But I doubt whether I should be justified in giving such a pledge."

"Justified! you will make me almost doubt, Mr. Wil-

kinson, whether I shall be justified in putting the living into your hands; but, at any rate, I must have an answer."

"What time can you allow me to consider my answer?"

"What time! It never struck me that you could require time. Well; you can let me have your decision to-morrow morning. Send it me in writing, so that I may have it before ten. The post goes out at twelve. If I do not hear from you before ten, I shall conclude that you have refused my offer." And so speaking the marquis got up from his chair.

Arthur also got up, and promised that he would send a letter over from Bowes the first thing on the following morning.

"And tell the messenger to wait for an answer," said his lordship; "and pray express yourself definitely, so that there may be no doubt." And then, muttering something as to his hope that the inn was comfortable, and saying that the state of his health prohibited him from entertaining visitors, the marquis again put out his fingers, and Arthur soon found himself in the gig on his journey to Bowes.

He intended returning to town on the following day by the twelve-o'clock mail, of which Lord Stapledean had spoken. But before that he had a difficult task to perform. He had no friend to consult, no one of whom he could ask advice, nothing to rely on but his own head and his own heart. That suggestion as to simony perplexed him. Had he the right, or could he have it, to appropriate the income of the living according to terms laid down by the lay impropiator? At one time he thought of calling on the old clergyman of the parish

and asking him; but then he remembered what the marquis had said of the neighbouring parsons, and felt that he could not well consult one of them on any matter in which his lordship was concerned.

In the evening he considered the matter long and painfully, sitting over a cup of some exquisitely detestable concoction called tea by the Bowesian landlady. "If he had only left me to myself," thought Arthur, "I should do at least as much as that for them. It is for them that I want it; as for myself, I should be more comfortable at Oxford." And then he thought of West Putford, and Adela Gauntlet. This arrangement of Lord Stapledean's would entirely prevent the possibility of his marrying; but then, the burden of his mother and sisters would prevent that equally under any circumstances.

It would be a great thing for his mother to be left in her old house, among her old friends, in possession of her old income. As regarded money, they would all be sufficiently well provided for. For himself, his fellowship and his prescribed stipend would be more than enough. But there was something in the proposition that was very distasteful to him. He did not begrudge the money to his mother; but he did begrudge her the right of having it from any one but himself.

But yet the matter was of such vital moment. Where else was he to look for a living? From his college in the course of years he might get one; but he could get none that would be equal in value to this of Hurst Staple, and to his fellowship combined. If he should refuse it, all those whom he loved would in truth suffer great privation; and that privation would not be rendered more endurable by the knowledge that such an offer had been refused.

Thus turning the matter over painfully in his mind, he resolved at last to accept the offer of the marquis. The payment after all was to be made to his own mother. The funds of the living were not to be alienated — were not, in truth, to be appropriated otherwise than they would have been had no such conditions as these been insisted on. And how would he be able to endure his mother's poverty if he should throw away on her behalf so comfortable a provision? He determined, therefore, to accept the goods the gods had provided him, clogged though they were with alloy, like so many other gifts of fortune; and accordingly he wrote a letter to Lord Stapledean, in which he stated "that he would accept the living, subject to the stipulations named — namely, the payment to his mother, during her life, of three hundred and fifty pounds per annum out of the tithes." To this he received an answer from the marquis, very short and very cold, but nevertheless satisfactory.

The presentation to the living was, in fact, made in his favour, and he returned home to his family laden with good news. The dear old vicarage would still be their own; the trees which they had planted, the flower-beds which they had shaped, the hives which they had put up, would not go into the hands of strangers. And more than this, want no longer stared them in the face. Arthur was welcomed back with a thousand fond caresses, as one is welcomed who bringeth glad tidings. But yet his heart was sad. What should he now say to Adela Gauntlet?

CHAPTER IV.

Our Prima Donna.

WHEN Arthur first explained to his mother the terms on which the living had been given to him, she refused to receive the income. No such promise with reference to money matters between mother and son could be binding. Were they not, moreover, one and the same household? Would it not be in the end the same if Arthur should keep the money himself? If it were paid to her, she should only pay it back again; and so on. But the vicar declared that he would adhere strictly to his promised engagement; and the mother soon fell into the way of thinking the arrangement not altogether a bad one. She had received intimation through the lord's man of business of the exact steps which had been taken for the relief of her great pecuniary distress — so the letter was worded — and it was not long before she regarded the income as fairly her own.

We are so apt to be generous in the hot-moments of impulse; but so equally apt to be only coldly just, even if coldly just, in the long years of our ordinary existence.

And so the family again settled down; the commenced packings were again unpacked; the preliminary arrangements for living on a very small income were thrown to the winds; the pony that was to have been sold, and which with that object was being fattened up on boiled barley, was put on his accustomed rations; the old housekeeper's warning was revoked, as was also that of the old gardener. It was astonishing how soon the new vicar seemed to fill the old vicar's shoes in the eyes and minds of the people of Hurst Staple. Had Mr. Wilkinson come up from his grave at the end of three

months, he would hardly have found that he was missed. A very elegant little tablet had been placed to his memory; and there apparently was an end of him. The widow's cap did make some change in the appearance of the family circle; but it is astonishing how soon we get used even to a widow's cap!

There had of course been visits of condolence between West Putfield and Hurst Staple, and the Hurst Staple girls and Adela had been as much, or perhaps more, together than usual. But Arthur's walks along the river had not been frequent. This, however, was not thought of by any one. He had had new duties to assume, and old duties to put off. He had been a fortnight up at Oxford; and when at home, had been calling on all his parishioners. He had been attending to the dilapidations of the vicarage, and rearranging the books in the book-room. The dingy volumes of thirty years since had been made to give way to the new and brighter bindings which he had brought from college.

And therefore no one had remarked that he had but once been at West Putford. But he thought of it himself. He often longed to go thither, and as often feared to do so. When he next went, it must be to tell Adela, not that he loved her, but that such love was forbidden to him.

The family at West Putford consisted only of the vicar and his daughter. Mrs. Gauntlet had been long dead, and there had been no other child. A maiden sister of Mr. Gauntlet's occasionally visited them, and had, indeed, lived there altogether while Adela's education had required it; but this lady preferred her own lodgings at Littlebath, and Adela, therefore, was in general the sole mistress of the parsonage.

I beg my reader not to imagine that there had been love-passages between Arthur Wilkinson and Adela Gauntlet: nothing of the sort had occurred. They had known and loved each other as children together, and now that they were no longer children, they still knew and loved each other — that was all. It is true that Arthur, when he had wished to talk of his own disappointments, had found a better listener at West Putford than any that he could find at Hurst Staple. It is true that Adela had always been glad to listen to him; that she had had pleasure in cheering his fainting heart, and telling him that the work of a soldier of Christ was worthier of a man than the bickerings of a statesman or the quibbles of a lawyer; that she had gravely, yet withal so sweetly, spoken to him of the comforts of a rural life, and made him almost in love with his own failure. Such passages there had been between them; but Arthur had never taken her hand and sworn that it must be his own, nor had Adela ever blushed while half refusing to give him all he asked.

Why then need he trouble himself about West Putford? Why not let matters rest as they were? Miss Gauntlet would still be his friend; though seeing that she could never be more, it might not be well for him to walk so often along that river. As there had been no love-passages, one would say that nothing else was necessary.

But he could not content himself that this should be so. Adela would think him strange if he should say nothing to her of his future prospects. True, he had spoken no word of love, but had he not looked at her as though it was in his mind to speak such? Was it not incumbent on him to make her understand why he

threw from him such golden hopes? And then, as to her, he did not flatter himself that she loved him — at least, not much; but yet it might be well to let her know that she was now at liberty to love any other swain. So at last he once more went his way to West Putford.

Adela Gauntlet was — No; for once I will venture to have a heroine without describing her. Let each reader make what he will of her; fancy her of any outward shape and colour that he please, and endow her with any amount of divine beauty. But for her inner character, let him take that from me as I go on, if so be that I can succeed in making clear to others that which is clear enough to my own mind's eye. I have called her a heroine; it is the novelist's customary name for his prima donna, and so I use it. But many opera companies have more than one prima donna. There is the donna prima, and if one may so say, the donna primissima. Now Adela Gauntlet is no more than my donna prima. My donna primissima will be another guess sort of lady altogether.

Arthur, as he walked along, communed with himself as to what he was going to say. "At any rate, she shall know it all; we shall be more comfortable when we meet afterwards. Not that it will make any difference to her;" and then he sighed deeply, and cut at the river rushes with his walking-stick.

He found her as usual alone in the drawing-room, and, as usual, she smiled sweetly when she saw him. Since the day on which he had first gone up to Oxford, she had always called him "Mr. Wilkinson" — so instructed by Aunt Penelope; but in other respects her

manner to him was almost that of a sister, only that it was softer, and more gracious.

"I declare, I thought we were never to see you again, Mr. Wilkinson." Ah, Adela! whom did the *we* mean? But is it possible that any girl should live fairly before the world without some little insincerities?

"I have been so occupied, Adela. There is so much to do in taking up a parish. Even though I know all the people so well, there has been so much to do."

"Yes, yes, I am sure of it. But now that you are settled, I do so hope that you will be comfortable. I saw Mary the other day, and she told me that your mother was quite well again."

"Yes, she is pretty well. We are all very well now, I think."

"I do so love that old lord for giving you the living, though they say he is such a Turk. It was such a good thing in him to do; so considerate to everybody."

"Yes; it has made my mother and the girls comfortable; that, of course, is what I had first to think of."

"As for yourself, I have no doubt you would have done better at Oxford. But you could have got no home for them like their old home; could you?"

"No, of course not," said Arthur, answering almost at random, and thinking how best he might explain the sacrifice which he had made without taking too much credit to himself.

"And then, if you had remained up there, you would only have become a musty old don. I don't think you would have been happy, not so happy as in a parish. And when a man is a clergyman" — this she said in a lower and somewhat a solemn voice — "surely he

cannot be so well placed as in charge of a parish. Don't you think so, Mr. Wilkinson?"

"Certainly. It is the life for which he is intended; for which he should have intended himself."

"And I am sure it is a happy life: look at papa; I do not know any happier man — only that poor mamma died."

And upon this hint he spake. "Yes, your father I am sure has been a happy man, and he is an excellent clergyman."

"Is he not? even still so active! And he is so glad now to have you near him."

"I wish I had received my living as he did his; not that it would make any real difference."

"He got his, you know, from the bishop. But do you dislike being Lord Stapledean's nominee?"

"It would be ungrateful to say that; but I certainly do not like Lord Stapledean. However, I have taken his living, and should not complain."

"I did not know that there was anything disagreeable."

"There is this, Adela. I had rather tell you; and I came over to-day in part to do so: but you will see that the matter is one that should not be talked about," and he looked down on the floor, poking about on the carpet-pattern with his stick, being unable any longer to meet the clear gaze of her soft eye.

"Oh, I am sorry if there is anything to distress you."

"Not exactly to distress me, perhaps; but I will tell you. When the marquis offered me the living, he did it on the stipulation that I should pay over to my mother three hundred and fifty pounds a year during her

life. I doubt whether it was right to accept it on these conditions; but I did so. The living, therefore, is rather hers than mine."

"Oh, Arthur, how good of you!" In spite of all Aunt Penelope's lessons, old habits would sometimes get the better of her.

"I don't know; I am afraid that it was not good."

"Why? I can't understand? Surely it must be good to give up your time, your labour, your hopes" — Adela did not say his heart — "for your mother and sisters' good! Why, how can it be else than good? I think it good, and shall think so."

"At any rate, Adela, I could not withstand the offer when it was made to me."

"I am sure you could not."

"So I am little more than a curate in the parish as far as the income is concerned; with this difference, that I can't change my curacy for a living should a chance offer."

Adela had never before known him to be solicitous about money for himself, and now she felt that she did not understand him. "But you have got your fellowship," said she.

"Yes, I have got my fellowship: oh, as far as that is concerned, I am better off than I could ever have expected to be. But, nevertheless, one feels — feels crippled by such an arrangement. It is quite impossible, you know, for instance, that — that — that I should do a great many things." His courage failed him as he was about to make the fatal announcement.

"What things?" said Adela, with all the boldness of innocence.

It was necessary that he should say it. "Why, for

instance," he continued, "it is quite impossible, though perhaps that does not make much matter; but it is quite impossible — that I should ever marry." And still looking down upon the ground, he poked sedulously among the patterns with his stick.

"Oh!" said Adela, with a tremour in her voice, and her eye was no longer able to rest upon his face.

There was a pause during which neither of them said a word, or saw each other. As far as Adela was concerned, immediate speech was impossible. She neither cried, nor sighed, nor sobbed, nor became hysterical. She was simply dumb. She could not answer this little announcement of her neighbour's. Heretofore, when he had come to her with his sorrows, she had sympathized with him, and poured balm into his wounds. But she had no balm for him now — and no sympathy. There they sat, mute; he poking the while at the carpet, while she did not even move a limb.

And then it gradually came home to both of them that this utter silence, this prostration of all power of self-management, told to each the secret of the other. Each felt that every moment of prolonged silence committed both of them the deeper. Why should not Adela be able to speak when thus informed of her neighbour's intended celibacy? Why should he sit like a fool before her merely because he had told her that on which he had long decided?

But it was clearly Wilkinson's duty to have disembarrassed the lady as soon as possible. It was almost unmanly in him to be put thus beyond the power of speech or action. But still he poked the carpet and said nothing. It was Adela who first broke that tell-tale silence; and grievous was the effort which it cost her to do so.

"But you will have your mother and sisters with you, Mr. Wilkinson; and so, perhaps, you won't mind that."

"Yes, I shall have them," said he; and then there was another silence, which seemed about to be equally dangerous and equally difficult. But Adela, who was fully aware of the error which she had already committed, strove hard to save herself from repeating it.

"You will have a family round you; and if, as you say" — but the ground that she approached was so hot that she could not walk on it. She could not get further in that direction, and therefore merely added: "I am sure I hope you will always be happy."

At length Arthur shook himself, positively shook himself, as though that were the only mode by which he could collect his faculties; and then getting up from his chair, and standing with his back against the wall, he spoke out as follows: —

"Perhaps, Adela, there was no necessity for me to have mentioned this subject. At least, I am sure there was no necessity. But you have ever been such a friend to me, have so understood my feelings when no one else seemed to do so, that I could not but tell you this as I have told you everything else. I hope I have not annoyed you by doing so."

"Oh, no; not at all."

"It does make me a little sad to think that I shall never be my own master."

"Never, Mr. Wilkinson!" Had Arthur but known it, there was balm, there was sympathy in this word. Had his intellect been as sharp as his feelings, he would have known it. But it passed him unperceived, as it had fallen from her unawares: and she said no other word

that could encourage him. If he was cold, she at least would be equally so.

"Certainly not during my mother's life; and you know how good ground we have for hoping that her life will be long. And then there are my sisters. My duty to them will be the same as to my mother, even though, as regards them, I may not be tied down as I am with regard to her."

"We cannot have everything here," said Adela, trying to smile. "But I am sure I need not teach you that."

"No, we cannot have everything." And Arthur thought that, in spite of the clerical austerity which he was about to assume, he should very much like to have Adela Gauntlet.

"It will make you happy to know that you are making your mother happy, and the dear girls — and — and I have no doubt you will very soon get used to it. Many clergymen, you know, think that they ought not to marry."

"Yes; but I never made up my mind to that."

"No, perhaps not; but now perhaps you will think of it more seriously."

"Indeed, I used to have an idea that a parish clergyman should be a married man. There are so many things which he can do better when he has a woman to assist him who thinks exactly as he thinks."

"You will have your sisters, you know. Both Mary and Sophia were always active in the parish, and Jane and Fanny have their school."

"Yes;" and he uttered a gentle sigh as he paused before he answered her. "But it is not quite the same thing, Adela. I love my sisters dearly; but one always

longs to have one heart that shall be entirely one's own."

And had he come over to tell her this in the same breath with which he informed her that marriage was a privilege quite beyond his reach? What did he think of her, or of what did he imagine that she was made? There was cruelty in it, of which Adela became immediately conscious, and which she could hardly help wishing to resent. He had performed the object of his visit; why did he not leave her? He had made himself thoroughly understood; why did he not go? His former many sweet visits had created hopes which were all but certain. He had said nothing of love; but coming there as he had come, and gazing at her as he had gazed, Adela could not doubt but that she was loved. That was all now set at rest; but why should he remain there, breaking her heart with allusions to his own past tenderness?

"You must put up with the world as you find it, Mr. Wilkinson."

"Oh, yes; of course. But when one has had such happy dreams, the waking reality, you know, does make one sad."

"You are too happy in your friends and your position to be an object of pity. How many clergymen are there of your age who would look upon your lot as almost beyond their ambition! How many men are there with mothers and sisters for whom they cannot provide! How many who have made rash marriages which have led to no happiness! Surely, Mr. Wilkinson, with you there is more cause for thankfulness than for complaint!" And thus, as it was necessary that she should say something, she moralized to him — very wisely.

"It is all true," said he; "and perhaps it is for the best. I might probably have been made more wretched in another way."

"Yes; very likely." Oh, Adela, Adela!

"I begin to know that a man should not be sanguine. I have always hoped for more than I have had a right to expect, and, therefore, I have always been disappointed. It was so at school, and at Oxford, and it is so now; it shows how true it is that a man should not look for his happiness here. Well; good-bye, Adela. I see that you think I am wrong to have any regrets."

"Useless regrets are always foolish: we laugh at children who cry for what is quite out of their reach."

"Yes; and you laugh at me. I dare say you are right."

"No; do not say that, Mr. Wilkinson. I have never laughed at you. But —" She did not wish to be actually unkind to him, though he had been so cruel to her.

At last he went. They shook hands with each other in their accustomed manner, but Wilkinson felt that he missed something from her touch, some warmth from the soft pressure, some scintillation of sympathy which such last moments of his visits had usually communicated to him. Yes; there was much to miss.

As he went back along the river his heart was sad within him. He had made up his mind to give up Adela Gauntlet, but he had not made up his mind to discover that she did not care for him — that she was indifferent to his happiness, and unable to sympathize with his feelings. The fact was, that though he had resolved that duty and his circumstances required him to remain single, nevertheless, he had at the bottom of his

heart a sort of wish that Adela should be in love with him. He had his wish; but he was not sharp enough to discover that he had it. "I never thought her unfeeling before," said he to himself. "But all the world is alike. Well; as it is, it does not signify; but it might have been that I should have half broken my heart to find her so unfeeling. — More cause for thankfulness than complaint! Yes; that is true of us all. But it was unfriendly, nay unfeminine in her to say so when she must have known how much I was giving up." And so he walked on complaining; understanding perhaps accurately the wants of his own heart, but being quite in the dark as to the wants of that other heart.

But his grief, his discontent was mild in comparison with hers. She shook hands with him when he went, and endeavoured to say her last word of farewell in her usual tone; nay, for a few minutes after his departure she retained her seat calmly, fearing that he possibly might return; but then, when the door had closed on him, and she had seen him from her window passing across the lawn, then her spirits gave way, and bitterly she made her moan.

What was this that he had said to her? He would not marry because he had his mother and sisters to support. Would not she have helped to support them? Would not she have thrown in her lot with his for better or for worse, let that lot have been ever so poor? And could it be possible that he had not known this — had not read her heart as she had read his? Could it be that he had come there day after day, looking to her for love, and sympathy, and kindness — that sort of kindness which a man demands from no one but her he loves, and which no one can give him unless she loves

him? Could it be that he had done this and then thought that it all meant nothing? the interchange of such feelings had no further signification?

Money! Had she asked about his money in those days when his father still lived, when there was no question of this living belonging to him? She would have waited for him for years had years been necessary, even though they should be counted by tens and tens. Nay, she would have been contented to wait, even though that waiting should never have been rewarded, had he given her the privilege of regarding herself as his. Money! She would have been contented to live on potato-parings could he have been contented to live with her on potatoes.

She had over and over again questioned herself as to her love, and reminded herself that as yet he had said nothing to her to justify it: but as often she had answered herself that with him she could have no doubt. It was impossible that he should so look into her eyes and so speak to her if he did not love her. And so she had resolved to risk all her happiness upon her conviction of his faithfulness. She had so risked it all; and now he came to her, telling her coldly that he could not afford to marry.

He, to tell her of his happy dreams and his waking reality! he who had not the courage to realize the bliss of his dreams when that bliss was within his reach! He, to talk of sympathy, of a woman thinking with him exactly as he thought! he who was so timid of the world that he feared to love lest perchance his supplies of bread and meat should fail him! What could heart wounds signify to him, or hurt feelings? Had he not his arms sound and his head clear? If, having them

he would not venture for his love's sake to meet the world and its burdens, he could hardly have heart enough to know what love really meant.

Flinging herself on her sofa with outstretched arms, thus Adela made her moan; not in these words, for she spake none: but such were the thoughts which ran through her mind as she bewailed all that she had risked and all that she had lost.

"What would I not have done for him!" she suddenly exclaimed aloud, as, rising from the sofa, she stood erect upon the ground, pressing her hand upon her heart. "Fool that I have been — fool, fool, fool!"

And then, with her hand still close to her side, she walked up and down the room with quick step.

And she had been a fool according to the world's wisdom. Of what use had been Aunt Penelope's teaching, strictly enacting as it did all the nice proprieties of young-lady life, seeing that it had not sufficed to guard her heart against the first comer? Unasked she had given it all away, had poured it out to the last drop of its warm flood; and now she was told that it was not wanted, that the article was one not exactly in the gentleman's walk of life! She might well call herself a fool: — but what was she to call him?

"It is quite impossible, you know, that I should ever marry!" Why had he not asked her whether or no it were possible; if not now, then in ten years' time — if not in ten years, then in twenty? Had he not been as faithless to her, was he not as much man-sworn, as though a thousand oaths had passed between them? Oaths between lovers are but Cupid's phrases, made to enable them to talk of love. They are the playthings of love, as kisses are. When lovers trust each other

they are sweet bonds; but they will never bind those who do not trust. When he had told her that she, and she only, understood his feelings, that she, and she only, knew his moods, and when she had answered him by the encouragement of her soft smile, could it be that more was necessary between them? Ah! yes, Adela, much more! Never know a gentleman's moods, never understand his feelings till, in the plain language of his mother-tongue, he has asked you to be mistress of them.

When her father came in before dinner, she was still pacing up and down the room. But she had not spent the two hours since Arthur had left her in vain sorrow or in vainer anger. She had felt that it behoved her to resolve how she would act, and what she would do; and in those two hours she had resolved. A great misfortune, a stunning blow had fallen on her; but the fault had been with her rather than with him. She would school herself to bear the punishment, to see him occasionally, and bear with him as she would have done had he never taken those walks along the river; she would still love his sisters; still go when needs was to the Hurst Staple parsonage. As for him, she would wish him no evil, rather every good. As for herself, she would check her rebel heart if she could; but, at any rate, she would learn to check the rising blood which would otherwise tell her tale.

"Arthur Wilkinson has been here to-day, papa," she was able to say, with composed voice; "they are quite settled again at the parsonage."

"Ah! he is a lucky fellow," said the old vicar; "he'll be wanting a wife now before the year's out."

CHAPTER V.

The Choice of a Profession.

WE must now go back to our other hero, or, rather, to another of our heroes. Arthur Wilkinson is our melancholy love-lorn tenor, George Bertram our eager, excitable barytone, and Mr. Harcourt — Henry Harcourt — our bass, wide awake to the world's good things, impervious to sentimentality, and not over-scrupulous — as is always the case with your true deep-mouthed opera bass.

Our present business is with the excitable barytone whom we left some year and a half ago in not a very clear state of mind as to the walk in life which would be best suited for his peculiar legs. Harcourt, who was himself a lawyer, recommended the law. Selfish as was the general tone of Harcourt's heart, still he had within him a high, if not a generous feeling, which made him wish to have near him in his coming life a friend of such promise as George Bertram. Bertram might beat him in his career; nay, probably would do so; but, nevertheless, Harcourt wished to see him keeping his terms in London. He was convinced that he should gain more than he should lose by such a friend.

But Bertram's own mind was not so easily made up. His personal possessions in life may be thus catalogued. He had come of a good family; he had received the best education which England could give him; he was quick in speech and ready in thought; he had a double-first degree, and would at once have a fellowship; he had also an uncle who was very rich and occasionally very

disagreeable, and a father who was very poor, and of whom he heard all men say that he was one of the most agreeable fellows that ever lived. Such being his stock in trade, how was he to take it to the best market? and what market would be the best?

In thinking over his markets, it must not be supposed that his only object, or his chief object, was the making of money. That was a rock, rather, of which it behoved him to be very careful. The money-making part of every profession was, according to his present views, a necessary incidental evil. To enable a poor man like him to carry on his work some money must be made; for some sorts of work, perhaps for that very sort which he would most willingly choose, much money must be made. But the making of it should never be his triumph. It could be but a disagreeable means to a desirable end. At the age of twenty-two so thought our excitable barytone hero on that point.

Two ends appeared to him to be desirable. But which of the two was the most desirable — that to him was the difficult question. To do good to others, and to have his own name in men's mouths — these were the fitting objects of a man's life. But whether he would attempt the former in order to achieve the latter; or obtain, if he did obtain, the latter by seeking success in the former: on this point his character was not sufficiently fixed, nor his principles sufficiently high to enable him fitly to resolve.

But the necessity of seeing his uncle before he took any actual steps secured him from the necessity of coming to any absolutely immediate decision. He and Harcourt were together for three or four days, and he listened not unmoved to his friend's eloquence in favour

of public life in London. Not unmoved, indeed, but always with a spirit of antagonism. When Harcourt told of forensic triumphs, Bertram spoke of the joy of some rustic soul saved to heaven in the quiet nook of a distant parish. When his friend promised to him Parliament, and the later glories of the ermine, he sighed after literary fame, to be enjoyed among the beauties of nature. But Harcourt understood all this: he did not wish to convince his friend, but only to lead him.

Mr. George Bertram senior was a notable man in the city of London. I am not prepared to say what was his trade, or even whether he had one properly so called. But there was no doubt about his being a moneyed man, and one well thought of on 'Change. At the time of which I write, he was a director of the Bank of England, chairman of a large insurance company, was deep in water, far gone in gas, and an illustrious potentate in railway interests. I imagine that he had neither counting-house, shop, nor ware-rooms: but he was not on that account at a loss whither to direct his steps; and those who knew city ways knew very well where to meet Mr. George Bertram senior between the hours of eleven and five.

He was ten years older than his brother, Sir Lionel, and at the time of which I write might be about seventy. He was still unmarried, and in this respect had always been regarded by Sir Lionel as a fountain from whence his own son might fairly expect such waters as were necessary for his present maintenance and future well-being. But Mr. George Bertram senior had regarded the matter in a different light. He had paid no shilling on account of his nephew, or on other accounts appertaining to his brother, which he had not

scored down as so much debt against Sir Lionel, duly debiting the amount with current interest; and statements of this account were periodically sent to Sir Lionel by Mr. Bertram's man of business, — and periodically thrown aside by Sir Lionel, as being of no moment whatsoever.

When Mr. Bertram had paid the bill due by his brother to Mr. Wilkinson, there was outstanding some family unsettled claim from which the two brothers might, or might not, obtain some small sums of money. Sir Lionel, when much pressed by the city Cræsus, had begged him to look to this claim, and pay himself from the founds which would be therefrom accruing. The city Cræsus had done so: a trifle of two or three hundred pounds had fallen to Sir Lionel's lot, and had of course been duly credited to his account. But it went a very little way towards squaring matters, and the old man of business went on sending his half-yearly statements, which became anything but "small by degrees."

Mr. Bertram had never absolutely told George of this debt, or complained of his not being repaid the advances which he had made; but little hints dropped from him, which were sometimes understood for more than they were worth, and which made the young Oxonian feel that he would rather not be quite so much in his uncle's hands. The old man gave him to understand that he must not look on himself as an heir to wealth, or imagine that another lot was his than that ordinary to mortals — the necessity, namely, of eating his bread in the sweat of his brow.

Old Mr. Bertram ordinarily lived at Hadley, a village about a mile beyond Barnet, just on the border of what used to be called Enfield Chase. Here he had an

establishment very fit for a quiet old gentleman, but perhaps not quite adequate to his reputed wealth. By my use of the word reputed, the reader must not be led to think that Mr. Bertram's money-bags were unreal. They were solid, and true as the coffers of the Bank of England. He was no Colonel Waugh, rich only by means of his rich impudence. It is not destined that he shall fall brilliantly, bringing down with him a world of ruins. He will not levant to Spain or elsewhere. His wealth is of the old-fashioned sort, and will abide at any rate such touch of time as it may encounter in our pages. But none of the Hadleyites, or, indeed any other ites — not even, probably, the Bank-of-England-ites, or the City-of-London-Widows'-Fundites — knew very well what his means were; and when, therefore, people at Hadley spoke of his modest household, they were apt to speak of it as being very insufficient for such a millionaire. -

Hitherto George had always passed some part of his vacations at Hadley. The amusements there were not of a very exciting nature; but London was close, and even at Hadley there were pretty girls with whom he could walk and flirt, and the means of keeping a horse and a couple of pointers, even if the hunting and shooting were not conveniently to be had.

A few days after the glories of his degree, when his name was still great on the High Street of Oxford, and had even been touched by true fame in a very flattering manner in the columns of the "Daily Jupiter," he came home to Hadley. His uncle never encouraged visits from him in the city, and they met, therefore, for the first time in the old man's drawing-room just before dinner.

"How are you, George?" said the uncle, putting out his hand to his nephew, and then instantly turning round and poking the fire. "What sort of a journey have you had from Oxford? Yes, these railways make it all easy. Which line do you use? Didcot, eh? That's wrong. You'll have a smash some of these days with one of those Great Western express trains" — Mr. Bertram held shares in the opposition line by which Oxford may be reached, and never omitted an opportunity of doing a little business. "I'm ready for dinner; I don't know whether you are. You eat lunch, I suppose. John, it's two minutes past the half-hour. Why don't we have dinner?"

Not a word was said about the degree — at least, not then. Indeed Mr. Bertram did not think very much about degrees. He had taken no degree himself, except a high degree in wealth, and could not understand that he ought to congratulate a young man of twenty-two as to a successful termination of his school-lessons. He himself at that age had been, if not on 'Change, at any rate seated on the steps of 'Change. He had been then doing a man's work; beginning to harden together the nucleus of that snowball of money which he had since rolled onwards till it had become so huge a lump — destined, probably to be thawed and to run away into muddy water in some much shorter space of time. He could not blame his nephew: he could not call him idle, as he would have delighted to do had occasion permitted; but he would not condescend to congratulate him on being great in Greek or mighty in abstract mathematics.

"Well, George," said he, pushing him the bottle as soon as the cloth was gone, "I suppose you have done with Oxford now?"

"Not quite, sir; I have my fellowship to receive."

"Some beggarly two hundred pounds a year, I suppose. Not that I mean to say you should not be glad to have it," he added, thus correcting the impression which his words might otherwise have made. "As you have been so long getting it, it will be better to have that than nothing. But your fellowship won't make it necessary for you to live at Oxford, will it?"

"Oh, no. But then I may perhaps go into the church."

"Oh, the church, eh? Well, it is a respectable profession; only men have to work for nothing in it."

"I wish they did, sir. If we had the voluntary system —"

"You can have that if you like. I know that the Independent ministers —"

"I should not think of leaving the Church of England on any account."

"You have decided, then, to be a clergyman?"

"Oh, no; not decided. Indeed, I really think that if a man will work, he may do better at the bar."

"Very well, indeed — if he have the peculiar kind of talent necessary."

"But then, I doubt whether a practising barrister can ever really be an honest man."

"What?"

"They have such dirty work to do. They spend their days in making out that black is white; or, worse still, that white is black."

"Pshaw! Have a little more charity, master George, and do not be so over righteous. Some of the greatest men of your country have been lawyers."

"But their being great men won't alter the fact;

nor will my being charitable. When two clear-headed men take money to advocate the different sides of a case, each cannot think that his side is true."

"Fiddlestick! But mind, I do not want you to be a lawyer. You must choose for yourself. If you don't like that way of earning your bread, there are others."

"A man may be a doctor, to be sure; but I have no taste that way."

"And is that the end of the list?"

"There is literature. But literature, though the grandest occupation in the world for a man's leisure, is, I take it, a slavish profession."

"Grub Street, eh? Yes, I should think so. You never heard of commerce, I suppose?"

"Commerce. Yes, I have heard of it. But I doubt whether I have the necessary genius."

The old man looked at him as though he doubted whether or no he were being laughed at.

"The necessary kind of genius, I mean," continued George.

"Very likely not. Your genius is adapted to dispersing, perhaps, rather than collecting."

"I dare say it is, sir."

"And I suppose you never heard of a man with a — what is it you call your degree? a double-first — going behind a counter. What sort of men are the double-lasts, I wonder!"

"It is they, I rather think, who go behind the counters," said George, who had no idea of allowing his uncle to have all the raillery on his side.

"Is it, sir? But I rather think they don't come out last when the pudding is to be proved by the eating. Success in life is not to be won by writing Greek verses;

not though you write ever so many. A ship-load of them would not fetch you the value of this glass of wine at any market in the world."

"Commerce is a grand thing," said George with an air of conviction.

"It is the proper work for men," said his uncle, proudly.

"But I have always heard," replied the nephew, "that a man in this country has no right to look to commerce as a profession unless he possesses capital." Mr. Bertram, feeling that the tables had been turned against him, finished his glass of wine and poked the fire.

A few days afterwards the same subject was again raised between them. "You must choose for yourself, George," said the old man; "and you should choose quickly."

"If I could choose for myself — which I am aware that I cannot do; for circumstances, after all, will have the decision — but, if I could choose, I would go into Parliament."

"Go where?" said Mr. Bertram, who would have thought it as reasonable if his nephew had proposed to take a house in Belgrave Square with the view of earning a livelihood.

"Into Parliament, sir."

"Is Parliament a profession? I never knew it before."

"Perhaps not, ordinarily, a money-making profession; nor would I wish to make it so."

"And what county, or what borough do you intend to honour by representing it? Perhaps the University will return you."

"Perhaps it may some of these days."

"And, in the meantime, you mean to live on your fellowship, I suppose?"

"On that and anything else that I can get."

Mr. Bertram sat quiet for some time without speaking, and George also seemed inclined to muse awhile upon the subject. "George," said the uncle, at last, "I think it will be better that we should thoroughly understand each other. You are a good fellow in your way, and I like you well enough. But you must not get into your head any idea that you are to be my heir."

"No, sir; I won't."

"Because it would only ruin you. My idea is that a man should make his own way in the world as I made mine. If you were my son, it may be presumed that I should do as other men do, and give you my money. And, most probably, you would make no better use of it than the sons of other men who, like me, have made money. But you are not my son."

"Quite true, sir; and therefore I shall be saved the danger. At any rate, I shall not be the victim of disappointment."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mr. Bertram, who, however, did not give any proof of his gladness, seeing that he evinced some little addition of acerbity in his temper and asperity in his manner. It was hard to have to deal with a nephew with whom he could find so little ground for complaint.

"But I have thought it right to warn you," he continued. "You are aware that up to the present moment the expense of your education has been borne by me."

"No, sir; not my education."

"Not your education! How, then, has it been borne?"

"I speak of my residence at Oxford. I have had a great many indulgences there, and you have paid for them. The expenses of my education I could have paid myself." This was fair on George's part. He had not asked his uncle for a liberal allowance, and was hardly open to blame for having taken it.

"I only know I have paid regularly one hundred and fifty pounds a year to your order, and I find from Pritchett" — Pritchett was his man of business — "that I am paying it still."

"He sent me the last quarter the other day; but I have not touched it."

"Never mind; let that pass. I don't know what your father's views are about you, and never could find out."

"I'll ask him. I mean to go and see him."

"Go and see him! Why, he's at Bagdad."

"Yes. If I start at once I shall just catch him there, or perhaps meet him at Damascus."

"Then you'll be a great fool for your pains — a greater fool almost than I take you to be. What do you expect your father can do for you? My belief is, that if four hundred pounds would take him to heaven; he couldn't make up the money. I don't think he could raise it either in Europe or Asia. I'm sure of this; I wouldn't lend it him."

"In such a case as that, sir, his personal security would go for so little."

"His personal security has always gone for little. But, as I was saying, I have consented ever since you went to Wilkinson's to allow your father to throw the burthen of your expenses on my shoulders. I thought it a pity that you should not have the chance of a decent

education. Mind, I claim no gratitude, as I shall expect your father to pay me what I have advanced."

"How on earth can he do that, sir? But perhaps I can."

"Can you? very well; then you can settle it with him. But listen to me."

"Listen to me for a moment, uncle George. I think you are hard on my father, and certainly hard on me. When I went to Wilkinson's, what did I know of who paid the bill?"

"Who says you knew anything, sir?"

"And, counting on from that time, at what period ought I to have begun to know it? When should I have first learnt to feel that I was a burden to any one?"

"Who has talked about a burden?"

"You say I am not to be your heir?"

"Certainly not."

"I never thought of being your heir. I don't care a straw about being anybody's heir. What you have given freely, I have taken freely. As for my father, if you felt so harshly towards him, why did you let him incur this debt?"

"I was to see you kicked out of Wilkinson's house and starve in the ditch, I suppose? But now, if you can control your fine feelings for one moment, will you listen to me? I have never blamed you in the matter at all, and don't blame you now — at least not yet."

"I hope you never will — that is about money matters."

"Now do listen to me. It seems to me that you are quite astray about a profession. You don't like commerce, and what you said the other day about capital is

quite true. I count a man a knave who goes into trade without capital. In a small way we might, perhaps, have managed it. But in a very small way you would not have liked it."

"Neither small nor great, sir."

"Very well. You need not be afraid that anything very great will be thrust upon you. But it seems to me that what you are most fitted for is a lawyer."

Young Bertram paused a moment. "Uncle, I really hardly know. Sometimes I have a strange desire to go into orders."

"Very strange indeed! But now, if you will listen to me — I have been speaking to Mr. Dry. Messrs. Dry and Stickatit have done business for me for the last forty years. Now, George, I will advance you three thousand pounds at four per cent. —"

"What should I want with three thousand pounds?"

"You don't suppose you can get into a house like that without money, do you?"

"And be an attorney?" said George, with a look of horror which almost penetrated the thick skin of the old man's feelings. What! had he taken a double-first, been the leading man of his year, spouted at the debating club, and driven himself nearly dizzy with Aristotle for this — for a desk in the office of Messrs. Dry and Stickatit, attorneys of old Bucklersbury! No, not for all the uncles! not for any uncle!

"They net four thousand pounds a year," said Mr. Bertram; "and in process of time you would be the working partner, and have, at any rate, a full half of the business."

But, no! George was not to be talked into such a scheme as that by the offer of any loan, by the mention

of any number of thousands. He positively refused to consider the proposition; and his uncle, with equal positiveness, refused to hold any further converse with him on the subject of a profession. "Pritchett will pay you your present allowance," said he, "for two years longer — that is, if I live."

"I can do without it, sir," said George.

"Pritchett will pay that amount for two years," said the uncle, with great positiveness; after that it will be discontinued. And for the next three months I shall be happy to see you here as my guest."

It will be readily believed that George Bertram did not overstay the three months.

CHAPTER VI.

Jerusalem.

BUT there was no quarrel between George Bertram uncle and George Bertram nephew: though in such conversations as they had about business they were not over civil to each other, still they went on together as goods friends, at any rate as they ever had been. Indeed, after the last scene which has been reported, the old man became more courteous to his nephew, and before the three months were over was almost cordial.

There was that about George the younger which made the old uncle respect him, despite himself. The London merchant had a thorough contempt for his brother, the soldier of fortune: he had acted as he had done on behalf of that brother's son almost more with the view of showing his contempt, and getting thereby an opportunity for expressing it, than with any fixed idea of doing a kindness. He had counted also on

despising the son as he had despised the father; but here he found himself foiled. George had taken all that he had given, as any youth would take what an uncle gave; but he had never asked for more: he had done as well as it was possible for him to do in that line of education which had been tendered to him; and now, though he would not become an attorney or a merchant, was prepared to earn his own bread, and professed that he was able to support himself without further assistance from any one.

Before the three months were over, his uncle had more than once asked him to prolong his visit; but George had made up his mind to leave Hadley. His purpose was to spend three or four months in going out to his father, and then to settle in London. In the meantime, he employed himself with studying the law of nations, and amused his leisure hours with Coke and Blackstone.

"You'll never find your father," said Mr. Bertram.

"At any rate, I'll try; and if I miss him, I shall see something of the world."

"You'll see more in London in three months than you will there in twelve; and, moreover, you would not lose your time."

But George was inexorable, and before the three months were over he had started on his trip.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. George," said Mr. Pritchett to him the day before he went (his uncle had requested him to call on Pritchett in the city) — "I beg your pardon, Mr. George, but if I may be allowed to speak a word or so, I do hope you'll write a line now and then to the old gentleman while you are away."

Now George had never written a line to his uncle

in his life; all his communications as to his journeys and proposed arrivals had, by his uncle's special direction, been made to the housekeeper, and he had no present intention of commencing a correspondence.

"Write to him, Mr. Pritchett! No, I don't suppose I shall. I take it, my uncle does not much care for such letters as I should write."

"Ah! but he would, Mr. George. You shouldn't be too quick to take persons by their appearances. It's half a million of money, you know, Mr. George; half — a — million — of — money!" And Mr. Pritchett put great stress on the numeration of his patron's presumed wealth.

"Half a million, is it? Well, that's a great deal, no doubt; and I fully see the force of your excellent argument. But I fear there is nothing to be done in that line: I'm not born to be the heir to half a million of money; you might see that in my face."

Mr. Pritchett stared at him very hard. "Well, I can't say that I do, Mr. George; but take my word for it, the old gentleman is very fond of you."

"Very fond! That's a little too strong, isn't it?"

"That is, if he's very fond of anything. Now, he said to me yesterday, 'Pritchett,' says he, 'that boy's going to Bagdad.' 'What! Mr. George?' says I. 'Yes,' says he; 'and to Hong Kong too, I suppose, before he comes back: he's going after his father;' and then he gave one of those bitter looks, you know. 'That's a pity,' says I, 'for you know one must humour him. 'He is a fool,' says your uncle, 'and always will be.'"

"I'm sure, Mr. Pritchett, I'm very much obliged for the trouble you are at in telling me."

"Oh! I think nothing of the trouble. 'And he

knows no more about money,' says your uncle, 'than an ostrich.' He can't go to Bagdad out of his allowance,' 'Of course he can't,' said I. 'You had better put three hundred pounds to his credit,' said the old gentleman; and so, Mr. George, I have."

"I could have done very well without it, Mr. Pritchett."

"Perhaps so; but three hundred pounds never hurt anybody — never, Mr. George; and I can tell you this: if you play your cards well, you may be the old gentleman's heir, in spite of all he says to the contrary."

"At any rate, Mr. Pritchett, I'm very much obliged to you:" and so they parted.

"He'll throw that three hundred pounds in my teeth the next time I see him," said George to himself.

Good as Mr. Pritchett's advice undoubtedly was, Bertram did not take it; and his uncle received no line from him during the whole period of his absence. Our hero's search after his father was not quite of so intricate a nature as was supposed by his uncle, nor so difficult as that made by Japhet under similar circumstances. His route was to be by Paris, Marseilles, Malta, Alexandria, Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Damascus, and he had written to Sir Lionel, requesting him to write to either or all of those addresses. Neither in France, nor Malta, nor Egypt did he receive any letters; but in the little town of Jaffa, where he first put his foot on Asiatic soil, a despatch from his father was awaiting him. Sir Lionel was about to leave Persia, and was proceeding to Constantinople on public service; but he would go out of his course to meet his son at Jerusalem.

The tone of Sir Lionel's letter was very unlike that

of Mr. Bertram's conversation. He heartily congratulated his son on the splendid success of his degree; predicted for him a future career both brilliant and rich; declared that it was the dearest wish of his heart to embrace his son, and spoke of their spending a few weeks together at Jerusalem almost with rapture.

This letter very much delighted George. He had a natural anxiety to think well of his father, and had not altogether believed the evil that had been rather hinted than spoken of him by Mr. Bertram. The colonel had certainly not hitherto paid him very much parental attention, and had generally omitted to answer the few letters which George had written to him. But a son is not ill inclined to accept acts of new grace from a father; and there was something so delightful in the tone and manner of Sir Lionel's letter, it was so friendly as well as affectionate, so perfectly devoid of the dull, monotonous, lecture-giving asperity with which ordinary fathers too often season their ordinary epistles, that he was in raptures with his newly-found correspondent.

"I would not miss seeing you for worlds," wrote Sir Lionel; "and although I have been ordered to Constantinople with all the *immediate haste* which your civil-service grandees always use in addressing us military slaves, it shall go hard with me but I will steal a fortnight from them in order to pass it with you at Jerusalem. I suppose I shall scarce know you, or you me; but when you see an old gentleman in a military frock, with a bald head, a hook nose, and a rather short allowance of teeth, you may then be sure that you look upon your father. However, I will be at Z—'s Hotel — I believe they honour the caravansary with that name — as soon as possible after the 14th."

His uncle had at any rate been quite wrong in predicting that his father would keep out of his way. So far was this from being the case, that Sir Lionel was going to put himself to considerable inconvenience to meet him. It might be, and no doubt was the case, that Mr. Bertram the merchant had put together a great deal more money than Colonel Bertram the soldier; but the putting together of money was no virtue in George's eyes; and if Sir Lionel had not remitted a portion of his pay as regularly as he perhaps should have done, that should not now be counted as a vice. It may perhaps be surmised that had George Bertram suffered much in consequence of his father's negligence in remitting, he might have been disposed to look at the matter in a different light.

He had brought but one servant with him, a dragoon whom he had picked up at Malta, and with him he started on his ride from the city of oranges. Oranges grow plentifully enough in Spain, in Malta, in Egypt, in Jamaica, and other places, but within five miles of Jaffa nothing else is grown — if we except the hedges of prickly pear which divide the gardens. Orange garden succeeds to orange garden till one finds oneself on the broad open desert that leads away to Jerusalem.

There is something enticing to an Englishman in the idea of riding off through the desert with a pistol girt about his waist, a portmanteau strapped on one horse before him, and an only attendant seated on another behind him. There is a *souçon* of danger in the journey just sufficient to give it excitement; and then it is so un-English, oriental, and inconvenient; so opposed to the accustomed haste and comfort of a railway; so

out of his hitherto beaten way of life, that he is delighted to get into the saddle. But it may be a question whether he is not generally more delighted to get out of it; particularly if that saddle be a Turkish one.

George had heard of Arab horses, and the clouds of dust which rise from their winged feet. When first he got beyond the hedges of the orange gardens, he expected to gallop forth till he found himself beneath the walls of Jerusalem. But he had before him many an hour of tedious labour ere those walls were seen. His pace was about four miles an hour. During the early day he strove frequently to mend it; but as the sun became hot in the heavens, his efforts after speed were gradually reduced, and long before evening he had begun to think that Jerusalem was a myth, his dragoman an impostor, and his Arab steed the sorriest of jades,

"It is the longest journey I ever took in my life," said George.

"Longest; yes. A top of two mountain more, and two go-down, and then there; yes," said the dragoman, among whose various accomplishments that of speaking English could hardly be reckoned as the most prominent.

At last the two mountains more and the two go-downs were performed, and George was informed that the wall he saw rising sharp from the rocky ground was Jerusalem. There is something very peculiar in the first appearance of a walled city that has no suburbs or extramural adjuncts. It is like that of a fortress of cards built craftily on a table. With us in England it is always difficult to say where the country ends and

where the town begins; and even with the walled towns of the Continent, one rarely comes upon them so as to see the sharp angles of a gray stone wall shining in the sun, as they do in the old pictures of the cities in "Pilgrim's Progress."

But so it is with Jerusalem. One rides up to the gate feeling that one is still in the desert; and yet a moment more, with the permission of those very dirty-looking Turkish soldiers at the gate, will place one in the city. One rides up to the gate, and as every one now has a matured opinion as to the taking of casemated batteries and the inefficiency of granite bastions, one's first idea is how delightfully easy it would be to take Jerusalem. It is at any rate easy enough to enter it, for the dirty Turkish soldiers do not even look at you, and you soon become pleasantly aware that you are beyond the region of passports.

George Bertram had promised himself that the moment in which he first saw Jerusalem should be one of intense mental interest; and when, riding away from the orange gardens at Jaffa, he had endeavoured to urge his Arab steed into that enduring gallop which was to carry him up to the city of the sepulchre, his heart was ready to melt into ecstatic pathos as soon as that gallop should have been achieved. But the time for ecstatic pathos had altogether passed away before he rode in at that portal. He was then swearing vehemently at his floundering jade, and giving up to all the fiends of Tartarus the accursed saddle which had been specially contrived with the view of lacerating the nether Christian man.

"Where on earth is this d— hotel?" said he, when he and his dragoman and portmanteau had been flounder-

ing for about five minutes down a steep, narrow, ill-paved lane, with a half-formed gully in the middle, very slippery with orange-peel and old vegetables, and crowded with the turbans of all the Eastern races. "Do you call this a street?" After all his sentiment, all his emotions, all his pious resolves, it was thus that our hero entered Jerusalem! But what piety can withstand the wear and tear of twelve hours in a Turkish saddle?

"Is this a street?" said he. It was the main street in Jerusalem. The first, or among the first in grandeur of those sacred ways which he had intended hardly to venture to pass with shoes on his feet. His horse turning a corner as he followed the dragoman again slipped and almost fell. Whereupon Bertram again cursed. But then he was not only tired and sore, but very hungry also. Our finer emotions should always be encouraged with a stomach moderately full.

At last they stopped at a door in a wall, which the dragoman pronounced to be the entrance of Z—'s hotel. In fact they had not yet been full ten minutes within the town; but the streets certainly were not well payed. In five minutes more, George was in his room, strewing sofas and chairs with the contents of his portmanteau, and inquiring with much energy what was the hour fixed for the table d'hôte. He found, with much inward satisfaction, that he had just twenty minutes to prepare himself. At Jerusalem, as elsewhere, these after all are the traveller's first main questions. When is the table d'hôte? Where is the cathedral? At what hour does the train start to-morrow morning? It will be some years yet, but not very many, before the latter question is asked at Jerusalem.

Bertram had arrived about a fortnight before Easter, and the town was already full of pilgrims, congregated for that ceremony, and of English and Americans who had come to look at the pilgrims.

The inn was nearly full, and George, when he entered the public room, heard such a Babel of English voices, and such a clatter of English spoons that he might have fancied himself at the top of the *Righi* or in a Rhine steamboat. But the subjects under discussion all savoured of the Holy Land.

"Mrs. Rose, we are going to have a picnic on Monday in the Valley of Jehoshaphat; will you and your young ladies join us? We shall send the hampers to the tomb of Zachariah."

"Thank you, Miss Todd; we should have been so happy; but we have only three days to do Bethlehem, the Dead Sea, and Jericho. We must be off to-morrow."

"Mamma, I lost my parasol somewhere coming down the Mount of Offence. Those nasty Arab children must have stolen it."

"They say the people in Siloam are the greatest thieves in Syria; and nobody dares to meddle with them."

"But I saw it in your hand, my dear, at the Well of Enrogel."

"What, no potatoes! there were potatoes yesterday. Waiter, waiter; who ever heard of setting people down to dinner without potatoes?"

"Well, I didn't know what to say to it. If that is the tomb of Nicodemus, that seems to settle the question. May I trouble you for the salt?"

"Mr. Pott, I won't have anything more to say to you; you have no faith. I believe it all."

“What, all? from Calvary upstairs in the gallery down to the dark corner where the cock crew?”

“Yes, all, Mr. Pott. Why should not a cock crow there as well as anywhere else? It is so beautiful to believe.”

George Bertram found himself seated next to a lady-like well-dressed Englishwoman of the middle age, whom he heard called Miss Baker; and next to her again sat — an angel! whom Miss Baker called Caroline, and whom an odious man sitting on the other side of her called Miss Waddington.

All my readers will probably at different times have made part of a table-d'hôte assemblage; and most of them, especially those who have travelled with small parties, will know how essential it is to one's comfort to get near to pleasant neighbours. The young man's idea of a pleasant neighbour is of course a pretty girl. What the young ladies' idea may be I don't pretend to say. But it certainly does seem to be happily arranged by Providence that the musty fusty people, and the nice spicy people, and the witty pretty people do severally assemble and get together as they ought to do.

Bertram's next-door neighbour was certainly of the nice spicy order; but this did not satisfy him. He would have been very well pleased to talk to Miss Baker had it not been for the close contiguity of Miss Waddington; and even her once-removed vicinity would not have made him unhappy had not that odious man on her left had so much to say about the village of Emmaus and the Valley of Ajalon.

Now, be it known to all men that Caroline Waddington is our *donna primissima* — the personage of most

importance in these pages. It is for her that you are to weep, with her that you are to sympathize, and at her that you are to wonder. I would that I could find it compatible with my duty to introduce her to this circle without any minute details of her bodily and mental charms; but I have already been idle in the case of Adela Gauntlet, and I feel that a *donna primissima* has claims to description which I cannot get over. Only not exactly now; in a few chapters hence we shall have Miss Waddington actively engaged upon the scene, and then she shall be described.

It must suffice now to say that she was an orphan; that since her father's death she had lived with her aunt, Miss Baker, chiefly at Littlebath; that Miss Baker had, at her niece's instance, been to Egypt, up the Nile, across the short desert — (short!) having travelled from Cairo to Jerusalem, — and that now, thoroughly sick of the oriental world, she was anxious only to get back to Littlebath; while Caroline, more enthusiastic, and much younger, urged her to go on to Damascus and Lebanon, to Beyrout and Smyrna, and thence home, merely visiting Constantinople and Athens on the way.

Had Bertram heard the terms in which Miss Waddington spoke of the youth who was so great about Ajalon when she and her aunt were in their own room, and also the words in which that aunt spoke of him, perhaps he might have been less provoked.

“Aunt, that Mr. M'Gabbery is an ass. I am sure he has ears if one could only see them. I am so tired of him. Don't you think we could get on to Damascus to-morrow?”

“If we did I have no doubt he'd come too.” Mr. M'Gabbery had been one of the party who crossed the desert with them from Cairo.

"Impossible, aunt. The Hunters are ready to start to-morrow, or, if not, the day after, and I know they would not have him."

"But, my dear, I really am not equal to Damascus. A few more days on a camel —"

"But, aunt, you'll have a horse."

"That's worse, I'm sure. And, moreover, I've found an old friend, and one that you will like very much."

"What, that exceedingly ugly young man that sat next to you?"

"Yes. That exceedingly ugly young man I remember as the prettiest baby in the world — not that I think he is ugly. He is, however, no other than the nephew of Mr. Bertram."

"What, papa's Mr. Bertram?"

"Yes; your father's Mr. Bertram. Therefore, if old Mr. Bertram should die, and this young man should be his heir, he would have the charge of all your money. You'd better be gracious to him."

"How odd! But what is he like?"

"He is one of the cleverest young men of the day. I had heard that he had distinguished himself very much at Oxford; and he certainly is a most agreeable companion." And so it was arranged between them that they would not start to Damascus as yet, in spite of any evil that Mr. M'Gabbery might inflict on them.

On the next morning at breakfast, Bertram managed to separate the aunt from the niece by sitting between them. It was long, however, before Mr. M'Gabbery gave up the battle. When he found that an interloper was interfering with his peculiar property, he began to tax his conversational powers to the utmost. He was greater than ever about Ajalon, and propounded some very

startling theories with reference to Emmaus. He recalled over and over again the interesting bits of their past journey; how tired they had been at Gaza, where he had worked for the ladies like a slave — how terribly Miss Baker had been frightened in the neighbourhood of Arimathea, where he, Mr. M'Gabbery, had specially looked to his pistols with the view of waging war on three or four supposed Bedouins who were seen to be hovering on the hill-sides. But all would not do. Miss Waddington was almost tired of Gaza and Arimathea, and Miss Baker seemed to have a decided preference for London news. So at last Mr. M'Gabbery became silent and grand, and betook himself to his associations and a map of Palestine in a corner.

Bertram, when fortified with a night's rest and a good breakfast, was able to recover his high-toned feeling, and, thus armed, proceeded alone to make his first visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was a Sunday, the last Sunday in Lent; and he determined to hear mass in the Greek Church, and ascertain for himself how much devotion an English Protestant could experience in the midst of this foreign worship. But one mass was over and another not begun when he reached the building, and he had thus time to follow his dragoman to the various wonders of that very wonderful building.

It is now generally known in England of what the church of the holy places consists; but no one who has not seen it, and none, indeed, who have not seen it at Easter-time, can fully realize all the absurdity which it contains and all the devotion which it occasions. Bertram was first carried to the five different churches which have crowded themselves together under the same

roof. The Greeks have by far the best of it. Their shrine is gaudy and glittering, and their temple is large and in some degree imposing. The Latins, whom we call Roman Catholics, are much less handsomely lodged, and their tinsel is by far more dingy. The Greeks, too, possess the hole in which stood — so they say — the cross of Our Saviour; while the Latins are obliged to put up with the sites on which the two thieves were crucified. Then the church of the Armenians, for which you have to descend almost into the bowels of the earth, is still less grand in its pretensions, is more sombre, more dark, more dirty; but it is as the nave of St. Peter's when compared to the poor wooden-cased altar of the Abyssinians, or the dark unfurnished gloomy cave in which the Syrian Christians worship, so dark that the eye cannot at first discover its only ornament — a small ill-made figure of the crucified Redeemer.

We who are accustomed to Roman Catholic gorgeousness in Italy and France can hardly at first understand why the Pope here should play so decidedly a second fiddle. But as he is held to be God's viceroy among the people of south-western Europe, so is the Russian emperor among the Christians of the East. He, the Russian, is still by far the greatest pope in Jerusalem, and is treated with a much greater respect, a much truer belief, than is his brother of Rome, even among Romans.

Five or six times Bertram had attempted to get into the Tabernacle of the Holy Sepulchre; but so great had been the rush of pilgrims, that he had hitherto failed. At last his dragoman espied a lull, and went again to the battle. To get into the little outside chapel, which forms, as it were, a vestibule to the cell of the sepulchre,

and from which on Easter Saturday issue the miraculous flames, was a thing to be achieved by moderate patience. His close contiguity to Candiotes and Copts, to Armenians and Abyssinians was not agreeable to our hero, for the contiguity was very close, and Christians of these nations are not very cleanly. But this was nothing to the task of entering the sanctum sanctorum. To this there is but one aperture, and that is but four feet high; men entering it go in head foremost, and those retreating come out in the other direction; and as it is impossible that two should pass, and as two or three are always trying to come out, and ten or twelve equally anxious to get in, the struggle to an Englishman is disagreeably warm, though to an Oriental it is probably matter of interesting excitement.

But for his dragoman, Bertram would never have succeeded. He, however, so pulled and hauled these anxious devotees, so thrust in those who endeavoured to come out, and clawed back those who strove to get in, that the passage became for a moment clear, and our hero, having bent low his head, found himself standing with his hand on the marble slab of the tomb.

Those who were there around him seemed to be the outcasts of the world, exactly those whom he would have objected to meet, unarmed, on the roads of Greece or among the hills of Armenia; cut-throat-looking wretches, with close-shaven heads, dirty beards, and angry eyes; men clothed in skins, or huge skin-like-looking cloaks, filthy, foul, alive with vermin, reeking with garlic, — abominable to an Englishman. There was about them a certain dignity of demeanour, a natural aptitude to carry themselves with ease, and even a not impure taste for colour among their dirt. But these Christians of the

Russian Church hardly appeared to him to be brothers of his own creed.

But he did put his hand on the slab of the tomb; and as he did so, two young Greeks, brothers by blood — Greeks by their creed, though of what actual nation Bertram was quite unable to say — pressed their lips vehemently to the marble. They were dirty, shorn about the head, dangerous looking, and skin-clothed, as we have described; men very low in the scale of humanity when compared with their fellow-pilgrim; but, nevertheless, they were to him at that moment objects of envy. They believed: so much at any rate was clear to him. By whatever code of morals they might be able to govern their lives, whether by any, or as, alas! might be too likely, by none, at least they possessed a faith. Christ to them was an actual living truth, though they knew how to worship him no better than by thus kissing a stone, which had in fact no closer reference to the Saviour than any other stone they might have kissed in their own country. They believed; and as they reverently pressed their foreheads, lips, and hands to the top and sides and edges of the sepulchre, their faith became ecstatic. It was thus that Bertram would fain have entered that little chapel, thus that he would have felt, thus that he would have acted had he been able. So had he thought to feel — in such an agony of faith had he been minded there to kneel. But he did not kneel at all. He remarked to himself that the place was inordinately close, that his contiguity to his religious neighbours was disagreeable; and then, stooping low his head, not in reverence, but with a view to backing himself out from the small enclosure, with some delay and much precaution, and, to speak truth, with various ex-

pressions of anger against those who with their heads continued to push him the way he did not wish to go, he retreated from the chapel. Nor while he was at Jerusalem did he feel sufficient interest in the matter again to enter it. He had done that deed, he had killed that lion, and, ticking it off from his list of celebrities as one celebrity disposed of, he thought but little more about it. Such, we believe, are the visits of most English Christians to the so-called Holy Sepulchre.

And then he killed the other lions there: Calvary up in the gallery; the garden, so called, in which the risen Saviour addressed the women running from the sepulchre; the place where Peter's cock crew; the tomb of Nicodemus — all within the same church, all under the one roof — all at least under what should be a roof, only now it has fallen into ruin, so that these sacred places are open to the rain of heaven, and Greeks and Latins having quarrelled about the repairs, the Turks, now lords of the Holy Sepulchre, have taken the matter into their own hands, and declared that no repairs shall be done by any of them.

And then he attended the Greek mass — at least, he partly believed that he did so, somewhat doubting, for the mass was not said as are those of the Romans, out at an open altar before the people, but in a holy of holies; very holy, it may be imagined, from the manner in which the worshippers rubbed their foreheads against certain gratings, through which a tantalizing glimpse might be had of the fine things that were going on within. Had they but known it, it might all have been seen, holy of holies, head-wagging priest, idle yawning assistant, with legs stretched out, half asleep, mumblement, jumblement and all, from a little back window

in a passage opening from that Calvary gallery upstairs. From thence at least did these profane eyes look down and see all the mumblement and jumblement, which after all was little enough; but saw especially the idle clerical apprentice who, had that screen been down, and had he been called on to do his altar work before the public eye, would not have been so nearly asleep, as may perhaps be said of other clerical performers nearer home.

But Bertram's attention was mainly occupied with watching the devotions of a single woman. She was a female of one of those strange nations, decently clad, about thirty years of age, pleasant to the eye were she not so dirty, and had she not that wild look, half way between the sallow sublime and the dangerously murderous, which seems common to oriental Christians, whether men or women. Heaven might know of what sins she came there to leave the burden: heaven did know, doubtless; but from the length of her manœuvres in quitting herself of their weight, one would say that they were heavy; and yet she went through her task with composed dignity, with an alacrity that was almost joyous, and certainly with no intentional self-abasement.

Entering the church with a quick step, she took up a position as though she had selected a special stone on which to stand. There, with head erect, but bowing between each ceremony, she crossed herself three times; then sinking on her knees, thrice she pressed her forehead to the floor; then rising again, again she crossed herself. Having so done somewhat to the right of the church, but near the altar-screen, she did the same on the corresponding stone towards the left, and then again the same on a stone behind the others, but in the centre.

After this she retreated further back, and did three more such worshippings, always choosing her stone with an eye to architectural regularity; then again, getting to the backward, she did three more, thus completing her appointed task, having crossed herself thirty-six times, and pressed her head with twenty-seven pressures upon the floor. And so, having finished, she quickly withdrew. Did any slightest prayer, any idea of praying, any thought of a God giving grace and pardon if only asked to give, once enter that bowing bosom?

"Why do those Turks sit there?" said Bertram, as he left the building. Why, indeed? It was strange to see five or six stately Turks, strict children of the Prophet doubtless, sitting there within the door of this temple dedicated to the Nazarene God, sitting there and looking as though they of all men had the most right so to sit, and were most at home in so sitting; nay, they had a divan there, were drinking coffee there out of little double cups, as is the manner of these people; were not smoking, certainly, as is their manner also in all other places.

"Dem guard de keys," said the dragoman.

"Guard the keys!"

"Yes, yes; open de lock, and not let de Christian fight."

So it is. In such manner is proper, fitting, peaceable conduct maintained within the thrice Christian walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On his return to the hotel, Bertram accepted an invitation to join Miss Todd's picnic in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and then towards evening strolled up alone on to the Mount of Olives.

CHAPTER VII.

The Mount of Olives.

IF there be one place told of in holy writ, the name of which gives rise to more sacred feelings than any other, it is that of the Mount of Olives; and if there be a spot in that land of wondrous memories which does bring home to the believer in Christ some individualized remembrance of his Saviour's earthly pilgrimage, that certainly is it.

There is no doubting there, no question there whether or no the ground on which you tread was not first called "the mount" by some Byzantine Sophia; whether tradition respecting it can go back further than Constantine; whether, in real truth, that was the hill over which Jesus walked when he travelled from the house of Lazarus at Bethany to fulfil his mission in the temple. No: let me take any ordinary believing Protestant Christian to that spot, and I will as broadly defy him to doubt there as I will defy him to believe in that filthy church of the holy places.

The garden of Gethsemane near the city, "over the brook Cedron," where he left his disciples resting while he went yonder to pray; the hillside on which the angel appeared unto him, strengthening him, and whither Judas and the multitude came out to take him; Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha, "fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem," where Lazarus was raised from the dead; the spot from whence he sent for the ass and the ass's colt; the path from thence to the city by which he rode when the multitude "cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David!" the same multitude which afterwards came out

against him with staves: these places are there, now as they were in his day, very credible — nay, more, impossible not to be believed. These are the true holy places of Jerusalem, places for which Greeks and Latins do not fight, guarded by no sedate, coffee-drinking Turks, open there to all men under the fair heavens, and desolate enough, too, even in these pilgrim weeks, for any one or two who will sit there alone and ponder over the wondrous history of the city that still lies over against him.

But what is the so strong evidence of the actual identity of these places? What is it that makes me so sure that this is the Mount of Olives, and that water-channel there the brook Cedron, and the hamlet on the other side the veritable Bethany? Why is one to be so sure of these, and yet feel such an infinity of doubt as to that village of Emmaus, that valley of Ajalon, that supposed Arimathea, and the rest of them? Nay, I cannot well say, at any rate not in these light novel pages. Dr. Stanley, with considerable distinctness does say. But go and see: with the ordinary Protestant Christian seeing here will be believing, as seeing over in that church of the holy places most indisputably will be disbelieving.

Hither Bertram strolled, and, seated on the brow of the hill, looked over to Jerusalem till the short twilight of the Syrian evening had left him, and he could no longer discern the wondrous spots on which his eye still rested. Wondrous, indeed! There before him were the walls of Jerusalem, standing up erect from the hill-side — for the city is still all fenced up — stretching from hill to hill in varying but ever continued line: on the left was the Hill of Sion, David's hill, a hill still inhabited, and mainly by Jews. Here is still the Jews'

quarters, and the Jews' hospital too, tended by English doctors, nurtured also by English money; and here, too, close to David's Gate, close also to that new huge Armenian convent, shall one, somewhat closely scrutinizing among heaps of rubbish, come upon a colony of lepers. In the town, but not of it, within the walls, but forbidden all ingress to the streets, there they dwell, a race of mournfullest Pariahs. From father to son, from mother to daughter, dire disease, horrid, polluting, is handed down, a certain legacy, making the body loathsome, and likening the divine face of man to a melancholy ape. Oh! the silent sadness, the inexpressible melancholy of those wan, thoughtless, shapeless, boneless, leaden faces! To them no happy daily labour brings rest and appetite; their lot forbids them work, as it forbids all other blessings. No; on their dunghills outside their cabins there they sit in the sun, the mournfullest sight one might look on, the leper parents with their leper children, beggars by inheritance, paupers, outcasts, mutilated victims, — but still with souls, if they or any round them did but know it.

There also, directly facing him, was the Mount Moriah, also inside the walls, where Solomon built the house of the Lord, "where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." For this city, Jerusalem, had, in still more ancient days, before the thought of that temple had come into men's minds, been the city Jebus, a city even then fenced up, and here had been the threshing-floor which Ornan tendered to David without price, but which the king bought for six hundred shekels of gold.

Yes; here before him as he sat was the site of that

temple, Solomon's temple, "exceeding magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all countries," of which David had been worthy only to collect the materials. The site! nay, but there were the very stones themselves.

Seen from that hill, the city seems so close that you may lay your hand upon it. Between you and it (you, if ever you should happily come to sit there) lies that valley of Jehoshaphat, in which Miss Todd is going to celebrate her picnic. This is the valley in which the Jews most love to have themselves buried; as there, according to them, is the chosen site of the resurrection: and thus they who painfully journeying thither in their old age, and, dying there, can there be buried, will have no frightful, moles'-work, underground pilgrimage to detain them when that awful trumpet shall once more summon them to the upper world.

The air, in Syria there, is thin and clear, clouded by no fogs; and the lines of the wall and the minarets of the mosque are distinct and bright and sharp against the sky, as in the evening light one looks across from one hill to the other. The huge stones of the wall now standing, stones which made part of that ancient temple, can be counted, one above another, across the valley. Measured by a rough estimate, some of them may be two and twenty feet in length, seven in depth, and five in height, single blocks of hewn rock, cut certainly by no Turkish enterprise, by no mediæval empire, by no Roman labour. It is here, and here only, at the base of the temple, that these huge stones are to be found, at the base of what was the temple, forming part of the wall that now runs along the side of Mount Moriah, but still some forty feet above the ground.

Over them now is the Mosque of Omar — a spot to

be desecrated no more by Christian step. On the threshing-floor of Ornan, the children of Mahomet now read the Koran and sing to Allah with monotonous howl. Oh, what a history! from the treading of the Jebusite's oxen down to the first cry of the Mussulman! Yes; no Christian may now enter here, may hardly look into the walled court round the building. But dignified Turks, drinking coffee on their divan within the building, keep the keys of the Christian church — keep also the peace, lest Latin and Greek should too enthusiastically worship their strange gods.

There can be few spots on the world's surface more sacred to any Christian than that on which Bertram sat. Coming up from Bethany, over a spur on the southern side of the Mount of Olives, towards Jerusalem, the traveller, as he rises on the hill, soon catches a sight of the city, and soon again loses it. But going onward along his path, the natural road which convenience would take, he comes at length to the brow of the hill, looking downwards, and there has Mount Sion, Moriah, and the site of the temple full before him. No one travelling such a road could do other than pause at such a spot.

'Twas here that Jesus "sat upon the mount, over against the temple." There is no possibility of mistaking the place. "And as he went, one of the disciples saith unto him, 'Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here.' And Jesus answering, said unto him, 'Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.'" There are the stones, the very stones, thrown down indeed from the temple, but now standing erect as a wall, supporting Omar's mosque.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city,

and wept over it." Yes, walk up from Bethany, my reader, and thou, too, shalt behold it, even yet; a matter to be wept over even now. 'Tis hard to sit there and not weep, if a man have any heart within him, any memory of those histories. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" But thou wouldest not know. And where art thou now, O Jew? And who is it that sitteth in thy high place, howling there to Allah most un-musically?

"O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" Not silently, and in thought only, but with outspoken words and outstretched hands, so then spake our young English friend, sitting there all alone, gazing on the city. What man familiar with that history could be there and not so speak? "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

When talking over the matter with Harcourt at Oxford, and afterwards with his uncle at Hadley, Bertram had expressed a sort of half-formed wish to go into the church; not, indeed, in such a manner as to leave on the minds of either of his counsellors an idea that he would really do so; but this profession of being a parson had been one of those of which he had spoken as being in some sort desirable for himself. Now, as he sat there, looking at the once holy city, it seemed to him to be the only profession in any way desirable. He resolved that he would be a clergyman; thanked his God in that he had brought him there to this spot before it was too late; acknowledged that, doubting as he had done, he

had now at length found a Divine counsellor — one whose leading his spirit did not disdain. There he devoted himself to the ministry, declared that he, too, would give what little strength he had towards bringing the scattered chickens of the new house of Israel to that only wing which could give them the warmth of life. He would be one of the smallest, one of the least of those who would fight the good fight; but, though smallest and least, he would do it with what earnestness was in him.

Reader! you may already, perhaps, surmise that George Bertram does not become a clergyman. It is too true. That enthusiasm, strong, true, real as it was, did not last him much longer than his last walk round Jerusalem; at least, did not bide by him till he found himself once more walking on the High Street of Oxford. Very contemptible this, you will say. Yes, contemptible enough, as humanity so often is. Who amongst us have not made such resolves — some resolve of self-devotion, at the sound of the preacher's voice — and forgotten it before our foot was well over the threshold? It is so natural, that wish to do a great thing; so hard, that daily task of bathing in Jordan.

When the bright day had disappeared, all but suddenly, and he could no longer see the minarets of the mosque, Bertram descended the hill. It is but a short walk thence to Jerusalem — thence even into the centre of Jerusalem. But what a walk! To the left is the valley-side — that valley of the Resurrection — covered with tombs — flat, sturdy, short stones, each bearing a semblance, at least, of some short Hebraic epitaph, unmoved through heaven knows how many centuries! apparently immovable; the place, in this respect, being very unlike our more ornamental cemeteries. On his

right was the Mount of Olives; a mount still of olives, sprinkled over with olive-trees quite sufficiently to make it properly so called, even to this day. Then he passed by the garden of Gethsemane, now a walled-in garden, in which grow rue and other herbs; in which, also, is one fine, aged olive tree, as to which tradition of course tells wondrous tales. This garden is now in charge of an old Latin monk — a Spaniard, if I remember well — who, at least, has all a Spaniard's courtesy.

It was here, or near to this, just above, on the hill-side, if our topography be reliable, that Jesus asked them whether they could not watch one hour. Bertram, as he passed, did not take the question to himself; but he well might have done so.

Turning round the wall of the garden, on his pathway up to Stephen's Gate, the so-called tomb of the Virgin was on his right hand, with its singular, low, subterranean chapel. A very singular chapel, especially when filled to the very choking with pilgrims from those strange retreats of oriental Christendom, and when the mass is being said — inaudible, indeed, and not to be seen, at the furthest end of that dense, underground crowd, but testified to by the lighting of a thousand tapers, and by the strong desire for some flicker of the holy flame.

And then he ascended to the city, up the steep hill, the side of Mount Moriah, to St. Stephen's Gate; and there, on his left, was the entrance to Omar's mosque, guarded by fierce dervishes against pollution from stray Christian foot. Hence to his hotel every footstep was over ground sacred in some sense, but now desecrated by traditionary falsehoods. Every action of our Saviour's passion has its spot assigned to it; of every noted word

the *locale* is given. When once you are again within the walls, all is again unbelievable, fabulous, miraculous; nay, all but blasphemous. Some will say quite so. But, nevertheless, in passing by this way, should you, O reader! ever make such passage, forget not to mount to the top of Pilate's house. It is now a Turkish barrack; whether it ever were Pilate's house, or, rather, whether it stands on what was ever the site of Pilate's house or no. From hence you see down into the court of the mosque, see whatever a Christian can see of that temple's site, and see also across them gloriously to those hills of Jerusalem, Scopus, and the hill of the men of Galilee, and the Mount of Olives, and the Mount of Offence — so called because there "did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is before Jerusalem."

On his return to his inn, Bertram at once found that there had been an arrival of some importance during his absence. Waiters and boots were all busy — for there are waiters and boots at Jerusalem, much the same as at the "Saracen's Head," or "White Lion;" there is no chambermaid, however, only a chamberman. Colonel Sir Lionel Bertram was there.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sir Lionel Bertram.

THE personal peculiarities which Sir Lionel had mentioned in his letter to his son as being characteristic of himself were certainly true. He was an old, or, perhaps, rather an elderly gentleman, in a military frock, with a bald head, a hook nose, and a short allowance of teeth. But he was more than this: though elderly he

was tall and upright; he was distinguished looking, and for an old man, handsome in spite of his lost teeth; and though bald as to the top of his head, had yet enough hair to merit considerable attention, and to be the cause of considerable pride. His whiskers, also, and mustache, though iron-gray, were excellent in their way. Had his baldness been of an uglier description, or his want of teeth more disagreeably visible, he probably might not have alluded to them himself. In truth, Sir Lionel was not a little vain of his personal appearance, and thought that in the matter of nose, he was quite equal to the Duke in aristocratic firmness, and superior to Sir Charles Napier in expression and general design.

But though a vain man, Sir Lionel was too clever to let his vanity show itself in an offensive manner. The "*ars celare artem*" was his forte; and he was able to live before the world as though he never cast a thought on his coat and pantaloons, or ever did more than brush and smooth his iron-gray locks with due attention to cleanliness.

I was going to say that Sir Lionel's appearance was the best thing about him; but in saying so I should belie his manner, with which it was certainly difficult for any one to find fault. It was what the world calls happy, meaning thereby, that so great was the possessor's luck that he was able to make it pleasant to all men, and to all women — for a while. Mrs. Bertram — she had not lived to be my lady — had, I believe, not always found it so.

These, joined to a readiness in the use of one or two languages besides his own, were the qualifications which had given Sir Lionel his title, and had caused him to be employed in so many missions in so many countries;

and on duty, too, which could not be said to be of a military nature. He never made difficulties or enemies of his own, and could generally smooth down the difficulties and enemies left behind them by others, perhaps of a more sturdy temperament.

But now the catalogue of his virtues is complete. He was not a man of genius, or even a man of talent. He had performed no great service for his country; had neither proposed nor carried through any valuable project of diplomacy; nor had he shown any close insight into the habits and feelings of the people among whom he had lived. But he had been useful at a great oil-jar, from whence oil for the quiescence of troubled waters might ever and anon be forthcoming. Expediency was his god, and he had hitherto worshipped it with a successful devotion.

That he had not been a good husband has been hinted; that he had been a very indifferent father has been made apparent. But at the moment of his meeting with his son, he atoned for all his past sins in this respect by the excellence of his manner; and before the evening was over, George liked his father, who had owed him everything and given him nothing, ten times better than he had ever liked his uncle who had given him everything though he had owed him nothing.

"It's an odd place for us to have met in at last, is it not, sir?" said George. They were sitting after supper very close together on one of those stationary sofas which are found affixed to the wall in every room in the East, and the son was half holding, half caressing his father's arm. Sir Lionel, to tell the truth, did not much care for such caresses, but under the particular circumstances of this present interview he permitted it.

"You see, I'm always in odd places, George."

"You've been in Jerusalem before?"

"No, never. It's not on the road anywhere, or on any road at all, as one may well see. I never knew such a place to get to. Now there are roads of some sort even about Bagdad."

"And Damascus?"

"Oh, Damascus is a highway; but nobody comes to Jerusalem except the pilgrims, and those who like to look after the pilgrims. We are just in the thick of them now, I believe."

"Yes, sir. There are thirteen thousand here. I am sure you'll like the place. I am delighted with it, although I have been here as yet only two days."

"Perhaps more so than you will be when you have been ten."

"I don't think it. But it is not the city itself."

"No; that seems poor and dirty enough."

"I would not mind the dirt if the place were but true." Sir Lionel did not quite understand him, but he said nothing. "It is the country round, the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem that fascinates so wonderfully."

"Ah! the scenery is good, is it?"

"Well, in one way it is; but I do not mean that. I cannot explain it; but to-morrow you will go to the Mount of Olives with me."

"Mount of Olives, eh? I'm not very good at climbing up a hill, Master George; you must remember the difference between twenty-three and sixty-three. What is there to see there?"

What was there to see there! This was said in a tone which made George feel rather indisposed to describe, if describe he could, what there was there to

be seen. He had quite wit enough to perceive that his father was not enthusiastic about Bible history.

And then they changed the conversation, and began to talk about George Bertram the elder.

"It's eighteen years since I've seen my brother," said Sir Lionel. "He was usually cross enough then. I suppose he has hardly improved?"

"I can't exactly call him cross. He has been very kind to me, you know."

"Kind — well. If you are contented, I am; but considering that you are his natural heir, I don't think he has done so very much. If he means to be kind, why does he bother me every other month with a long account, of which the postage comes to heaven knows how much?"

"Ah! but, sir, I am not his heir."

"Not his heir!" said Sir Lionel, with more of sharpness in his tone than was at all usual with him; with a little sharpness also in his eye, as George quickly observed. "Not his heir — who is his heir then?"

"Ah, that I do not know. Some corporation, perhaps, or some hospital. All I know is, that I am not. That he has told me quite plainly. And he was very right to do so," added George, after a pause.

Sir Lionel repressed the exclamation of anger against his brother which was in his heart, and had all but risen to his tongue. He had not been wandering for thirty years on foreign missions for nothing. He must find out more of this lad's disposition and feelings before he spoke out plainly before him what he thought. He had intended not only that his son should be the rich uncle's heir, but the rich uncle's adopted child also; so

that some portion of that vast wealth might be made use of, certainly by George, perhaps even in some modest degree by himself, without the unnecessary delay of waiting for his brother's death. It would be bad enough to wait, seeing how probable it was that that brother might outlive himself. But now to be told not only that his hopes in this respect were vain, but that the old miser had absolutely repudiated his connection with his nephew! This was almost too much for his diplomatic equanimity. Almost, I say; for in fact he did restrain himself.

"And did he say, George, in so many words that he meant to give you nothing?"

"Yes, very plainly — in so many words. And I told him as plainly, and in as many, that I wanted nothing from him."

"Was that prudent, my boy?"

"It was the truth, sir. But I must tell you the whole. He offered me a loan of three thousand pounds —"

"Well, you took that?"

"Indeed, no. He offered it on the condition that I should be an attorney."

"An attorney! and you with a double-first?"

"Ah, he does not much value double-firsts. Of course, I was not going to make myself an attorney."

"Of course not. But what is he doing about an allowance for you?"

"He has been very liberal. He has given me a hundred and fifty a year —"

"Yes; and sent me the bill of it — with great regularity."

The son did not remind the father that all regularity

in the matter had ended there, and that the bills so sent had never been paid; but he could not help thinking that in justice he might do so.

"But that expense will soon be over, sir, as regards either you or him. The allowance will be discontinued next year."

"What! he is going to stop even that schoolboy's pittance?"

"Why not, sir? I have no claim on him. And as he has not forgotten to tell me so once or twice —"

"He was always a vulgar fellow," said Sir Lionel. "How he came to have such a spirit of trade in his very blood, I can't conceive. God knows I have none of it."

"Nor I either, sir."

"Well, I hope not. But does he expect you to live upon air? This is bad news, George — very bad."

"Of course I have always intended to go into a profession. I have never looked at it in the same light as you do. I have always intended to make my own way, and have no doubt that I shall do so. I have quite made up my mind about it now."

"About what, George?"

"I shall go into orders, and take a college living."

"Orders!" said Sir Lionel; and he expressed more surprise and almost more disgust at this idea than at that other one respecting the attorney scheme.

"Yes; I have been long doubting; but I think I have made up my mind."

"Do you mean that you wish to be a parson, and that after taking a double-first?"

"I don't see what the double-first has to do with it, sir. The only objection I have is the system of the establishment. I do not like the established church."

"Then why go into it?" said Sir Lionel, not at all understanding the nature of his son's objection.

"I love our liturgy, and I like the ritual; but what we want is the voluntary principle. I do not like to put myself in a position which I can, in fact, hold whether I do the duties of it or no. Nor do I wish —"

"Well; I understand very little about all that; but, George, I had hoped something better for you. Now, the army is a beggarly profession unless a man has a private fortune: but, upon my word, I look on the church as the worst of the two. A man *may* be a bishop of course; but I take it he has to eat a deal of dirt first."

"I don't mean to eat any dirt," said the son.

"Nor to be a bishop, perhaps," replied the father.

They were quite unable to understand each other on this subject. In Sir Lionel's view of the matter, a profession was — a profession. The word was understood well enough throughout the known world. It signified a calling by which a gentleman, not born to the inheritance of a gentleman's allowance of good things, might ingeniously obtain the same by some exercise of his abilities. The more of these good things that might be obtained, the better the profession; the easier the labour also, the better the profession; the less restriction that might be laid on a man in his pleasurable enjoyment of the world, the better the profession. This was Sir Lionel's view of a profession, and it must be acknowledged that, though his view was commonplace, it was also common sense; that he looked at the matter as a great many people look at it; and that his ideas were at any rate sufficiently intelligible. But George Bertram's view was different, and much less easy of ex-

planation. He had an idea that in choosing a profession he should consider, not so much how he should get the means of spending his life, but how he should in fact spend it. He would have, in making this choice, to select the pursuit to which he would devote that amount of power and that amount of life which God should allot to him. Fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, guardians and grandfathers, was not this a singular view for a young man to take in looking at such a subject?

But in truth George was somewhat afflicted by a *tête monté* in this matter. I say afflicted, because, having imagination and ideality to lead him to high views, he had not a sufficient counter-balance in his firmness of character. If his father was too mundane, he was too transcendental. As for instance, he approved at the present moment, in theory, of the life of a parish clergyman; but could he have commenced the life to-morrow, he would at once have shrunk from its drudgery.

They did not understand each other; perceiving which, Sir Lionel gave up the subject. He was determined not to make himself disagreeable to his son. He, at any rate, intended to make him no allowance, to give him no fortune, and was aware, therefore, that he had no right to interfere otherwise than as his advice might be asked. Nor indeed had he any wish to do so, if he could only instil into the young man's mind a few — not precepts; precepts are harsh and disagreeable — a few comfortable friendly hints as to the tremendous importance of the game which might be played with Mr. George Bertram senior. If he could only do this pleasantly, and without offence to his son, he would attempt nothing further.

He turned the conversation, and they talked agree-

ably on other matters — of Oxford, of the Wilkinsons, of Harcourt, and by degrees also a little of uncle George.

“What sort of a house does my brother keep at Hadley — eh, George? Dull enough it used to be.”

“Well; it is dull. Not that he is dull himself; I can always talk to my uncle when he will talk to me.”

“Sees no company, I suppose?”

“Not much.”

“Never goes into society?”

“He dines out in London sometimes; and sometimes gives dinners too.”

“What! at taverns?”

“Yes; at Blackwall, or Greenwich, or some of those places. I have been at his dinners, and he never spares anything.”

“He doesn't feel his years, then? He's not infirm? no rheumatism or anything of that sort — strong on his legs, eh?”

“As strong as you are, sir.”

“He's ten years my senior, you know.”

“Yes, I know he is. He's not nearly so young a man as you are; but I really think he is as strong. He's a wonderful man for his years, certainly.”

“I'm delighted to hear it,” said Sir Lionel. A keen judge of character, however, scrutinizing the colonel's face closely, would not then have read much warm delight therein depicted.

“You rather like him on the whole, then — eh, George?”

“Well; I really think I do. I am sure I ought to like him. But —”

“Well, George; speak out. You and I need have no secrets.”

"Secrets, no; I've no secret. My uncle has a way of saying too much himself about what he does for one."

"Sends in the bill too often — eh, George?"

"If it is to be a bill, let him say so. I for one shall not blame him. There is no reason he should give me anything. But situated as I have been at Oxford, it would have been almost absurd in me to refuse his allowance —"

"Quite absurd."

"When he knew I was coming out to you, he made Pritchett — you know Pritchett?"

"And his handwriting — very well indeed."

"He made Pritchett put three hundred pounds to my credit; that was over and above my allowance. Well, I did almost make up my mind to return that; as it is, I have not touched it, and I think I shall repay it."

"For heaven's sake do no such thing. It would be an offence which he would never forgive." Sir Lionel did say so much with something of parental energy in his tone and manner.

"Yes, sir; but to be told of it!"

"But he does not ask you to pay it him back again?"

"If he asks you; — is not that the same thing? But you hardly understand me, or him either."

"I think I understand him, George. I wonder whether they could give us a cup of coffee here?"

"Of course they can:" and George rang the bell.

"Perhaps so; but as far as my experience goes, wherever Englishmen frequent, there the coffee is spoilt. Englishmen, as far as I can see, have a partiality for chicory, but none at all for coffee."

“What I mean, sir, is this. Connected as I and my uncle are together, seeing that he has all my life —” Here George paused a moment, for what he was about to say might have seemed to imply a censure on his father.

“Paid your school-bills, and all that sort of thing,” filled in Sir Lionel.

“Yes; as he has always done that, it seemed so natural that I should take what he gave me.”

“Quite natural. You could have done nothing else.”

“And now he speaks of it as though — as though; — of course I am under an obligation to him — a very deep obligation. I understand that, and should not fret at it. But he thinks of it as though I had been to blame in spending his money. When I see him next, he’ll say something of the same sort about that three hundred pounds. All I can do is to remind him that I did not ask for it, and tell him that he may have it back again.”

“Do nothing of the kind, George,” said Sir Lionel, who regarded as little less than lunacy on his son’s part this declared intention to refund money to a rich man. “I know very well what you mean. It is disagreeable to be reminded of money that you have spent.”

“But I haven’t spent it.”

“Well, of money that you have received. But what can you do? It is not your fault. As you truly say, it would be absurd and ungrateful too if you were to decline to take such trifles from your own uncle; especially seeing what he has done for you. It is his manner, and that was always disagreeable; especially in money matters.” And so having given to his son the best advice he had to offer, Sir Lionel sipped his coffee. “Very bad — very bad, indeed; it always is at these English places.

If I could have my own way, I would always keep out of English haunts." In this respect Sir Lionel had had his own way during the greater portion of his life.

Before they parted for the evening, George communicated to his father the great fact of Miss Todd's picnic as settled for the next day; and Sir Lionel expressed himself as willing to make one of the party if Miss Todd could be induced to extend to him the light of her countenance. On this head young Bertram, though his own acquaintance had certainly been short, thought that he might take on himself to answer. People soon get intimate with each other at such places as Jerusalem. When you have been up the Great Pyramid with a lady, the chances are you know more about her than you would do from a year's acquaintance fostered by a dozen London parties; and a journey up the Nile with a man may be considered equal to three years spent together at the same college, — that is, if the fellow-travellers be young. After a certain age, men never become really intimate, let their relations with each other be ever so close.

"There will be a Miss Baker there, sir, who says she knows you; and a Miss Waddington, a very fine girl, who at any rate knows my name."

"What! Caroline Waddington?"

"Yes, Caroline Waddington."

"She is a ward of your uncle."

"So Miss Baker tells me; but I never heard my uncle mention them. Indeed, he never mentions anything."

"It will be very desirable that you should know Miss Waddington. There is no saying what your uncle may do with his money. Yes, I'll go to the picnic; only I hope the place is not distant." So that matter was settled.

CHAPTER IX.

Miss Todd's Picnic.

THAT matter of obtaining permission for Sir Lionel to join the picnic was not found difficult of arrangement. Good-looking, pleasant-mannered Sir Lionels, who bear the Queen's commission, and have pleasant military ways with them, are welcome enough at such parties as these, even though they be sixty years of age. When George mentioned the matter to Miss Todd, that lady declared herself delighted. She had heard, she said, of the distinguished arrival at the hotel, but she had been almost afraid to ask such a man as Sir Lionel to join their foolish little party. Then Miss Baker, who in this affair bore the next authority to Miss Todd, declared that she had intended to ask him, taking upon herself the freedom of an old acquaintance; and so that matter was arranged.

The party was not to be a large one. There was Miss Todd, the compounder of it, a maiden lady, fat, fair, and perhaps almost forty; a jolly jovial lady, intent on seeing the world, and indifferent to many of its prejudices and formal restraints. "If she threw herself in Sir Lionel's way, people would of course say that she wanted to marry him; but she did not care a straw what people said; if she found Sir Lionel agreeable, she would throw herself in his way." So she told Miss Baker — with perhaps more courage than the occasion required.

Then there was Mrs. and Miss Jones. Miss Jones was the young lady who lost her parasol on the Mount of Offence, and so recklessly charged the Arab children of Siloam with the theft. Mr. Jones was also in Jeru-

salem, but could not be persuaded to attend at Miss Todd's behest. He was steadily engaged in antiquarian researches, being minded to bring out to the world some startling new theory as to certain points in Bible chronology and topography. He always went about the city with a trowel and a big set of tablets; and certain among the more enthusiastic of the visitors to Jerusalem had put him down as an infidel.

There were also Mr. and Mrs. Hunter — a bridegroom and bride, now on their wedding trip; a somewhat fashionable couple, who were both got up with considerable attention as to oriental costume. Mrs. Hunter seemed to think a good deal about her trousers, and Mr. Hunter's mind was equally taken up with the fact that he had ceased to wear any. They had a knowing way of putting on their turbans, and carried their sashes gracefully; those, however, who had seen Mr. Hunter roll himself into his sash, were of opinion that sooner or later he would suffer from vertigo in his head. Miss Baker and her niece had fallen in with these people, and were considered to be of the same party.

There was a clergyman to be there, one Mr. Cruse, the gentleman who had been so keenly annoyed at the absence of potatoes from the dinner board. He was travelling in charge of a young gentleman of fortune, a Mr. Pott, by whose fond parents the joint expense of the excursion was defrayed. Mr. Cruse was a University man, of course; had been educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and piqued himself much on being far removed from the dangers of Puseyism. He was a man not of a happy frame of mind, and seemed to find that from Dan to Beersheba everything in truth was barren. He was good-looking, unmarried, not without some talent,

and seemed to receive from the ladies there assembled more attention than his merits altogether deserved.

Mr. M'Gabbery had talked of not going, but had been over-persuaded by the good-natured Miss Todd. He had become almost overwhelmed by the intensity of his feelings in regard to the sacred associations of the place, since George Bertram had contrived to seat himself between Miss Baker and Miss Waddington. Up to that moment, no one had been merrier than he. He had, so he had flattered himself, altogether cut out Mr. Cruse in that special quarter, the good graces namely of those two ladies, and had been prepared to take on his own shoulders all the hard work of the picnic. But now things were altered with him; he had some doubts whether the sacredness of the valley would not be desecrated by such a proceeding, and consulted Mr. Cruse on the matter. Hitherto these gentlemen had not been close friends; but now they allied themselves as against a common enemy. Mr. Cruse did not care much for associations, seemed indeed to think that any special attention to sacred places savoured of idolatry, and professed himself willing to eat his dinner on any of the hills or in any of the valleys round Jerusalem. Fortified with so good an opinion, and relying on the excellence of his purpose, Mr. M'Gabbery gave way, and renewed his offers of assistance to Miss Todd.

There was also Mr. Pott, Mr. Cruse's young charge, the son of a man largely engaged in the linen trade; a youth against whom very little can be alleged. His time at present was chiefly given up to waiting on Miss Jones; and, luckier in this respect than his tutor, Mr. Cruse, he had no rival to interfere with his bliss.

Miss Baker and Miss Waddington made up the party.

Of the former, little more need be said, and that little should be all in her praise. She was a lady-like, soft-mannered, easy-tempered woman, devoted to her niece, but not strongly addicted to personal exertions on her own part. The fact that she was now at Jerusalem, so far away from her own comfortable drawing-room, sufficiently proved that she *was* devoted to her niece.

And now for Caroline Waddington, our *donna primissima*. Her qualities, attributes, and virtues must be given more in detail than those of her companions at the picnic, seeing that she is destined to fill a prominent place upon our canvas.

At the time of which we are speaking, she might perhaps be twenty years of age; but her general appearance, her figure, and especially the strong character marked in her face, would have led one to suspect that she was older. She was certainly at that time a beautiful girl — very beautiful, handsome in the outline of her face, graceful and dignified in her mien, nay, sometimes almost majestic — a Juno rather than a Venus. But any Paris who might reject her, awed by the rigour of her dignity, would know at the time that he was wrong in his judgment. She was tall, but not so tall as to be unfeminine in her height. Her head stood nobly on her shoulders, giving to her bust that ease and grace of which sculptors are so fond, and of which tight-laced stays are so utterly subversive. Her hair was very dark — not black, but the darkest shade of brown, and was worn in simple rolls on the side of her face. It was very long and very glossy, soft as the richest silk, and gifted apparently with a delightful aptitude to keep itself in order. No stray jagged ends would show themselves if by chance she removed her bonnet, nor did it even look as though

it had been prematurely crushed and required to be afresh puffed out by some head-dresser's mechanism. She had the forehead of a Juno; white, broad, and straight; not shining as are some foreheads, which seem as though an insufficient allowance of skin had been vouchsafed for their covering. It was a forehead on which an angel might long to press his lips — if angels have lips, and if, as we have been told, they do occasionally descend from their starry heights to love the daughters of men.

Nor would an angel with a shade of human passion in his temperament have been contented with her forehead. Her mouth had all the richness of youth, and the full enticing curves and ruby colour of Anglo-Saxon beauty. Caroline Waddington was no pale, passionless goddess; her graces and perfections were human, and in being so were the more dangerous to humanity. Her forehead we have said, or should have said, was perfect; we dare not affirm quite so much in praise of her mouth: there was sometimes a hardness there, not in the lines of the feature itself, but in the expression which it conveyed, a want of tenderness, perhaps of trust, and too much self-confidence, it may be, for a woman's character. The teeth within it, however, were never excelled by any that ever graced the face of a woman.

Her nose was not quite Grecian; had it been so, her face might have been fairer, but it would certainly have been less expressive. Nor could it be called *retroussé*, but it had the slightest possible tendency in that direction; and the nostrils were more open, more ready to breathe forth flashes of indignation than is ever the case with a truly Grecian nose.

The contour of her face was admirable: nothing could exceed in beauty the lines of her cheeks or the shape

and softness of her chin. Those who were fastidious in their requirements might object to them that they bore no dimple; but after all, it is only prettiness that requires a dimple: full-blown beauty wants no such adventitious aid.

But her eyes! Miss Waddington's eyes! The eyes are the poet's strongest fortress; it is for their description that he most gathers up his forces and puts forth all his strength. What of her eyes? Well, her eyes were bright enough, large enough, well set in her head. They were clever eyes too — nay, honest eyes also, which is better. But they were not softly feminine eyes. They never hid themselves beneath their soft fringes when too curiously looked into, as a young girl at her window half hides herself behind her curtain. They were bold eyes, I was going to say, but the word would signify too much in their dispraise; daring eyes, I would rather say, courageous, expressive, never shrinking, sometimes also suspicious. They were fit rather for a man than for so beautiful a girl as our Caroline Waddington.

But perhaps the most wonderful grace about her was her walk. "*Vera incessu patuit Dea.*" Alas! how few women can walk! how many are wilfully averse to attempting any such motion! They scuffle, they trip, they trot, they amble, they waddle, they crawl, they drag themselves on painfully, as though the flounces and furbelows around them were a burden too heavy for easy, graceful motion; but, except in Spain, they rarely walk. In this respect our heroine was equal to an Andalusian.

Such and so great were Miss Waddington's outward graces. Some attempt must also be made to tell of those inner stores with which this gallant vessel was freighted; for, after all, the outward bravery is not everything with

a woman. It may be that a man in selecting his wife rarely looks for much else; — for that in addition, of course, to money; but though he has looked for little else, some other things do frequently force themselves on his attention soon after the knot is tied; and as Caroline Waddington will appear in these pages as wife as well as maid, as a man's companion as well as his plaything, it may be well to say now something as to her fitness for such occupation.

We will say, then, that she was perhaps even more remarkable for her strength of mind than for her beauty of person. At present, she was a girl of twenty, and hardly knew her own power; but the time was to come when she should know it and should use it. She was possessed of a stubborn, enduring, manly will; capable of conquering much, and not to be conquered easily. She had a mind which, if rightly directed, might achieve great and good things, but of which it might be predicted that it would certainly achieve something, and that if not directed for good, it might not improbably direct itself for evil. It was impossible that she should ever grow into a piece of domestic furniture, contented to adapt itself to such uses as a marital tyrant might think fit to require of it. If destined to fall into good hands, she might become a happy, loving wife; but it was quite as possible that she should be neither happy nor loving.

Like most other girls, she no doubt thought much of what might be her lot in love — thought much of loving, though she had never yet loved. It has been said that her turn of mind was manly; but it must not on that account be imagined that her wishes and aspirations were at present other than feminine. Her heart and feelings were those of a girl, at any rate as yet; but

her will and disposition were masculine in their firmness.

For one so young, she had great and dangerous faults of character — great, as being injurious to her happiness; and dangerous, as being likely to grow with her years. Her faults were not young faults. Though true herself, she was suspicious of others; though trustworthy, she was not trustful: and what person who is not trustful ever remains trustworthy? Who can be fit for confidence who cannot himself confide? She was imperious, too, when occasion offered itself to her proud spirit. With her aunt, whom she loved, she was not so. Her she was content to persuade, using a soft voice and a soft eye; but with those whom she could not persuade and wished to rule, her voice was sometimes stern enough, and her eye far from soft.

She was a clever girl, capable of talking well, and possessed of more information than most young ladies of the same age. She had been at an excellent school, if any schools are really excellent for young ladies; but there was, nevertheless, something in her style of thought hardly suitable to the softness of girlhood. She could speak of sacred things with a mocking spirit, the mockery of philosophy rather than of youth; she had little or no enthusiasm, though there was passion enough deep seated in her bosom; she suffered from no transcendentalism; she saw nothing through a halo of poetic inspiration: among the various tints of her atmosphere there was no rose colour; she preferred wit to poetry; and her smile was cynical rather than joyous.

Now I have described my *donna primissima*, with hardly sufficient detail for my own satisfaction, doubtless with far too much for yours, oh, my reader! It must be

added, however, that she was an orphan; that she lived entirely with her aunt, Miss Baker; that her father had been in early life a sort of partner with Mr. George Bertram; that Mr. George Bertram was her guardian, though he had hitherto taken but little trouble in looking after her; whatever trouble he may have taken in looking after her money; and that she was possessed of a moderate fortune, say about four thousand pounds.

A picnic undertaken from Jerusalem must in some respects be unlike any picnic elsewhere. Ladies cannot be carried to it in carriages, because at Jerusalem there are no carriages; nor can the provisions be conveyed even in carts, for at Jerusalem there are no carts. The stock of comestibles was therefore packed in hampers on a camel's back, and sent off to the valley by one route, whereas Miss Todd and her friends went on horseback and on donkey-back by another and a longer road.

It may as well be mentioned that Miss Todd was a little ashamed of the magnitude to which her undertaking had attained. Her original plan had merely been this: — that she and a few others should ride through the valleys round the city, and send a basket of sandwiches to meet them at some hungry point on the road. Now there was a *cortège* of eleven persons, exclusive of the groom-boys, a boiled ham, sundry chickens, hard-boiled eggs, and champagne. Miss Todd was somewhat ashamed of this. Here, in England, one would hardly inaugurate a picnic to Kensal Green, or the Highgate Cemetery, nor select the tombs of our departed great ones as a shelter under which to draw one's corks. But Miss Todd boasted of high spirits: when this little difficulty had been first suggested to her by Mr. M'Gabbery, she had scoffed at it,

and had enlarged her circle in a spirit of mild bravado. Then chance had done more for her; and now she was doomed to preside over a large party of revellers immediately over the ashes of James the Just.

None but Englishmen or Englishwomen do such things as this. To other people is wanting sufficient pluck for such enterprises; is wanting also a certain mixture of fun, honest independence, and bad taste. Let us go into some church on the Continent — in Italy, we will say — where the walls of the churches still boast of the great works of the great masters. — Look at that man standing on the very altar-step while the priest is saying his mass; look at his gray shooting-coat, his thick shoes, his wide-awake hat stuck under one arm, and his stick under the other, while he holds his opera-glass to his eyes. How he shuffles about to get the best point of sight, quite indifferent as to clergy or laity! All that bell-ringing, incense-flinging, and breast-striking is nothing to him: he has paid dearly to be brought thither; he has paid the guide who is kneeling a little behind him; he is going to pay the sacristan who attends him; he is quite ready to pay the priest himself, if the priest would only signify his wish that way; but he has come there to see that fresco, and see it he will: respecting that he will soon know more than either the priest or his worshippers. Perhaps some servant of the church, coming to him with submissive, almost suppliant gesture, begs him to step back just for one moment. The lover of art glares at him with insulted look, and hardly deigns to notice him further: he merely turns his eye to his Murray, puts his hat down on the altar-step, and goes on studying his subject. All the world — German, Frenchman, Italian, Spaniard — all men of all nations know that

that ugly gray shooting-coat must contain an Englishman. He cares for no one. If any one upsets him, he can do much towards righting himself; and if more be wanted, has he not Lord Malmesbury or Lord Clarendon at his back? But what would this Englishman say if his place of worship were disturbed by some wandering Italian?

It was somewhat in this way with Miss Todd. She knew that what she was about to do was rather absurd, but she had the blood of the Todds warm at her heart. The Todds were a people not easily frightened, and Miss Todd was not going to disgrace her lineage. True, she had not intended to feed twelve people over a Jewish sepulchre, but as the twelve people had assembled, looking to her for food, she was not the woman to send them away fasting: so she gallantly led the way through the gate of Jaffa, Sir Lionel attending her on a donkey.

When once out of the town, they turned sharp to the left. Their path lay through the valley of Gihon, through the valley of Hinnom, down among those strange, open sepulchres, deeply excavated in caves on the mountain-sides — sepulchres quite unlike those below in the valley of Jehoshaphat. There they are all covered, each stone marking a grave; but here they lie in open catacombs — in caves, at least, of which the entrance is open. The hardy stranger crawling in may lay his hand within the cell — nay, may crawl up into it if he will — in which have mouldered the bones of some former visitor to Jerusalem. For this, so saith tradition, is the field purchased with the reward of iniquity. It was the burying place for strangers, Aceldama, the field of blood.

But where be these bones now? for the catacombs are mostly empty. Mr. Pott, descending as far as he

could into the deepest of them, did at last bring forth a skull and two parts of a back-bone; did present the former with much grace to Miss Jones, who, on beholding it, very nearly fell from off her donkey.

"For shame, Pott," said Mr. Cruse. "How could you handle anything so disgusting? You are desecrating the grave of some unfortunate Mussulman who has probably died within the last fifty years." Mr. Cruse was always intent on showing that he believed none of the traditions of the country.

"It was quite dreadful of you, Mr. Pott," said Miss Jones; "quite dreadful! Indeed, I don't know what you would not do. But I am quite sure he was never a Mahomedan."

"He looked like a Jew, didn't he?" said Pott.

"Oh! I did not see the face; but he was certainly either a Jew or a Christian. Only think. Perhaps those remains have been there for nearly eighteen hundred years. Is it not wonderful? Mamma, it was just here that I lost my parasol."

Sir Lionel had headed the cavalcade with Miss Todd, but George Bertram was true to his new friends, Miss Baker and Miss Waddington. So also, for a time, were Mr. M'Gabbery and Mr. Cruse. As the aunt and niece rode beside each other, a great part of this gallant attention fell upon the former. Indeed, the easiest way of addressing the beauty was often found to be through the beauty's aunt; and it may be doubted whether Mr. M'Gabbery would not have retreated long since in despair, but for the scintillations of civility which fell to him from Miss Baker's good-humour. He had had the good fortune of some previous days' journeying with them on horseback through the desert, and had found

that privilege gave him an inestimable advantage over Mr. Cruse. Why should it not also suffice as regarded this new comer? He had held much commune with himself on the subject that morning; had called himself to task for his own pusillanimity, and had then fortified his courage with the old reflection about fair ladies and faint hearts — and also with a glass of brandy. He was therefore disposed to make himself very unpleasant to poor George if occasion should require.

“How delighted you must have been to see your father?” said Miss Baker, who, though her temper would not permit her to be uncivil to Mr. M'Gabbery, would readily have dispensed with that gentleman's attendance.

“Indeed, I was. I never saw him before, you know.”

“Never saw him, your father, before, Mr. Bertram?” said Caroline. “Why, aunt Mary says that I have seen him.”

“I never saw him to remember him. One doesn't count one's acquaintance before seven or eight years of age.”

“Your memory must be very bad, then,” said Mr. M'Gabbery, “or your childhood's love for your father very slight. I perfectly remember the sweetness of my mother's caresses when I was but three years old. There is nothing, Miss Waddington, to equal the sweetness of a mother's kisses.

“I never knew them,” said she. “But I have found an aunt's do nearly as well.”

“A grandmother's are not bad,” said Bertram, looking very grave.

“I can never think of my mother without emotion,” continued Mr. M'Gabbery. “I remember, as though it

were yesterday, when I first stood at her knee, with a picture-book on her lap before me. It is the furthest point to which memory carries me — and the sweetest.”

“I can remember back much before that,” said George; “a great deal before that. Listen to this, Miss Baker. My earliest impression was a hatred of dishonesty.”

“I hope your views have not altered since,” said Caroline.

“Very materially, I fear. But I must tell you about my memory. I was lying once in my cradle —”

“You don’t mean to tell me you remember that?” said M’Gabbery.

“Perfectly, as you do the picture-book. Well, there I was lying, Miss Baker, with my little eyes wide open. It is astonishing how much babies see, though people never calculate on their having eyes at all. I was lying on my back, staring at the mantelpiece, on which my mother had left her key-basket.”

“You remember, of course, that it was her key-basket?” said Miss Waddington, with a smile that made M’Gabbery clench his walking-stick in his hand.

“Perfectly; because she always kept her halfpence there also. Well, there was a nursery-girl who used to be about me in those days. I distinctly saw her go to that basket, Miss Baker, and take out a penny; and I then made up my mind that the first use I would make of my coming speech should be to tell my mother. That, I think, is the furthest point to which my memory carries me.”

The ladies laughed heartily, but Mr. M’Gabbery frowned bitterly. “You must have dreamt it,” said he.

"It is just possible," said George; "but I don't think it. Come, Miss Waddington, let us have your earliest recollections."

"Ah! mine will not be interesting. They do not go back at all so far. I think they have reference to bread and butter."

"I remember being very angry," said Miss Baker, "because papa prophesied that I should be an old maid. It was very hard on me, for his prophecy no doubt brought about the fact."

"But the fact is no fact as yet," said Mr. M'Gabbery, with a smirking gallantry for which he ought to have been kicked.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. M'Gabbery," said Miss Waddington. "It is quite an established fact. My aunt will never have my consent to marry; and I am sure she will never dream of such a thing without it."

"And so Mr. M'Gabbery's hopes in that direction are all at an end," said George, who was now able to speak to Caroline without being heard by the others.

"I declare I think he has entertained some such idea, for he never leaves my aunt alone for a minute. He has been very civil, very; but, Mr. Bertram, perhaps you know that a very civil man may be a bore."

"He always is, I think. No man is really liked who is ever ready to run on messages and tie up parcels. It is generally considered that a man knows his own value, and that, if he be willing to do such work, such work is fit for him."

"You never do anything to oblige, then?"

"Very rarely; at least, not in the little domestic line. If one could have an opportunity of picking a lady out of a fire, or saving her from the clutches of an

Italian bravo, or getting her a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, one would be inclined to do it. In such cases, there would be no contempt mixed up with the lady's gratitude. But ladies are never really grateful to a man for turning himself into a flunky."

"Ah! I like to be attended to all the same."

"Then there is Mr. M'Gabbery. Half a smile will keep him at your feet the whole day."

Mr. M'Gabbery and poor Miss Baker were now walking behind them, side by side. But his felicity in this respect was not at all sufficient for that gentleman. In their long journey from Egypt, he and Miss Waddington had always been within speaking distance; and who was the stranger of to-day that was thus to come and separate them?

"Miss Waddington," he cried, "do you remember when your horse stumbled in the sand at El Arish! Ah! what a pleasant day that was!"

"But you have not recalled it by a very pleasant incident. I was very nearly being thrown out of my saddle."

"And how we had to wait for our dinner at Gaza till the camels came up?" And Mr. M'Gabbery, urging on his horse, brought him up once more abreast with that of Miss Waddington.

"I shall soon have as great a horror of Gaza as Samson had," said she, *sotto voce*. "I almost feel myself already in bonds under Philistian yoke whenever it is mentioned."

"Talking of recollections, that journey will certainly be among the sunniest of my life's memories," said Mr. M'Gabbery.

"It was sunny, certainly," said Miss Waddington; for the heat of the desert had been oppressive.

"Ah! and so sweet! That encamping in your own tent; preparing your own meals; having everything, as it were, within yourself. Civilized life has nothing to offer equal to that. A person who has only gone from city to city, or from steamboat to steamboat, knows nothing of oriental life. Does he, Miss Waddington?" This was intended as a blow at Bertram, who had got to Jerusalem without sleeping under canvas.

"What ignorant wretches the natives must be!" said George; "for they apparently sleep as regularly in their own beds as any stupid Christian in England."

"I am not sure that even Mr. M'Gabbery would admire the tents so much if he had not some Christian comforts along with him."

"His brandy-flask and dressing-case, for instance," said George.

"Yes; and his mattress and blankets," said Caroline.

"His potted meat and preserved soup."

"And especially his pot to boil his potatoes in."

"That was Mr. Cruse," said Mr. M'Gabbery, quite angrily. "For myself, I do not care a bit about potatoes."

"So it was, Mr. M'Gabbery; and I beg your pardon. It is Mr. Cruse whose soul is among the potatoes. But, if I remember right, it was you who were so angry when the milk ran out." Then Mr. M'Gabbery again receded, and talked to Mrs. Jones about his associations.

"How thoroughly the Turks and Arabs beat us in point of costume," said Mrs. Hunter to Mr. Cruse.

"It will be very hard, at any rate, for any of them to beat you," said the tutor. "Since I have been out here, I have seen no one adopt their ways with half as much grace as you do."

Mrs. Hunter looked down well pleased to her ankles, which were covered, and needed to be covered, by no riding-habit. "I was not thinking so much of myself as of Mr. Hunter. Women, you know, Mr. Cruse, are nothing in this land."

"Except when imported from Christendom, Mrs. Hunter."

"But I was speaking of gentlemen's toilets. Don't you think the Turkish dress very becoming? I declare, I shall never bear to see Charles again in a coat and waistcoat and trousers."

"Nor he you in an ordinary silk gown, puffed out with crinoline."

"Well, I suppose we must live in the East altogether then. I am sure I should not object. I know one thing — I shall never endure to put a bonnet on my head again. By-the-by, Mr. Cruse, who is this Sir Lionel Bertram that has just come? Is he a baronet?"

"Oh dear, no; nothing of that sort, I imagine. I don't quite know who he is; but that young man is his son."

"They say he's very clever, don't they?"

"He has that sort of boy's cleverness, I dare say, which goes towards taking a good degree." Mr. Cruse himself had not shone very brightly at the University.

"Miss Waddington seems very much smitten with him; don't you think so?"

"Miss Waddington is a beautiful girl; and variable — as beautiful girls sometimes are."

"Mr. Cruse, don't be satirical."

"Praise undeserved is satire in disguise," said Mr. Cruse, not quite understanding, himself, why he made

the quotation. But it did exceedingly well. Mrs. Hunter smiled sweetly on him, said that he was a dangerous man, and that no one would take him to be a clergyman; upon which Mr. Cruse begged that she would spare his character.

And now they had come to the fountain of Enrogel, and having dismounted from their steeds, stood clustering about the low wall which surrounds the little pool of water.

"This, Sir Lionel," said Miss Todd, acting cicerone, "is the fountain of Enrogel, which you know so well by name."

"Ah!" said Sir Lionel. "It seems rather dirty at present; doesn't it?"

"That is because the water is so low. When there has been much rain, there is quite a flood here. Those little gardens and fields there are the most fertile spot round Jerusalem, because there is so much irrigation here."

"That's where the Jerusalem artichokes are grown, I suppose."

"It is a singular fact, that though there are plenty of artichokes, that special plant is unknown," said Mr. M'Gabbery. "Do you remember, Miss Waddington —"

But Miss Waddington had craftily slipped round the corner of the wall, and was now admiring Mrs. Hunter's costume, on the other side of the fountain.

"And that is the village of Siloam," continued Miss Todd, pointing to a range of cabins, some of which seemed to be cut out of the rock on the hill-side, on her right hand as she looked up towards the valley of Jehoshaphat. "And that is the pool of Siloam, Sir Lionel; we shall go up there."

"Ah!" said Sir Lionel again.

"Is it not interesting?" said Miss Todd; and a smiling gleam of satisfaction spread itself across her jovial ruddy face.

"Very," said Sir Lionel. "But don't you find it rather hot?"

"Yes, it is warm. But one gets accustomed to that. I do so like to find myself among these names which used to torment me so when I was a child. I had all manner of mysterious ideas about the pool of Bethesda and the beautiful gate, about the hill of Sion, and Gehenna, and the brook Cedron. I had a sort of belief that these places were scattered wide over the unknown deserts of Asia; and now, Sir Lionel, I am going to show them all to you in one day."

"Would they were scattered wider, that the pleasure might last the longer," said Sir Lionel, taking off his hat as he bowed to Miss Todd, but putting it on again very quickly, as he felt the heat.

"Yes; but the mystery, the beautiful mystery, is all gone," said Miss Jones. "I shall never feel again about these places as I used to do."

"Nor I either, I hope," said Mr. Pott. "I always used to catch it for scripture geography."

"Yes, the mystery of your childhood will be gone, Miss Jones," said Mr. M'Gabbery, who, in his present state of hopelessness as regarded Miss Waddington, was ill-naturedly interfering with young Pott. "The mystery of your childhood will be gone; but another mystery, a more matured mystery, will be created in your imagination. Your associations will henceforth bear a richer tint."

"I don't know that," said Miss Jones, who did not

approve of being interfered with a bit better than did Mr. Pott.

And then they remounted, and the cavalcade moved on. They turned up the rising ground towards the city wall, and leaving on the left the gardens in which Jerusalem artichokes did not grow, they came to the pool of Siloam. Here most of them again descended, and climbed down to the water, which bursts out from its underground channel into a cool, but damp and somewhat dirty ravine.

"You are my guide, Miss Todd, in everything," said Sir Lionel. "Is it necessary that I should study scripture geography down in that hole? If you bid me, I'll do it."

"Well, Sir Lionel, I'll let you off; the more especially as I have been down there myself already, and got dreadfully draggled in doing so. Oh! I declare, there is Miss Waddington in the water."

Miss Waddington was in the water. Not in such a manner, gentlest of readers, as to occasion the slightest shock to your susceptible nerves; but in such a degree as to be very disagreeable to her boots, and the cause of infinite damage to her stockings. George Bertram had handed her down, and when in the act of turning round to give similar assistance to some other adventurous lady, had left her alone on the slippery stones. Of course any young lady would take advantage of such an unguarded moment to get into some catastrophe.

Alas! and again alas! Unfortunately, Mr. M'Gabbery had been the first to descend to the pool. He had calculated, cunningly enough, that in being there, seeing that the space was not very large, the duty must fall to his lot of receiving into his arms any such ladies as

chose to come down — Miss Waddington, who was known to be very adventurous, among the number. He was no sooner there, however, than George Bertram jumped in almost upon him, and hitherto he had not had an opportunity of touching Miss Waddington's glove. But now it seemed that fortune was to reward him.

“Good heavens!” cried Mr. M'Gabbery, as he dashed boldly into the flood, thereby splashing the water well up into Caroline's face. There was not much occasion for this display, for the gentleman could have assisted the lady quite as effectually without even wetting his toes; but common misfortunes do create common sympathies — or at least they should do. Would it not be natural that Miss Waddington and Mr. M'Gabbery, when both wet through up to their knees, should hang together in their sufferings, make common cause of it, talk each of what the other felt and understood so well? Nay, might it not be probable that, in obedience to the behests of some wise senior, they might be sent back to the city together; — understand, O reader, that the wall of Jerusalem had never yet been distant from them half a mile — back, we say, together to get dry stockings? To achieve such an object, Mr. M'Gabbery would have plunged bodily beneath the wave — had the wave been deep enough to receive his body. As it was, it only just came over the tops of his boots, filling them comfortably with water.

“Oh, Mr. M'Gabbery!” exclaimed the ungrateful lady. “Now you have drowned me altogether.”

“I never saw anything so awkward in my life,” said M'Gabbery, looking up at Bertram with a glance that should have frozen his blood.

"Nor I, either," said Caroline.

"What had you better do? Pray give me your hand, Miss Waddington. To leave you in such a manner as that! We managed better in the desert, did we not, Miss Waddington? You really must go back to Jerusalem for dry shoes and stockings, you really must. Where is Miss Baker? Give me your hand, Miss Waddington; both hands, you had better."

So much said Mr. M'Gabbery while struggling in the pool of Siloam. But in the meantime, Miss Waddington, turning quickly round, had put out her hand to Bertram, who was standing — and I regret to say all but laughing — on the rock above her; and before Mr. M'Gabbery's eloquence was over, she was safely landed among her friends.

"Oh, Mr. Bertram," said she; "you are a horrid man. I'll never forgive you. Had I trusted myself to poor Mr. M'Gabbery, I should have been dry-footed at this moment." And she shook the water from off her dress, making a damp circle around herself as a Newfoundland dog sometimes does. "If I served you right, I should make you go to the hotel for a pair of shoes."

"Do, Miss Waddington; make him go," said Sir Lionel, "If he doesn't, I'll go myself."

"I shall be delighted," said Mr. Cruse; "my donkey is very quick;" and the clergyman mounted ready to start. "Only I shouldn't know where to find the things."

"No, Mr. Cruse; and I couldn't tell you. Besides, there is nothing I like so much as wet feet, — except wet strings to my hat, for which latter I have to thank Mr. M'Gabbery."

"I will go, of course," said M'Gabbery, emerging slowly from the pool. "Of course it is for me to go; I shall be glad of an opportunity of getting dry boots myself."

"I am so sorry you have got wet," said the beauty.

"Oh! it's nothing; I like it. I was not going to see you in the water without coming to you. Pray tell me what I shall fetch. I know all your boxes so well, you know, so I can have no difficulty. Will they be in the one with C. W. on it in brass nails? That was the one which fell off the camel near the Temple of Dagon." Poor Mr. M'Gabbery! that ride through the desert was an oasis in his otherwise somewhat barren life, never to be forgotten.

"I am the sinner, Miss Waddington," said George, at last, "and on me let the punishment fall. I will go back to Jerusalem; and in order that you may suffer no inconvenience, I will bring hither all your boxes and all your trunks on the backs of a score of Arab porters."

"You know you intend to do no such thing," said she. "You have already told me your ideas as to waiting upon young ladies."

There was, however, at last some whispering between Miss Baker and her niece, in which Mr. M'Gabbery vainly attempted to join, and the matter ended in one of the grooms being sent into the town, laden with a bunch of keys and a written message for Miss Baker's servant. Before dinner-time, Miss Waddington had comfortably changed her stockings in the upper story of the tomb of St. James, and Mr. M'Gabbery — but Mr. M'Gabbery's wet feet did not receive the attention which they deserved.

Passing on from the pool of Siloam, they came to a water-course at which there was being conducted a considerable washing of clothes. The washerwomen — the term is used as being generic to the trade and not to the sex, for some of the performers were men — were divided into two classes, who worked separately; not so separately but what they talked together, and were on friendly terms; but still there was a division. The upper washerwomen, among whom the men were at work, were Mahomedans; the lower set were Jewesses, As to the men, but little observation was made, except that they seemed expert enough, dabbing their clothes, rubbing in the soap, and then rinsing, very much in the manner of Christians. But it was impossible not to look at the women. The female followers of the Prophet had, as they always have, some pretence of a veil for their face. In the present instance, they held in their teeth a dirty blue calico rag, which passed over their heads, acting also as a shawl. By this contrivance, intended only to last while the Christians were there, they concealed one side of the face and the chin. No one could behold them without wishing that the eclipse had been total. No epithet commonly applied to women in this country could adequately describe their want of comeliness. They kept their faces to their work, and except that they held their rags between their teeth, they gave no sign of knowing that strangers were standing by them.

It was different with the Jewesses. When they were stared at, they stood up boldly and stared again; — and well worth looking at they were. There were three or four of them, young women all, though already mothers, for their children were playing on the grass be-

hind them. Each bore on her head that moon-shaped head-dress which is there the symbol of a Jewess; and no more graceful tiara can a woman wear. It was wonderful that the same land should produce women so different as were these close neighbours. The Mahomedans were ape-like; but the Jewesses were glorious specimens of feminine creation. They were somewhat too bold, perhaps; there was too much daring in their eyes, as, with their naked shoulders and bosoms nearly bare, they met the eyes of the men that were looking at them. But there was nothing immodest in their audacity; it was defiant rather, and scornful.

There was one among them, a girl, perhaps of eighteen, who might have been a sculptor's model, not only for form and figure, but for the expression of her countenance and the beautiful turn of her head and shoulders. She was very unlike the Jewess that is ordinarily pictured to us. She had no beaky nose, no thin face, no sharp, small, black, bright eyes; she was fair, as Esther was fair; her forehead and face were broad, her eyes large and open; yet she was a Jewess, plainly a Jewess; such a Jewess as are many still to be seen — in Palestine, at least, if not elsewhere.

When they came upon her, she was pressing the dripping water from some large piece of linen, a sheet probably. In doing this she had cunningly placed one end firmly under her foot upon a stone, and then, with her hands raised high above her head, she twisted and retwisted it till the water oozing out fell in heavy drops round her feet. Her arms and neck were bare, as were also her feet; and it was clear that she put forth to her work as much strength as usually falls to the lot of a woman in any country.

She was very fair to look at, but there was about her no feminine softness. Do not laugh, reader, unless you have already stopped to think, and, thinking, have decided that a girl of eighteen, being a washerwoman, must therefore be without feminine softness. I would not myself say that it is so. But here at least there was no feminine softness, no tenderness in the eye, no young shame at being gazed at. She paused for a moment in her work, and gave back to them all the look they gave her; and then, as though they were beneath her notice, she strained once more at her task, and so dropped the linen to the ground.

"If I knew how to set about the bargain, I would take that woman home with me, and mould her to be my wife." Such was George Bertram's outspoken enthusiasm.

"Moulded wives never answer well," said Sir Lionel.

"I think he would prefer one that had been dipped," whispered Miss Todd to the colonel; but her allusion to Miss Waddington's little accident on the water, and to the chandler's wares, was not thoroughly appreciated.

It has been said that the hampers were to be sent to the tomb of Zachariah; but they agreed to dine immediately opposite to that of St. James the Less. This is situated in the middle of the valley of Jehoshaphat, in the centre of myriads of Jewish tombs, directly opposite to the wall built with those huge temple stones, not many feet over the then dry water-course of the brook Cedron. Such was the spot chosen by Miss Todd for her cold chickens and champagne.

Of course they wandered about a little in pairs and trios while these dainties were being prepared for them.

This St. James's tomb is a little temple built on the side of the rock, singularly graceful. The front towards the city is adorned with two or three Roman pillars, bearing, if I remember rightly, plain capitals. There is, I think, no pediment above them, or any other adjunct of architectural pretension; but the pillars themselves, so unlike anything else there, so unlike any other sepulchral monument that I, at least, have seen, make the tomb very remarkable. That it was built for a tomb is, I suppose, not to be doubted; though for whose ashes it was in fact erected may perhaps be questioned. I am not aware that any claimant has been named as a rival to St. James.

The most conspicuous of these monuments is that which tradition allots to Absalom, close to this other which we have just described. It consists of a solid square erection, bearing what, for want of a better name, I must call a spire, with curved sides, the sides curving inwards as they fall from the apex to the base. This spiral roof, too low and dumpy to be properly called a spire, is very strong, built with stones laid in circles flat on each other, the circles becoming smaller as they rise towards the top. Why Absalom should have had such a tomb, who can say? That his bones were buried there the Jews at least believe; for Jewish fathers, as they walk by with their children, bid their boys each cast a stone there to mark their displeasure at the child who rebelled against his parent. It is now nearly full of such stones.

While Miss Waddington was arranging her toilet within the tomb of St. James, her admirers below were not making themselves agreeable to each other. "It was the awkwardest thing I ever saw," said Mr. Cruse to Mr.

M'Gabbery, in a low tone, but not so low but what Bertram was intended to hear it.

"Very," said Mr. M'Gabbery. "Some men are awkward by nature; — seem, indeed, as though they were never intended for ladies' society."

"And then to do nothing but laugh at the mischief he had caused. That may be the way at Oxford; but we used to flatter ourselves at Cambridge that we had more politeness."

"Cambridge!" said Bertram, turning round and speaking with the most courteous tone he could command. "Were you at Cambridge? I thought I had understood that you were educated at St. Bees." Mr. Cruse had been at St. Bees, but had afterwards gone to the University.

"I was a scholar at St. John's, sir," replied Mr. Cruse, with much dignity. "M'Gabbery, shall we take a stroll across the valley till the ladies are ready?" And so, having sufficiently shown their contempt for the awkward Oxonian, they moved away.

"Two very nice fellows, are they not?" said Bertram to Mr. Hunter. "It's a stroke of good fortune to fall in with such men as that at such a place as this."

"They're very well in their own way," said Mr. Hunter, who was lying on the grass, and flattering himself that he looked more Turkish than any Turk he had yet seen. "But they don't seem to me to be quite at home here in the East. Few Englishmen in fact are. Cruse is always wanting boiled vegetables, and M'Gabbery can't eat without a regular knife and fork. Give me a pilau and a bit of bread, and I can make a capital dinner without anything to help me but my own fingers."

"Cruse isn't a bad kind of coach," said young Pott. "He never interferes with a fellow. His only fault is that he's so spoony about women."

"They're gentlemanlike men," said Sir Lionel; "very. One can't expect, you know, that every one should set the Thames on fire."

"Cruse won't do that, at any rate," put in Mr. Pott.

"But Mr. M'Gabbery perhaps may," suggested George. "At any rate, he made a little blaze just now at the brook above." And then the ladies came down, and the business of the day commenced; seeing which, the two injured ones returned to their posts.

"I am very fond of a picnic," said Sir Lionel, as, seated on a corner of a tombstone, he stretched out his glass towards Miss Todd, who had insisted on being his cupbearer for the occasion; "excessively fond. I mean the eating and drinking part, of course. There is only one thing I like better; and that is having my dinner under a roof, upon a table, and with a chair to sit on."

"Oh, you ungrateful man; after all that I am doing for you!"

"I spoke of picnics generally, Miss Todd. Could I always have my nectar filled to me by a goddess, I would be content with no room, but expect to recline on a cloud, and have thunderbolts ready at my right hand."

"What a beautiful Jupiter your father would make, Mr. Bertram!"

"Yes; and what a happy king of gods with such a Juno as you, Miss Todd!"

"Ha! ha! ha! -oh dear, no. I pretend to no rôle

higher than that of Hebe. Mr. M'Gabbery, may I thank you for a slice of ham? I declare, these tombs are very nice tables, are they not? Only, I suppose it's very improper. Mr. Cruse, I'm so sorry that we have no potatoes; but there is salad, I know."

"Talking of chairs," said Mr. Hunter, "after all there has been no seat yet invented by man equal to a divan, either for ease, dignity, or grace." Mr. Hunter had long been practising to sit cross-legged, and was now attempting it on the grass for the first time in public. It had at any rate this inconvenient effect, that he was perfectly useless; for, when once seated, he could neither help himself nor any one else.

"The cigar divan is a very nice lounge when one has nothing better to do," suggested Mr. Pott. "They have capital coffee there."

"A divan and a sofa are much the same, I suppose," said George.

But to this Mr. Hunter demurred, and explained at some length what were the true essential qualities of a real Turkish divan: long before he had finished, however, George had got up to get a clean plate for Miss Waddington, and in sitting down had turned his back upon the Turk. The unfortunate Turk could not revenge himself, as in his present position any motion was very difficult to him.

Picnic dinners are much the same in all parts of the world, and chickens and salad are devoured at Jerusalem very much in the same way as they are at other places — except, indeed, by a few such proficient in Turkish manners as Mr. Hunter. The little Arab children stood around them, expectant of scraps, as I have seen children do also in England; and the conversation, which was

dull enough at the commencement of the feast, became more animated when a few corks had flown. As the afternoon wore on, Mr. M'Gabbery became almost bellicose under the continual indifference of his lady-love; and had it not been for the better sense of our hero — such better sense may be expected from gentlemen who are successful — something very like a quarrel would have taken place absolutely in the presence of Miss Todd.

Perhaps Miss Waddington was not free from all blame in the matter. It would be unjust to accuse her of flirting — of flirting, at least, in the objectionable sense of the word. It was not in her nature to flirt. But it was in her nature to please herself without thinking much of the manner in which she did it, and it was in her nature also to be indifferent as to what others thought of her. Though she had never before known George Bertram, there was between them that sort of family knowledge of each other which justified a greater intimacy than between actual strangers. Then, too, he pleased her, while Mr. M'Gabbery only bored. She had not yet thought enough about the world's inhabitants to have recognized and adjudicated on the difference between those who talk pleasantly and those who do not; but she felt that she was amused by this young double-first Oxonian, and she had no idea of giving up amusement when it came in her way. Of such amusement, she had hitherto known but little. Miss Baker herself was, perhaps, rather dull. Miss Baker's friends at Littlebath were not very bright; but Caroline had never in her heart accused them of being other than amusing. It is only by knowing his contrast that we recognize a bore when we meet him. It was in this

manner that she now began to ascertain that Mr. M'Gabbery certainly had bored her. Ascertaining it, she threw him off at once — perhaps without sufficient compunction.

"I'll cut that cock's comb before I have done with him," said M'Gabbery to his friend Mr. Cruse, as they rode up towards St. Stephen's gate together, the rest of the cavalcade following them. Sir Lionel had suggested to Miss Todd that they might as well return, somewhat early though it was, seeing that there was cause why that feast of reason and that flow of soul should no longer be continued by them round the yet only half-emptied hampers. So the ladies had climbed up into the tomb and there adjusted their hats, and the gentlemen had seen to the steeds; and the forks had been packed up; and when Mr. M'Gabbery made the state of his mind known to Mr. Cruse, they were on their way back to Jerusalem, close to the garden of Gethsemane.

"I'll cut that young cock's comb yet before I have done with him," repeated Mr. M'Gabbery.

Now Mr. Cruse, as being a clergyman, was of course not a fighting man. "I shouldn't take any notice of him," said he; "nor, indeed, of her either; I do not think she is worth it."

"Oh, it isn't about that," said M'Gabbery. "They were two women together, and I therefore was inclined to show them some attention. You know how those things go on. From one thing to another it has come to this, that they have depended on me for everything for the last three or four weeks."

"You haven't paid any money for them, have you?"

"Well, no; I can't exactly say that I have paid money for them. That is to say, they have paid their

own bills, and I have not lent them anything. But I dare say you know that a man never travels with ladies in that free and easy way without feeling it in his pocket. One is apt to do twenty things for them which one wouldn't do for oneself; nor they for themselves if they had to pay the piper."

Now here a very useful moral may be deduced. Ladies, take care how you permit yourselves to fall into intimacies with unknown gentlemen on your travels. It is not pleasant to be spoken of as this man was speaking of Miss Baker and her niece. The truth was, that a more punctilious person in her money dealings than Miss Baker never carried a purse. She had not allowed Mr. M'Gabbery so much as to lay out on her behalf a single piastre for oranges on the road. Nor had he been their sole companion on their journey through the desert. They had come to Jerusalem with a gentleman and his wife: Mr. M'Gabbery had been kindly allowed to join them.

"Well, if I were you, I should show them a cold shoulder," said Mr. Cruse; "and as to that intolerable puppy, I should take no further notice of him, except by cutting him dead."

Mr. M'Gabbery at last promised to follow his friend's advice, and so Miss Todd's picnic came to an end without bloodshed.

CHAPTER X.

The Effects of Miss Todd's Picnic.

SIR LIONEL did not participate violently either in his son's disgust at the falsehood of that holy sepulchre church, nor in his enthusiasm as to the Mount of Olives.

In the former, he walked about as he had done in many other foreign churches, looked a little to the right and a little to the left, observed that the roof seemed to be rather out of order, declined entering the sanctum sanctorum, and then asked whether there was anything more to be seen. He did not care, he said, about going upstairs into the gallery; and when George suggested that he should descend into the Armenian chapel, he observed that it appeared to be very dark and very crowded. He looked at the Turkish janitors without dismay, and could not at all understand why George should not approve of them.

He was equally cold and equally complaisant on the Mount of Olives. He would willingly have avoided the ascent could he have done so without displeasing his son; but George made a point of it. A donkey was therefore got for him, and he rode up.

"Ah! yes," said he, "a very clear view of the city; oh, that was Solomon's temple, was it? And now they have a mosque there, have they? Ah! perhaps the Brahmins will have a turn at it before the world is done. It's a barren sort of hill after all, is it not?"

And then George tried very much in vain to make his father understand why he wished to go into the church.

"By-the-by," said Sir Lionel — they were then sitting exactly on the spot where George had placed himself before, when he made that grand resolve to give up everything belonging to this world for the sake of being one of Christ's shepherds — "by-the-by, George, for heaven's sake don't throw your uncle over in choosing a profession. I certainly should be sorry to see you become an attorney."

"I have never thought of it for a moment," said George.

"Because, with your abilities, and at any rate with your chance of money, I think you would be very much thrown away; but, considering his circumstances and yours, were I you, I would really submit almost to anything."

"I will not at any rate submit to that," said George, not very well able to reconcile his father's tone to the spot on which they were sitting.

"Well, it's your own affair, my boy. I have no right to interfere, and shall not attempt to do so; but of course I must be anxious. If you did go into the church, I suppose he'd buy a living for you?"

"Certainly not; I should take a college living."

"At your age any that you could get would be very small. Ah, George! if I could only put an old head upon young shoulders, what a hand of cards you would have to play! That old man could leave you half a million of money!"

This was certainly not the object with which the son had ascended the mount, and he did not use much eloquence to induce his father to remain long in the place. Sir Lionel got again on his donkey, and they returned to Jerusalem; nor did George ever again talk to him about the Mount of Olives.

And he was not very much more successful with another friend into whose mind he endeavoured to inculcate his own high feelings. He got Miss Baker up to his favourite seat, and with her Miss Waddington; and then, before he had left Jerusalem, he succeeded in inducing the younger lady to ramble thither with him alone.

"I do not know that I think so highly of the church

as you do," said Caroline. "As far as I have seen them, I cannot find that clergymen are more holy than other men; and yet surely they ought to be so."

"At any rate, there is more scope for holiness if a man have it in him to be holy. The heart of a clergyman is more likely to be softened than that of a barrister or an attorney."

"I don't exactly know what you mean by heart-softening, Mr. Bertram."

"I mean —" said Bertram, and then he paused; he was not quite able, with the words at his command, to explain to this girl what it was that he did mean, nor was he sure that she would appreciate him if he did do so; and, fond as he still was of his idea of a holy life, perhaps at this moment he was fonder still of her.

"I think that a man should do the best he can for himself in a profession. You have a noble position within your grasp, and if I were you, I certainly would not bury myself in a country parsonage."

What this girl of twenty said to him had much more weight than the time-honoured precepts of his father; and yet both, doubtless, had their weight. Each blow told somewhat; and the seed too had been sown upon very stony ground.

They sat there some three or four minutes in silence. Bertram was looking over to Mount Moriah, imaging to himself the spot where the tables of the money-changers had been overturned, while Miss Waddington was gazing at the setting sun. She had an eye to see material beauty, and a taste to love it; but it was not given to her to look back and feel those things as to which her lover would fain have spoken to her. The temple in which Jesus had taught was nothing to her.

Yes, he was her lover now, though he had never spoken to her of love, had never acknowledged to himself that he did love her — as so few men ever do acknowledge till the words that they have said make it necessary that they should ask themselves whether those words are true. They sat there for some minutes in silence, but not as lovers sit. The distance between them was safe and respectful. Bertram was stretched upon the ground, with his eyes fixed, not upon her, but on the city opposite; and she sat demurely on a rock, shading herself with her parasol.

“I suppose nothing would induce you to marry a clergyman?” said he at last.

“Why should you suppose that, Mr. Bertram?”

“At any rate, not the parson of a country parish. I am led to suppose it by what you said to me yourself just now.”

“I was speaking of you, and not of myself. I say that you have a noble career open to you, and I do not look on the ordinary life of a country parson as a noble career. For myself, I do not see any nobility in store. I do not know that there is any fate more probable for myself than that of becoming a respectable vicaress.”

“And why may not a vicar’s career be noble? Is it not as noble to have to deal with the soul as with the body?”

“I judge by what I see. They are generally fond of eating, very cautious about their money, untidy in their own houses, and apt to go to sleep after dinner.”

George turned upon the grass, and for a moment or two ceased to look across into the city. He had not strength of character to laugh at her description and yet to be unmoved by it. He must either resent what she

said, or laugh and be ruled by it. He must either tell her that she knew nothing of a clergyman's dearest hopes, or else he must yield to the contempt which her words implied.

"And could you love, honour, and obey such a man as that, yourself, Miss Waddington?" he said at last.

"I suppose such men do have wives who love, honour, and obey them; either who do or do not. I dare say I should do much the same as others."

"You speak of my future, Miss Waddington, as though it were a subject of interest; but you seem to think nothing of your own."

"It is useless for a woman to think of her future; she can do so little towards planning it, or bringing about her plans. Besides, I have no right to count on myself as anything out of the ordinary run of women; I have taken no double-first degree in anything."

"A double-first is no sign of a true heart or true spirit. Many a man born to grovel has taken a double-first."

"I don't perhaps know what you mean by grovelling, Mr. Bertram. I don't like grovellers myself. I like men who can keep their heads up — who, once having them above the water, will never allow them to sink. Some men in every age do win distinction and wealth and high place. These are not grovellers. If I were you I would be one of them."

"You would not become a clergyman?"

"Certainly not; no more than I would be a shoemaker."

"Miss Waddington!"

"Well; and what of Miss Waddington? Look at the clergymen that you know; do they never grovel? You

know Mr. Wilkinson; he is an excellent man, I am sure, but is he conspicuous for highmindedness, for truth and spirit?" It must be remembered that the elder Mr. Wilkinson was at this time still living. "Are they generally men of wide views and enlightened principles? I do not mean to liken them to shoemakers; but were I you, I should think of the one business as soon as the other."

"And in my place, what profession would you choose?"

"Ah, that I cannot say. I do not know your circumstances."

"I must earn my bread, like other sons of Adam."

"Well, earn it then in such manner that the eyes of the world shall be upon you, that men and women shall talk of you, and newspapers have your name in their columns. Whatever your profession, let it be a wakeful one; not one that you can follow half asleep."

Again he paused for awhile, and again sat looking at the rock of the temple. Still he thought of the tables of the money-changers, and the insufficiency of him who had given as much as half to the poor. But even while so thinking, he was tempted to give less than half himself, to set up on his own account a money-changing table in his own temple. He would fain have worshipped at the two shrines together had he been able. But he was not able; so he fell down before that of Mammon.

"You can talk to me in this way, urge me to be ambitious, and yet confess that you could give yourself to one of those drones of whom you speak with such scorn."

"I speak of no one with scorn; and I am not urging

you; and at present am not talking of giving myself to any one. You ask as to the possibility of my ever marrying a clergyman; I say that it is very possible that I may do so some day."

"Miss Waddington," said George; and now he had turned his face absolutely from the city, and was looking upwards to the hill; upwards, full into the beauty of her countenance. "Miss Waddington!"

"Well, Mr. Bertram?"

"You speak of me as though I were a being high in the scale of humanity —"

"And so I think of you."

"Listen for a moment — and of yourself as one comparatively low."

"No, no, not low; I have too much pride for that; much lower than you, certainly, for I have given no proofs of genius."

"Well — lower than me. That is what you have said, and I do not believe that you would say so falsely. You would not descend to flatter me?"

"Certainly not; but —"

"Believe equally of me that I would not flatter you. I have told you no falsehood as yet, and I have a right to claim your belief. As you look on me, so do I on you. I look up to you as one whose destiny must be high. To me there is that about you which forbids me to think that your path in the world can ever be other than conspicuous. Your husband, at least, will have to live before the world."

"I shall not have the slightest objection to his doing so; but that, I think, will depend a great deal more on him than on me."

Bertram was very anxious to say something which

might tend towards the commingling of his destiny with hers. He was hardly yet prepared to swear that he loved her, and to ask her in good set terms to be his wife. But he did not like to leave her without learning whether he had at all touched her heart. He was fully sure now that his own was not whole.

"Come, Mr. Bertram," said she; "look at the sun, how nearly it is gone. And you know we have no twilight here. Let us go down; my aunt will think that we are lost."

"One minute, Miss Waddington; one minute, and then we will go. Miss Waddington — if you care enough for me to bid me take up any profession, follow any pursuit, I will obey you. You shall choose for me, if you will."

She blushed, not deeply, but with a colour sufficiently heightened to make it visible to him, and with a tingling warmth which made her conscious of it herself. She would have given much to keep her countenance, and yet the blush became her greatly. It took away from the premature firmness of her womanly look, and gave her for the moment something of the weakness natural to her age.

"You know that is nonsense: on such a subject you must of course choose for yourself."

Bertram was standing in the path before her, and she could not well go on till he had made way for her. "No," said he; "thinking as I do of you, feeling as I do regarding you, it is not nonsense. It would be absolute nonsense if I said so to your aunt, or to Mrs. Hunter, or to Miss Jones. I could not be guided by a person who was indifferent to me. But in this matter I will be guided by you if you will consent to guide me."

"Of course I shall do no such thing."

"You have no personal wish, then, for my welfare?"

"Yes, I have. Your uncle is my guardian, and I may therefore be allowed to look upon you as a friend of a longer standing than merely of yesterday. I do regard you as a friend, and shall be glad of your success." Here she paused, and they walked on a few steps together in silence; and then she added, becoming still redder as she did so, but now managing to hide her face from her companion, "Were I to answer you in the way that you pretend to wish, I should affect either less friendship than I feel, or much more."

"Much more!" said Bertram, with a shade of despondency in his tone.

"Yes, much more, Mr. Bertram. Why, what would you have me say?"

"Ah me! I hardly know. Nothing — nothing — I would have you say nothing. You are quite right to say nothing." And then he walked on again for a hundred yards in silence. "Nothing, Miss Waddington, nothing; unless, indeed —"

"Mr. Bertram;" and as she spoke she put out her hand and gently touched his arm. "Mr. Bertram, stop yourself; think, at any rate, of what you are going to say. It is a pity when such as you speak foolishly." It was singular to see how much more composed she was than he; how much more able to manage the occasion — and yet her feelings were strong too.

"Nothing; I would have you say nothing — nothing, unless this: that whatever my destiny may be, you will share it with me."

As he spoke he did not look towards her, but straight before him down the path. He did not sigh, nor look

soft. There was indeed not much capability for soft looks in his square and strongly-featured face. He frowned rather, set his teeth together, and walked on faster than before. Caroline did not answer him immediately; and then he repeated his words. "I do not care for you to say anything now, unless you can say this — that whatever your lot may be, I may share it; whatever mine, that you will share it."

"Mr. Bertram!"

"Well —"

"Now you have spoken foolishly. Do you not know that you have spoken foolishly?"

"I have spoken truly. Do you speak as truly. You should be as much above false, girlish petty scruples, as you will be and are above falsehood of another kind. You will never tell a man that you love him if you do not."

"No; certainly, I never will."

"And do not deny it if it be the truth."

"But it is not the truth. How long have we known each other, Mr. Bertram?"

"Counting by days and hours, some fortnight. But what does that signify? You do not love a man the better always, the longer you know him. Of you, I discern that there is that in you I can love, that would make me happy. I have talent, some sort of talent at least. You have a spirit which would force me to use it. I will not pretend to say that I am suited for you. You must judge that. But I know that you are suited for me. Now I will take any answer you will give me."

To tell the truth, Miss Waddington hardly knew what answer to give him. He was one, it seemed, who, having spoken with decision himself, would take any

answer as decisive. He was one not to be tampered with, and one also hardly to be rejected without consideration; and certainly not so to be accepted. She had liked him much — very much, considering the little she had known of him. She had even asked herself, half playfully, whether it were not possible that she might learn to love him. He was a gentleman, and that with her was much. He was a man of talent, and that with her was more. He was one whose character and mode of thought she could respect. He was a man whom any woman might probably be able to respect. But Caroline Waddington wanted much more than this in her future lord. She could talk pleasantly of the probability of her marrying a country parson; but she had, in truth, a much wider ambition for herself. She would never marry — such was the creed which was to govern her own life — without love; but she would not allow herself to love where love would interfere with her high hopes. In her catalogue of human blisses love in a cottage was not entered. She was not avaricious; she did not look to money as the summum bonum; — certainly not to marry for money's sake. But she knew that no figure in the world could be made without means. Her own fortune was small, and she did not even rate her beauty high. Her birth was the birth of a lady, but that was all; her talents had never been tried, but she thought of them more indifferently than they deserved. She felt, therefore, that she had no just ground to hope for much; but she was determined that no folly on her own part should rob her of any chance that fortune might vouchsafe to her.

Under such circumstances what answer should she make to Bertram? Her heart would have bid her not

reject him, but she was fearful of her own heart. She dreaded lest she should be betrayed into sacrificing herself to love. Ought prudence now to step in and bid her dismiss a suitor whose youth had as yet achieved nothing, whose own means were very small, with whom, if he were accepted, her marriage must be postponed; who, however, was of great talent, who gave such promise of future distinction? Bertram, when he made his offer, made it from a full heart; but Caroline was able to turn these matters in her mind before she answered him.

She will be called cold-hearted, mercenary, and unfeminine. But when a young girl throws prudence to the winds, and allows herself to love where there is nothing to live on, what then is she called? It seems to me that it is sometimes very hard for young girls to be in the right. They certainly should not be mercenary; they certainly should not marry paupers; they certainly should not allow themselves to become old maids. They should not encumber themselves with early, hopeless loves; nor should they callously resolve to care for nothing but a good income and a good house. There should be some handbook of love, to tell young ladies when they may give way to it without censure. As regards our heroine, however, she probably wanted no such handbook. "Now I will take any answer you will give me." Bertram, when he had said that, remained silent, awaiting her reply.

"Mr. Bertram," she said at last, "I think that you have spoken unwisely; let us agree to forget it. What you have said has come from impulse rather than judgment."

"Not so, Miss Waddington. I cannot forget it; nor can you. I would not have it again unsaid if I could.

When I once learned that I loved you, it became natural to me to tell you so."

"Such quick speaking is not perhaps natural to me. But as you demand an immediate answer, I must give you one. I have had much pleasure in your society, but I have never thought of loving you. Nor can I love you without thinking of it."

It would be hard to say what answer Bertram expected; indeed, he had no expectations. He had had no idea of making this offer when he walked up the hill with her. His heart was then turned rather to worship at that other shrine: it had been her own words, her own eloquence in favour of the world's greatness, that had drawn him on. He had previously filled his mind with no expectation; but he had felt an intense desire for success when once he had committed himself to his offer.

And now, as he walked down beside her, he hardly knew what to make of her answer. A man, if he be not absolutely rejected, is generally inclined to think that any answer from a lady may be taken as having in it some glimmer of favour. And ladies know this so well, that they almost regard any reply on their own part, short of an absolute refusal, as an acceptance. If a lady bids a gentleman wait awhile for his answer, he thinks himself quite justified in letting all the world know that she is his own. We all know what a reference to a parent's judgment means. A lady must be very decisive — very, if she means to have her "no" taken at its full meaning. Now Caroline Wadlington had not been very decisive.

Whatever Bertram's thoughts or his hopes might be, he said nothing more on the present occasion. He walked

silently down the hill by her side, somewhat moody-looking, but yet not with the hang-dog aspect of a rejected suitor. There was a fire in his eyes and a play upon his countenance which did not tell of hope altogether extinguished. Before they were at the foot of the hill, he had resolved that he would have Caroline Waddington for his wife, let the difficulties in his way be what they might. But then he was ever so keen to resolve; so often beaten from his resolutions!

And Caroline also walked silently down the hill. She knew that she had given an ambiguous answer, and was content to let it remain so. In the silence of her chamber, she would think over this thing and make her calculations. She would inquire into her own mind, and learn whether she could afford to love this man whom she could not but acknowledge to be so loveable. As for asking any one else, seeking counsel in the matter from her aunt, that never for a moment suggested itself to Caroline Waddington.

They had left Miss Baker and Miss Todd at the bottom of the hill. It was a beautiful evening, and those ladies had consented to sit down and rest there while the more enthusiastic and young lovers of the mount ascended to the spot of which Bertram was so fond. But in giving that consent, they had hardly expected that such encroachment would be made on their good-nature. When Caroline and Bertram again found them, the daylight had almost waned away.

CHAPTER XI.

Vale Valete.

MISS BAKER was a little querulous at being left so long sitting with Miss Todd at the corner of the garden wall; but Miss Todd was never querulous: she was one of those good-humoured persons who never complain, and find some antidote to every ill in life, even in the ill itself. True, she had been kept a couple of hours and more sitting on a stone by the brook Cedron; but then she had acquired the privilege of telling how Mr. George Bertram and Miss Caroline Waddington had passed those hours, *tête-à-tête* together, on the mountain-side.

"Why, Caroline, we thought you were never coming down again," said Miss Baker.

"It was Mr. Bertram's fault, aunt; he is immovable when he gets to a certain rock up there. He has an idea of turning hermit, and constructing a cell for himself in that spot."

"If I did turn hermit, it should certainly be for the sake of living there," said he. "But I fear I want the proper spirit for so holy a life."

"I hope you have not kept us all this time for nothing: you have had some success, I trust?" said Miss Todd to Bertram, in a laughing whisper. Miss Todd's face was quite joyous as she whispered; but then her face was always joyous.

"I certainly have not done that which I intended to do," said Bertram, with mock sententiousness. "And so far I have been unsuccessful."

"Then she has rejected him," said Miss Todd to herself. "What a fool the girl must be!" but it was a great comfort to Miss Todd that she knew all about it.

That evening their plans were decided on as to leaving Jerusalem — the plans, that is, of those whose fortunes we must follow; — Miss Baker, namely, and her niece; Sir Lionel and his son. Of Miss Todd we may here take our leave for awhile. She did not on this occasion marry Sir Lionel, nor did she even have the satisfaction of knowing that her friends accused her of wishing to do so. Miss Todd had her weak points, but taking her as a whole, and striking the balance between good and bad, I do not care how soon we may meet her again. To her friends also we may bid adieu. Mr. M'Gabbery did not die of love. Mr. Pott did propose to and was accepted by Miss Jones; but the match was broken off by the parental Potts, who on the occasion nearly frightened poor Mrs. Jones out of her life. The Hunters sojourned for awhile on the sides of Lebanon, but did at last return to the discomforts of European life. Mrs. Hunter tried the effect of her favourite costume at Tenby, but it was not found to answer. Of Mr. Cruse, I can only say that he was dreadfully scolded by Mrs. Pott, in that he had allowed her son to fall in love; and that Mr. Pott threatened to stop his salary. An attorney's letter, however, settled that.

It must be confessed that Miss Baker had allowed her plans to be altered by the arrival of the Bertrams at Jerusalem; and confessed also that Miss Baker's complaisance in this respect had been brought about by her niece's persuasion. Their original intention had been to go on to Damascus. Then Miss Baker had begged off this further journey, alleging that her clothes as well as her strength were worn out; and Caroline had consented to return home by the shortest route. Then came the temptation of going as far as Beyrout with the Bertrams,

and Miss Baker had been enjoined to have herself patched up externally and internally. She was accordingly being patched up; but now things were altered again. Caroline knew that she could not travel with George Bertram without engaging herself to be his wife; or that if she did, their journey would not be a happy one. And she did not wish so to engage herself without further thought. She determined, therefore, that they would fall back upon her aunt's plan, and return home by the easier route, by Jaffa, that is, and Alexandria.

Her altered mind had to be explained, not only to her aunt, but to the Bertrams; and she came to the somewhat singular resolve to explain it in both cases by the simple truth. She would tell her aunt what had happened; and she would make George Bertram understand in a few and as kind words as might be, that under the present circumstances it would be better that they should not be thrown into the very close intercourse necessary for fellow-travellers in the East. She was very prudent, was Miss Waddington; and having freed herself of one lover because she did not like him, she prepared to rid herself of another because she did.

The Bertrams were to leave Jerusalem together in a couple of days' time. George was to go with his father as far as Constantinople, and, having seen something of real Turks in real Turkey, was to return at once to England. After his last visit to the Mount of Olives, he said nothing further about the church as a profession.

That evening Caroline settled it all with her aunt. "Aunt," said she, as they sat together brushing their hair before they went to bed, "you will think me very fanciful; but after all, I believe we had better go back by Alexandria."

“O dear, I shall be so glad, my dear. Jane says that I could not possibly get a travelling dress made here that I could wear.”

“You could get a dress in Damascus, I don’t doubt, aunt. But —”

“And I really am not fit for much more riding. I don’t like to disappoint you; but if you really wouldn’t mind it —”

“Well, I should mind it, — and I should not. But let me tell you. You must not think that I am so very changeable, first pressing you to go one way, and then begging you to go another, without a reason.”

“No; I know you do it for my sake.”

“Not that either, aunt — quite; but do listen. Mr. Bertram to-day made —”

“He has not offered to you, has he?”

“Yes, aunt; that is just what he has done. And, therefore, perhaps it will not be quite so well that we should travel together.”

“But, Caroline, tell me — pray do tell me; what did he say, and what have you said? Oh dear me, this is very sudden.” And Miss Baker sat back in her chair, with her now grayish hair hanging over her shoulders, with her hair-brush still held in one hand, and with the other resting on the toilet-table.

“As for what he said, I may skip that, aunt. It was the old story, I suppose, merely signifying that he wanted me to marry him.”

“Well, well.”

“As you truly say, aunt; it was too sudden. Mr. Bertram has a great deal to recommend him; a very great deal; one cannot but like him. He is very clever too.”

“Yes, Caroline; and will be his uncle’s heir — doubtless.”

“I know nothing of that; to tell the truth, indeed, I never thought of that. But it would have made no difference.”

“And you refused him.”

“Well, I hardly know. I do know this — that I did more towards refusing him than accepting him; that I must have much more love for any man I do marry than I have for him at present; and that after what has passed, I think we had better not go to Damascus together.”

To this latter proposition aunt Mary fully agreed; and thus it was decided that the extra patching for the longer journey need not be accomplished. Miss Baker would explain the matter to Sir Lionel in her way; and Caroline would do the same to George Bertram in hers. On one other point, also, Miss Baker made up her mind fully; though on this matter she did not think it prudent to make her mind known to her niece. She was very confident that the marriage would take place, and resolved to do all in her power to bring it about. Personally, she was fond of George Bertram; she admired his talents, she liked his father, and felt very favourably inclined towards his uncle’s wealth. She finished her toilet therefore in calm happiness. She had an excellent match in view for her niece — and, after all, she would escape that dreadful horseback journey to Damascus.

During the next day Caroline and George Bertram were not together for a moment — that is, they were not together alone; for they breakfasted and dined at the same table, and he sat between the aunt and her niece as he had done continually since he had been at Jeru-

salem. Sir Lionel told him in the forenoon that they were not to have the pleasure of the ladies' company on their journey, and rallied him as to the heart-breaking tendency of these tidings. But George showed, in his countenance at least, no symptoms of heart-breaking.

That evening, as they all parted for the night, George did press Miss Waddington's hand more warmly than was usual with him; and, as he did so, he did look into her face for one moment to see what encouragement he might find there. I cannot say that there was no encouragement. The pressure was perhaps not met by any similar warmth on her part, but it was submitted to without any touch of resentment: the love which shot from his eye was not returned to him from hers, but hers were soft beneath his glance, softer than was usual with Caroline Waddington.

But on the next morning they did come together. It was the day before the departure of the Bertrams, and whatever was to be said must be said then. Caroline watched her opportunity, and as soon as breakfast was over — they all breakfasted in the public salon — asked him to come into her aunt's sitting-room. She was quite collected, had fully made up her mind what to say, and was able also to say it without hesitation, and with perfect self-possession. This was more than could be boasted of on the gentleman's behalf.

"You know, Mr. Bertram, that we are not going to travel together?"

"Yes; my father told me so yesterday."

"And you will understand the reason of it, I am sure?"

"Not exactly, Miss Waddington. I cannot say I do understand it. I may have been presumptuous in what

I said to you the other day; but I do not see why on that account your aunt should be put to the inconvenience of altering her plans. You fear, I suppose, that I should annoy you; but you might trust me — and still may if you will do so.”

“Now, Mr. Bertram, you are hardly so sincere as you asserted yourself to be, and required me to be on the mount. You are yourself quite aware that nobody has thought you presumptuous. I have nothing to complain of, and much to thank you for — independently of the honour you have now done me; — for from you it is an honour. But I cannot say that I love you. It would not be natural that I should do so.”

“Good heavens! not natural. I love you with the whole strength of my heart. Is that unnatural?”

“It is the province of men to take the initiative in such matters,” said Caroline, smiling.

“I know nothing as to man’s province, or of woman’s province either. By province, you mean custom and conventional rule; and conventional rule means falsehood. I have known you but a week or two, and I love you dearly. You, of course, have known me as long, and are at any rate as capable of loving as I am. There would be nothing unnatural in you loving me — though, indeed, it may be very unlikely that you should do so.”

“Well; I will not contradict you in anything if I can help it, except perhaps as to that last little would-be-proud, petulant protest. But putting out of sight all question of likelihood, what ought I to do if I do not love you? What in such a case would you recommend a sister to do? Is it not better that we should not be im-

mediately thrown together, as must so certainly be the case in travelling?"

"Then I am to understand that you positively can never love me?"

"I have not said so: but you press me unfairly, Mr. Bertram."

"Unfairly. No, by heavens! no pressure in such case can be unfair. I would press the truth out from you — the real truth; the truth that so vitally concerns myself. You will not say that you have an aversion to me?"

"Aversion! No, certainly not."

"Or that you cannot love me? Then why not let us remain together? You argue that you do not yet know me well enough; will not that be the way to know me better?"

"If I were to travel with you now, Mr. Bertram, it would be tantamount to accepting you. Your own sense will certainly tell you that. Were I to do so, I should give you the privilege of coming with me as my lover. Forgive me for saying that I cannot give you that privilege. I grieve to hurt your feelings for a day even; but I am sure you will ultimately approve of what I am doing."

"And are we to meet no more, then?"

"Of course we shall meet again; at least, in all human probability. My guardian is your uncle."

"I never even knew that till I met you the other day."

"Because you have always been at school or at college; but you know it now. I, at least, shall look forward to meeting you — and so will my aunt."

"Yes; as acquaintances. It would be impossible for

me to meet you in that way. I hardly think you know or realize what my feelings to you are. I can only meet you to tell you again and again that I love you. You are so cold yourself that you cannot understand my — my — my impetuosity, if you choose to call it so."

"In three or four months, Mr. Bertram, you will be laughing at your own impetuosity — when I perhaps shall be grieving over my own coldness." These last words she said with a smile in which there was much archness, and perhaps also a little encouragement.

"You will tell me at any rate that I may hope?"

"No; certainly not. You will hope enough for anything you really desire without my telling you. But I will not joke, as I believe that you are serious."

"Oh, you believe so, do you?"

"Yes; I suppose I must believe so. Your declaration the other day took me very much by surprise. I had no conception that you had any feelings towards me of that sort. I certainly had entertained none such towards you. Love with me cannot be the birth of a moment. I cannot say that I will love merely because I am asked. You would not wish me to be false even in your own favour. We will part now, Mr. Bertram; and being apart we shall better learn to know, each of us, how we value the other. On my part I can truly say that I hope we shall meet again — at any rate, as friends." And then she held out her hand to him.

"Is this to be our farewell?" said he, without at once taking it.

"It shall be if you so please. We shall meet again only at the public table."

"And you will not tell me that I may hope?"

"I will tell you nothing further, Mr. Bertram. You

will shake hands with me as with a friend, will you not?"

He then took her hand, and, holding it in his own, gazed for a moment into her face. She bore the weight of his eyes with unabashed front. She showed neither anger nor pleasure; neither disdain nor pride; the same sweet smile was still upon her face, somewhat playful, somewhat hopeful, but capable of no definite construction either for making or marring a man's comfort.

"Caroline!" he said at last.

"Good-bye, Mr. Bertram. I thoroughly hope you may enjoy your journey."

"Caroline!"

She essayed to withdraw her hand from his. Feeling this, he raised it to his lips and kissed it, and then left the room. As he closed the door the same smile was on her face.

I hope it will be admitted that Miss Waddington had played her part with skill, and judgment, and good breeding; and not altogether heartlessly either. She had thought much on the subject since George had first thrown himself at her feet, and had concluded, putting the good against the bad, and balancing the affair as accurately as facts would enable her, that the match would be one which she ought to regard as desirable. There were two valid reasons, however, why she should not at once accept his offer. Firstly, he might not know his own mind, and it might be serviceable to him to have the option of renewing his proposal or retreating from it after a few months' trial of his own feelings. And secondly, she hardly knew her own mind. She could not in truth say yet whether she did love him, or whether she did not. She was rather inclined to think she

did; but it would be well that she should try the matter before she committed herself.

The statement made by her aunt that George would doubtless be his uncle's heir certainly had its weight with her. It would be wrong in her to engage herself to a man who was without the means of maintaining her in that rank of life in which she had resolved to live; wrong both on his account and on her own. She felt that she could not be a good poor man's wife. It was not the walk of life for which she had destined herself. She had made up her mind on that point too, and having made it up was not weak enough to be driven from her resolve by any little gust of feeling. She did like Bertram — much, very much, better than she had ever liked any other man. He came up in many points to her idea of what a man should be. He was not sufficiently collected, not sufficiently thoughtful, and perhaps almost too enthusiastic: success in life would be easier to a man who put less heart into everything he said and did. But years would teach him much in this respect, and she also might perhaps teach him something. She did like Bertram; and what objection could there be to the match if, as appeared so probable, he was to inherit his uncle's money?

Prudent as she was, she was ready to run some risk in this respect. She did not wish to be a poor man's wife; but neither did she wish to be an idle man's wife. What she did desire was, that her husband should be an earnest, rising, successful man; — one whose name, as she had herself said to Bertram, might be frequent in men's mouths, and daily to be read in the columns of newspapers. She would not marry a fool, even though he were also a Cræsus; she would not marry a fool,

even though he were also an earl. In choosing a master, her first necessity was that she should respect him, then that the world should do so also. She could respect talent—talent, if needs be, alone—but nothing without talent. The world's respect could not be had without wealth. As for love, that was necessary too; but it was only a third necessity.

Such being our heroine's mind about marriage, I make bold to say that she had behaved with skill and judgment, and not altogether heartlessly either.

On the following morning, Sir Lionel and George left Jerusalem together. The colonel had his own servant, as he always had; George was followed by the dragoman, who had now been with him for some time; and each had also an Arab groom. On quitting Jerusalem, Sir Lionel had made no objection to having the entire bill settled by his son.

"Well, George," he had said with a smile, "I know you are in ample funds, and I never am. You, moreover, have a milch cow that will not run dry. The government is my cow, and she is apt to be very chary in her supply; she does run dry with uncommon quickness."

George smiled also, and paid the bill readily, protesting that of course he ought to do so, as Sir Lionel had come there only to see him. The colonel plumed himself at once upon having managed well; but he was greatly mistaken. His calculation in this respect had been made on a false basis. "George," he said to himself, "is a young man; he will think nothing of this; a fellow at his age cares nothing for money." George did care but little for the money, but he did care about his father; and he understood the ways of the world well

enough to know that his father ought to have paid his own bill. He began for the first time to experience something of that feeling which his uncle so often expressed.

They started, too, with somewhat different ideas as to the purport of their route. Sir Lionel wished to get to Constantinople, and was content, for George's sake, to go by Damascus and Beyrout; but George had to visit Ramah, and Gibeon, and Luz; to see the well of the woman of Samaria at Sichem; to climb Mount Carmel, and to sleep at least for a night within its monastery. Mount Tabor also, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, he must visit; he must bathe in the Sea of Galilee, as he had already bathed in Jordan and the Dead Sea; Gadara he must see, and Gergesa, and Chorazin; and, above all, he must stand with naked feet in Nazareth, and feel within his heart that he was resting on holy ground.

Sir Lionel did not care a straw for Bethsaida or Chorazin — not a straw even for Nazareth. For many reasons he wished to be well with his son. In the first place, a man whose bill is paid for him always makes some concession to the man who pays it. He should do so, at any rate; and on this point Sir Lionel was willing to be just. And then he had ulterior views, which made it very necessary that George should like him. In this respect he had hitherto played his cards well — well, with the exception of that Jerusalem bill. He had made his society very pleasant to his son, had done much towards gaining the young man's heart, and was well inclined to do more — anything, indeed, short of putting himself to real personal inconvenience. We may perhaps add, without doing too much violence to Sir Lionel's established character, that he himself really liked his son.

All this for some days carried him hither and thither, if not with patience, at any rate with perseverance. He went to spots which he was told had a world-wide celebrity, of the names of which he had but a bare distant remembrance, and which he found to be arid, comfortless, and uninteresting. Gibeon he did endure, and Shiloh, and Sichein; Gilgal, also, and Carmel. But there he broke down: he could not, he said, justify it to himself to be absent longer from his official duties. He found that he was near Beyrout: he could ride thither in two days, avoiding Damascus altogether. The cookery at Mount Carmel did not add to his love of the Holy Land. He found himself to be not very well. He laughingly reminded George that there was a difference between twenty-three and sixty; and ended by declining altogether to go backwards towards the Sea of Galilee. If George could only be induced to think that he had seen enough of these regions, his father would be so delighted to have his company direct from Beyrout to Constantinople!

George, however, was inexorable about Nazareth: and so they parted, agreeing that they would meet again at Constantinople. We need not closely follow either on his journey. Sir Lionel, having had everything paid for him up to the moment of their separation, arrived — let us hope with a full purse — at the Bosphorus. George, when left to himself, travelled more slowly, and thought much of these holy places — much also of his love. He could have found it in his heart to rush back, and catch Miss Baker and Caroline at Jaffa. He would have done so as soon as he quitted Nazareth, only that he was ashamed.

About a fortnight after his father's departure, he found himself at Damascus, and in another week, he was

stepping on board the packet at Beyrout. When leaving Palestine, that land of such wondrous associations, his feelings were not altogether consolatory. He had at one moment acknowledged what he believed to be a spiritual influence within him, and yielding himself to it, had spoken of devoting his life to a high and holy purpose. He had, indeed, spoken only to himself, and the wound to his pride was therefore the less. But his high and holy purpose had been blown to the winds by a few words from a pair of ruby lips, by one glance of scorn from a pair of bright eyes. And he had so yielded, even though those lips would acknowledge no love for him; though those eyes would not look on him kindly. He could not be proud of his visit to the Holy Land; and yet he felt a longing to linger there. It might be, that if he would return once more to that mount, look once again on Sion and the temple, the spirit might yet get the better of the flesh. But, alas! he had to own to himself that he had now hardly a wish that the spirit should predominate. The things of the world were too bright to be given up. The charms of the flesh were too strong for him. With a sigh, he looked back for the last time from Mount Hermon, stretched out his arms once more towards Jerusalem, said one farewell in his heart as his eye rested for a moment on the distant glassy waters of Galilee, and then set his horse's head towards Damascus.

When a traveller in these railroad days takes leave of Florence, or Vienna, or Munich, or Lucerne, he does so without much of the bitterness of a farewell. The places are now comparatively so near that he expects to see them again, or, at any rate, hopes that he may do so. But Jerusalem is still distant from us no Sabbath-

day's journey. A man who, having seen it once, takes his leave, then sees it probably for the last time. And a man's heart must be very cold who can think of Palestine exactly as of any other land. It is not therefore surprising that Bertram was rather sad as he rode down the further side of Mount Hermon.

At Constantinople, Sir Lionel and George again met, and our hero spent a pleasant month there with his father. It was still spring, the summer heats had hardly commenced, and George was charmed, if not with the city of the Sultan, at any rate with the scenery around it. Here his father appeared in a new light: they were more intimate with each other than they had been at Jerusalem; they were not now living in ladies' society, and Sir Lionel by degrees threw off what little restraint of governorship, what small amount of parental authority he had hitherto assumed. He seemed anxious to live with his son on terms of perfect equality; began to talk to him rather as young men talk to each other than men of ages so very different, and appeared to court a lack of reverence.

In his ordinary habits of life, and, indeed, in his physical vivacity, Sir Lionel was very young for his time of life. He never pleaded his years in bar of any pleasure, and never pleaded them at all except when desirous of an excuse for escaping something that was disagreeable. There are subjects on which young men talk freely with each other, but on which they hesitate to speak to their elders without restraint. Sir Lionel did his best to banish any such feeling on the part of his son. Of wine and women, of cards and horses, of money comforts and money discomforts, he spoke in a manner which Bertram at first did not like, but which

after awhile was not distasteful to him. There is always some compliment implied when an old man unbends before a young one, and it is this which makes the viciousness of old men so dangerous. I do not say that Sir Lionel purposely tempted his son to vice; but he plainly showed that he regarded morality in a man to be as thoroughly the peculiar attribute of a clergyman as a black coat; and that there could be no reason for other men even to pretend to it when there were no women by to be respected and deceived.

Bertram certainly liked his father, and was at ease in his company; but, in spite of this, he was ashamed of him, and was sometimes very sorrowful. He was young, full of vivacity, and without that strength of character which should have withstood the charm of Sir Lionel's manner; but he knew well that he would fain have had in his father feelings of a very different nature, and he could not but acknowledge that the severity of his uncle's tone was deserved.

It had been George's intention to stay a week only at Constantinople, but his father had persuaded him to remain four. He had boasted that when he returned to England he would be in a position to give back to his uncle the three hundred pounds which Pritchett had placed to his account. But he would not now be able to do this: his father lived expensively; and even here, where Sir Lionel was now at home, George paid more than his own share of the expense.

One of their chief subjects of conversation, that, indeed, which Sir Lionel seemed to prefer to any other, was the ultimate disposal of his brother's money. He perceived that George's thoughts on this subject were by far too transcendental, that he was childishly indifferent

to his own interests, and that if not brought to a keener sense of his own rights, a stronger feeling as to his position as the only nephew of a very wealthy man, he might let slip through his fingers a magnificent fortune which was absolutely within his reach. So thinking, he detained his son near him for awhile, that he might, if possible, imbue him with some spark of worldly wisdom.

He knew how useless it would be to lecture a young man like George as to the best way in which he could play tuft-hunter to his uncle. From such lectures George would have started away in disgust; but something, Sir Lionel thought, might be done by tact, by *finesse*, and a daily half-scornful badinage, skilfully directed towards the proper subject. By degrees, too, he thought that George did listen to him, that he was learning, that he might be taught to set his eyes greedily on those mountains of wealth. And so Sir Lionel persevered with diligence to the end.

"Say everything that is civil from me to my brother," said the colonel, the day before George left him.

"Uncle George does not care much for civil speeches," said the other, laughing:

"No, I know he does not; he'd think more of it if I could send home a remittance by you to pay the bill; eh, George? But as I can't do that, I may as well send a few civil words." Uncle George's bill had gradually become a source of joke between the father and son. Sir Lionel, at least, was accustomed to mention it in such a way that the junior George could not help laughing; and though at first this had gone against the grain of his feelings, by degrees he had become used to it.

"He expects, I fancy, neither money nor civil words," said George the younger.

“He will not, on that account, be the less pleased at getting either the one or the other. Don't you believe everything that everybody tells you in his own praise: when a man says that he does not like flattery, and that he puts no value on soft words, do not on that account be deterred from making any civil speeches you may have ready. He will not be a bit stronger than another because he boasts of his strength.”

“I really think you would find it difficult to flatter your brother.”

“Perhaps so; and therefore I should set about it with the more care. But, were I in your shoes, I should not attempt flattery; I should be very submissive rather. He always loved to play the tyrant.”

“And I do not love to play the slave.”

“An only nephew's slavery would probably be of a very mild description.”

“Yes; no harder than sitting on a clerk's stool in a merchant's counting-house for seven or eight hours a day.”

“That would be an unendurable bore as a continuance; but take my word for it, George, if you could bring yourself to do it for six months, by the end of that time you would have the game in your own hands.”

“At any rate, I shall not try it, sir.”

“Well, you are your own master: I can only say that the temptation would be too strong for most men. I have not the slightest doubt that if you would give way to him for six months, two years would see you in Parliament.” Sir Lionel had already ascertained that to sit in the House of Commons was the dearest object of his son's ambition.

On the evening of that day, as they were drinking their coffee and smoking together, Sir Lionel for the first time spoke to his son on another matter. "George," said he, "I don't know whether there was anything in it, but when we were at Jerusalem, I thought you were very sweet on Caroline Waddington."

George blushed deeply, and affected to laugh.

"She was certainly a very fine girl," continued his father; "I think as handsome a girl as I have seen these ten years. What a shoulder and neck she had! When you used to be dragging her up the Mount of Olives, I could not but think there was more in it than mere scripture geography — eh, George?"

George merely laughed, and looked rather like a simpleton.

"If you were not in love with her, I can only say that you ought to have been. I was, I know."

"Well, sir, I believe she is free as yet; you can try your chance if you have a mind."

"Ah! I would I could. If I knew Medéa's secret, I would have myself chopped and boiled that I might come out young on her behalf; but, George, I can tell you something about her."

"Well, sir!"

"I would have told you then, when we were at Jerusalem, but we were not so well acquainted then as we are now, and I did not like to interfere."

"It could not be interference from you."

"Well, but the matter is this: if my brother ever loved any human being — and I am not quite sure he ever did — but if he did, it was that girl's father. Had Waddington lived, he would now have been my age. Your uncle took him early by the hand, and would

have made his fortune for him, but the poor fellow died. In my opinion, it would assist your views if your uncle knew that you were going to marry Caroline Waddington."

George said nothing, but sat sucking the mouth-piece of his pipe-stick and blowing out great clouds of smoke. Sir Lionel said nothing further, but easily changed the conversation. Early on the following morning, Bertram left Constantinople, having received a promise that Sir Lionel would visit him in England as soon as the exigencies of the public service would permit of his doing so.

CHAPTER XII.

George Bertram decides in favour of the Bar.

GEORGE BERTRAM did not return directly to England. Since he had been in Turkey, he had made arrangement by letter with his friend Harcourt to meet him in the Tyrol, and to travel home with him through Switzerland. It was about the middle of June when he left Constantinople, and Harcourt was to be at Innsbruck on the 5th August. George might therefore well have remained a week or two longer with his father had either of them so wished; but neither of them did wish it. The living at Constantinople was dear, and George's funds would not stand much more of it; and Sir Lionel, free and easy as he was, still felt his son's presence as some impediment — perhaps in the way of his business, perhaps in that of his pleasures.

From Constantinople Bertram went up across the Balkan to the Danube, and thence through Bucharest into Transylvania, travelling, as in those days was ne-

cessary, somewhat by permission of the Russian authorities. He then again struck the Danube at Pesth; remained some little time there; again a week or so at Vienna; from thence he visited Saltzburg, and exactly on the appointed day shook hands with his friend in the hall of the old "Golden Sun" at Innspruck.

At first, on leaving his father, George was very glad to be once more alone. Men delighted him not; nor women either at that moment — seeing that his thoughts were running on Caroline Waddington, and that her presence was not to be had. But by the time that he found himself in the Tyrol, he was delighted once more to have a companion. He had of course picked up Englishmen, and been picked up by them at every town he had passed; one always does; some ladies also he had casually encountered — but he had met with no second Caroline. While wandering about the mountains of Transylvania, he had been quite contented to be alone: at Pesth he had not ceased to congratulate himself on his solitude, though sometimes he found the day a little too long for his purpose in doing so; at Vienna he was glad enough to find an old Oxonian; though, even while enjoying the treat, he would occasionally say to himself that, after all, society was only a bore. But by the time he had done the Saltzburg country, he was heartily sick of himself, somewhat sick also of thinking of his love, and fully able to re-echo all that Harcourt had to say in praise of some very fine old wine which that fastidious gentleman caused to be produced for them from the cellars of the "Golden Sun."

Innspruck is a beautiful little town. Perhaps no town in Europe can boast a site more exquisitely picturesque. Edinburgh would be equal to it, if it had a

river instead of a railroad running through its valley and under its Castle-hill. But we sojourned too long in the Holy Land to permit of our dwelling even for half a chapter in the Tyrol. George, however, and his friend remained there for a fortnight. They went over the Brenner and looked down into Italy; made an excursion to those singular golden-tinted mountains, the Dolomites, among which live a race of men who speak neither German nor Italian, nor other language known among the hundred dialects of Europe, but a patois left to them from the ancient Latins; they wandered through the valleys of the Inn and its tributaries, and wondered at the odd way of living which still prevails in their picturesque castellated mansions.

For awhile Bertram thought that Harcourt was the best companion in the world. He was as agreeable and easy tempered as his father; and was at the same time an educated man, which his father certainly was not. Harcourt, though he put his happiness in material things perhaps quite as much as did Sir Lionel, required that his material things should be of a high flavour. He was a reading man, addicted, in a certain cynical, carping sort of way, even to poetry, was a critic almost by profession, loved pictures, professed to love scenery, certainly loved to watch and scrutinize the different classes of his brother-men. He was gifted pre-eminently with a lawyer's mind, but it was not a lawyer's mind of a vulgar quality. He, too, loved riches, and looked on success in the world as a man's chief, nay, perhaps his only aim; but for him it was necessary that success should be polished. Sir Lionel wanted money that he might swallow it and consume it, as a shark does its prey; but, like sharks in general, he had always been

hungry, — had never had his bellyful of money. Harcourt's desire for money was of a different class. It would not suit him to be in debt to any one. A good balance at his banker's was a thing dear to his soul. He aimed at perfect respectability, and also at perfect independence.

For awhile, therefore, Harcourt's teaching was a great improvement on Sir Lionel's, and was felt to be so. He preached a love of good things; but the good things were to be corollaries only to good work. Sir Lionel's summum bonum would have been an unexpected pocketful of money, three months of idleness in which to spend it, and pleasant companions for the time, who should be at any rate as well provided in pocket as himself. Harcourt would have required something more. The world's respect and esteem were as necessary to him as the world's pleasures.

But nevertheless, after a time, Harcourt's morality offended Bertram, as Bertram's transcendentalism offended Harcourt. They admired the same view, but they could not look at it through the same coloured glass.

"And so on the whole you-liked your governør?" said Harcourt to him one day as they were walking across a mountain range from one valley to another.

"Yes, indeed."

"One is apt to be prejudiced in one's father's favour, of course," said Harcourt. "That is to say, when one hasn't seen him for twenty years or so. A more common, constant knowledge, perhaps, puts the prejudice the other way."

"Sir Lionel is undoubtedly a very pleasant man; no one, I fancy, could help liking his society."

"I understand it all as well as though you had written a book about him. You have none of that great art, Bertram, which teaches a man to use his speech to conceal his thoughts."

"Why should I wish to conceal my thoughts from you?"

"I know exactly what you mean about your father: he is no martinet in society, even with his son. He assumes to himself no mysterious unintelligible dignity. He has none of the military Grimgruffenuff about him. He takes things easily, and allows other people to do the same."

"Exactly."

"But this was not exactly what you wanted. If he had treated you as though a father and son were necessarily of a different order of beings, had he been a little less familiar, a little colder, perhaps a thought more stern and forbidding in his parental way of pushing the bottle to you, you would have liked him better?"

"No, not have liked him better; I might perhaps have thought it more natural."

"Just so; you went to look for a papa with a boy's feelings, and the papa, who had not been looking for you at all, took you for a man as you are when he found you."

"I am sure of this at any rate, that he was delighted to see me."

"I am sure he was, and proud of you when he did see you. I never supposed but that the gallant colonel had some feelings in his bowels. Have you made any arrangements with him about money?"

"No — none."

"Said not a word about so mundane a subject?"

"I don't say that; it is only natural that we should have said something. But as to income, he fights his battle, and I fight mine."

"He should now have a large income from his profession."

"And large expenses. I suppose there is no dearer place in Europe than Constantinople."

"All places are dear to an Englishman exactly in comparison as he knows, or does not know, the ways of the place. A Turk, I have no doubt, could live there in a very genteel sort of manner on what you would consider a moderate pittance."

"I suppose he could."

"And Sir Lionel by this time should be a Turk in Turkey, a Greek in Greece, or a Persian in Bagdad."

"Perhaps he is. But I was not. I know I shall be very fairly cleared out by the time I get to London; and yet I had expected to have three hundred pounds untouched there."

"Such expectations always fall to the ground — always. Every quarter I allow myself exactly what I shall want, and then I double it for emergencies."

"You are a lucky fellow to have the power to do so."

"Yes, but then I put my quarterly wants at a *very* low figure; a figure that would be quite unsuitable — quite unintelligible to the nephew of a Croesus."

"The nephew of a Croesus will have to put his quarterly wants at something about fifty pounds, as far as I can see."

"My dear fellow, when I observe that water bubbles up from a certain spot every winter and every spring, and occasionally in the warm weather too, I never think

that it has run altogether dry because it may for a while cease to bubble up under the blazing sun of August. Nature, of whose laws I know so much, tells me that the water will come again."

"Yes, water will run in its natural course. But when you have been supplied by an artificial pipe, and have cut that off, it is probable that you may run short."

"In such case I would say, that having a due regard to prudence, I would not cut off that very convenient artificial pipe."

"One may pay too dear, Harcourt, even for one's water."

"As far as I am able to judge, you have had yours without paying for it at all; and if you lose it, it will only be by your own obstinacy. I would I had such an uncle to deal with."

"I would you had; as for me, I tell you fairly, I do not mean to deal with him at all."

"I would I had; I should know then that everything was open to me. Now I have everything to do for myself. I do not despair, however. As for you, the ball is at your foot."

They talked very freely with each other as to their future hopes and future destinies. Harcourt seemed to take it as a settled matter that Bertram should enter himself at the bar, and Bertram did not any longer contradict him. Since he had learnt Miss Waddington's ideas on the subject, he expressed no further desire to go into the church, and had, in fact, nothing serious to say in favour of any of those other professions of which he had sometimes been accustomed to speak. There was nothing but the bar left for him; and therefore when

Harcourt at last asked him the question plainly, he said that he supposed that such would be his fate.

But on one subject Bertram did not speak openly to his friend. He said not a word to him about Caroline. Harcourt was in many respects an excellent friend; but he had hardly that softness of heart, or that softness of expression which tempts one man to make another a confidant in an affair of love. If Harcourt had any such affairs himself, he said nothing of them to Bertram, and at the present time Bertram said nothing on the subject to him. He kept that care deep in his own bosom. He had as yet neither spoken a word nor written a word concerning it to any one; and even when his friend had once casually asked him whether he had met much in the way of beauty in Jerusalem, he had felt himself to wince as though the subject were too painful to be spoken of.

They reached London about the middle of October, and Harcourt declared that he must immediately put himself again into harness. "Ten weeks of idleness," said he, "is more than a man can well afford who has to look to himself for everything; and I have now given myself eleven."

"And what are you going to do?"

"Do! work all day and read all night. Take notice of all the dullest cases I can come across, and read the most ponderous volumes that have been written on the delightful subject of law. A sucking barrister who means to earn his bread has something to do — as you will soon know."

Bertram soon learnt — now for the first time, for Harcourt himself had said nothing on the subject — that his friend's name was already favourably known, and

that he had begun that career to which he so steadily looked forward. His ice was already broken: he had been employed as junior counsel in the great case of *Pike v. Perch*; and had distinguished himself not a little by his success in turning white into black.

"Then you had decidedly the worst of it?" said Bertram to him, when the matter was talked over between them.

"Oh, decidedly; but, nevertheless, we pulled through. My opinion all along was that none of the Pikes had a leg to stand upon. There were three of them. But I won't bore you with the case. You'll hear more of it some day, for it will be on again before the lords-justices in the spring."

"You were Pike's counsel?"

"One of them — the junior. I had most of the fag and none of the honour. That's of course."

"And you think that Perch ought to have succeeded?"

"Well, talking to you, I really think he ought; but I would not admit that to any one else. Sir Ricketty Giggs led for us, and I know he thought so to at first; though he got so carried away by his own eloquence at last that I believe he changed his mind."

"Well, if I'd thought that, I wouldn't have held the brief for all the Pikes that ever swam."

"If a man's case be weak, then, he is to have no advocate? That's your idea of justice."

"If it be so weak that no one can be got to think it right, of course he should have no advocate."

"And how are you to know till you have taken the matter up and sifted it? But what you propose is Quixotic in every way. It will not hold water for a

moment. You know as well as I do that no barrister would keep a wig on his head who pretended to such a code of morals in his profession. Such a doctrine is a doctrine of puritanism — or purism, which is worse. All this moonshine was very well for you when you talked of being a clergyman, or an author, or a painter. One allows outsiders any amount of nonsense in their criticism, as a matter of course. But it won't do now, Bertram. If you mean to put your shoulders to the wheel in the only profession which, to my mind, is worthy of an educated man's energies, you must get rid of those cobwebs."

"Upon my word, Harcourt, when you hit on a subject you like, your eloquence is wonderful. Sir Ricketty Giggs himself could hardly say more to defend his sins of forty years' endurance."

Harcourt had spoken in earnest. Such milk-and-water, unpractical scruples were disgusting to his very soul. In thinking of them to himself, he would call them unmanly. What! was such a fellow as Bertram, a boy just fresh from college, to animadvert upon and condemn the practice of the whole bar of England? He had, too, a conviction, clearly fixed in his own mind, though he could hardly explain the grounds of it in words, that in the long run the cause of justice would be better served by the present practice of allowing wrong and right to fight on equal terms; by giving to wrong the same privilege that is given to right; by giving to wrong even a wider privilege, seeing that, being in itself necessarily weak, it needs the more protection. He would declare that you were trampling on the fallen if you told him that wrong could be entitled to no privilege, no protection whatever — to no protec-

tion, till it was admitted by itself, admitted by all, to be wrong.

Bertram had now to establish himself in London; and he was also, as he thought, under the necessity of seeing two persons, his uncle and Miss Waddington. He could not settle himself well to work before he had done both. One preliminary business he did settle for himself, in order that his uncle, when he saw him, might know that his choice for the bar was made up and past recalling. He selected that great and enduring Chancery barrister, Mr. Neversaye Die, as the Gamaliel at whose feet he would sit; as the fountain from whence he would draw the coming waters of his own eloquence; as the instructor of his legal infancy and guide of his legal youth. Harcourt was at the Common Law bar, and therefore he recommended the other branch of the profession to his friend. "The Common Law," said he, "may have the most dash about it; but Chancery has the substance." George, after thinking over the matter for some days, gave it as his opinion that Chancery barristers were rogues of a dye somewhat less black than the others, and that he would select to be a rogue of that colour. The matter was therefore so settled.

His first step, then, was to see his uncle. He told himself — and as he thought, truly — that his doing so was a duty, disagreeable in all respects, to be attended with no pecuniary results, but necessary to be performed. In truth, however, the teaching of Sir Lionel and Harcourt had not been altogether without effect: at this present moment, having just paid to Mr. Neversaye Die his first yearly contribution, he was well-nigh penniless; and, after all, if a rich uncle have money to bestow, why should he not bestow it on a nephew? Money, at any

rate, was not in itself deleterious. So much George was already prepared to allow.

He therefore called on his uncle in the City. "Ha! George — what; you're back, are you? Well, come and dine at Hadley to-morrow. I must be at the Bank before three. Good-bye, my boy."

This was all his uncle said to him at their first meeting. Then he saw Mr. Pritchett for a moment.

"Oh, Mr. George, I am glad to see you back, sir; very glad indeed, sir. I hear you have been to very foreign parts. I hope you have always found the money right, Mr. George?"

Mr. George, shaking hands with him, warmly assured him that the money had always been quite right — as long as it lasted.

"A little does not go a long way, I'm sure, in those very foreign parts," said Mr. Pritchett, oracularly. "But, Mr. George, why didn't you write, eh, Mr. George?"

"You don't mean to say that my uncle expected to hear from me?"

"He asked very often whether I had any tidings. Ah! Mr. George, you don't know an old man's ways yet. It would have been better for you to have been led by me. And so you have seen Mr. Lionel — Sir Lionel, I should say now. I hope Sir Lionel is quite well."

George told him that he had found his father in excellent health, and was going away, when Mr. Pritchett asked another question, or rather made another observation. "And so you saw Miss Waddington, did you, Mr. George?"

Bertram felt that there was that in his countenance which might again betray him; but he managed to turn

away his face as he said, "Yes, I did meet her, quite by chance, at Jerusalem."

"At Jerusalem!" said Mr. Pritchett, with such a look of surprise, with such an awe-struck tone, as might have suited some acquaintance of Æneas's, on hearing that gentleman tell how he had travelled beyond the Styx. Mr. Pritchett was rather fat and wheezy, and the effort made him sigh gently for the next two minutes.

Bertram had put on his hat and was going, when Mr. Pritchett, recovering himself, asked yet a further question. "And what did you think of Miss Waddington, sir?"

"Think of her!" said George.

"A very beautiful young lady; isn't she? and clever, too. I knew her father well, Mr. George — very well. Isn't she a very handsome young lady? Ah, well! she hasn't money enough, Mr. George; that's the fact; that's the fact. But" — and Mr. Pritchett whispered as he continued — "the old gentleman might make it more, Mr. George."

Mr. Pritchett had a somewhat melancholy way of speaking of everything. It was more in his tone than in his words. And this tone, which was all but sepulchral, was perhaps owing rather to a short neck and an asthmatic tendency than to any real sorrow or natural lowness of spirits. Those who saw Mr. Pritchett often probably remembered this, and counted on it; but with George there was always a graveyard touch about these little interviews. He could not, therefore, but have some melancholy presentiment when he heard Miss Waddington spoken of in such a tone.

On the following day he went down to Hadley, and, as was customary there, found that he was to spend the

evening *tête-à-tête* with his uncle. Nothing seemed changed since he had left it: his uncle came in just before dinner, and poked the fire exactly as he had done on the last visit George had paid him after a long absence. "Come, John, we're three minutes late! why don't we have dinner?" He asked no question — at least, not at first — either about Sir Lionel or about Jerusalem, and seemed resolute to give the traveller none of that *éclat*, to pay to his adventures none of that deferential awe which had been so well expressed by Mr. Pritchett in two words.

But Mr. Bertram, though he always began so coldly, did usually improve after a few hours. His tone would gradually become less cynical and harsh; his words would come out more freely; and he would appear somewhat less anxious to wound the *amour propre* of his companion.

"Are you much wiser for your travels, George?" he said at last, when John had taken away the dinner, and they were left alone with a bottle of port wine between them. This, too, was asked in a very cynical tone, but still there was some improvement in the very fact of his deigning to allude to the journey.

"Yes, I think I am rather wiser."

"Well, I'm glad of that. As you have lost a year in your profession, it is well that you should have gained something. Has your accession of wisdom been very extensive?"

"Somewhat short of Solomon's, sir; but probably quite as much as I should have picked up had I remained in London."

"That is very probable, I suppose you have not the

slightest idea how much it cost you. Indeed, that would be a very vulgar way of looking at it."

"Thanks to your unexpected kindness, I have not been driven to any very close economy."

"Ah! that was Pritchett's doing. He seemed afraid that the land would not flow with milk and honey unless your pocket was fairly provided. But of course it's your own affair, George. It is money borrowed; that's all."

George did not quite understand what this meant, and remained silent; but at one moment it was almost on his tongue to say that it ought at least to be admitted that the borrower had not been very pressing in his application.

"And I suppose you have come back empty?" continued his uncle.

George then explained exactly how he stood with regard to money, saying how he had put himself into the hands of Mr. Neversaye Die, how he had taken chambers in the Middle Temple, and how a volume of Blackstone was already lying open in his dingy sitting-room.

"Very well, very well. I have no objection whatever. You will perhaps make nothing at the bar, and certainly never the half what you would have done with Messrs. Dry and Stickatit. But that's your affair. The bar is thoroughly respectable. By-the-by, is your father satisfied with it as a profession?" This was the first allusion that Mr. Bertram had made to his brother.

"Perfectly so," said George.

"Because of course you were bound to consult him." If this was intended for irony, it was so well masked that George was not able to be sure of it.

"I did consult him, sir," said George, turning red in accordance with that inveterate and stupid habit of his.

"That was right. And did you consult him about another thing? did you ask him what you were to live on till such time as you could earn your own bread?"

In answer to this, George was obliged to own that he did not. "There was no necessity," said he, "for he knows that I have my fellowship."

"Oh! ah! yes; and that of course relieves him of any further cause for anxiety in the matter. I forgot that."

"Uncle George, you are always very hard on my father; much too hard."

"Am I?"

"I think you are. As regards his duty to me, if I do not complain, you need not."

"Oh! that is it, is it? I did think that up to this, his remissness in doing his duty as a father had fallen rather on my shoulders than on yours. But I suppose I have been mistaken; eh?"

"At any rate, if you have to complain, your complaint should be made to him, not to me."

"But you see I have not time to run across the world to Jerusalem; and were I to do so, the chances are ten to one I should not catch him. If you will ask Pritchett too, you will find that your father is not the best correspondent in the world. Perhaps he has sent back by you some answer to Pritchett's half-yearly letters?"

"He has sent nothing by me."

"I'll warrant he has not. But come, George, own the truth. Did he borrow money from you when he saw you? If he did not, he showed a very low opinion of your finances and my liberality."

George might have declared, without any absolute falseness, that his father had borrowed no money of him. But he had not patience at the present moment to distinguish between what would be false and what not false in defending his father's character. He could not but feel that his father had behaved very shabbily to him, and that Sir Lionel's conduct could not be defended in detail. But he also felt that his uncle was quite unjustifiable in wounding him by such attacks. It was not to him that Mr. Bertram should have complained of Sir Lionel's remissness in money matters. He resolved that he would not sit by and hear his father so spoken of; and, therefore, utterly disregarding of what might be the terribly ill effects of his uncle's anger, he thus spoke out in a tone not of the meekest: —

"I will neither defend my father, Mr. Bertram; nor will I sit still and hear him so spoken of. How far you may have just ground of complaint against him, I do not know, nor will I inquire. He is my father, and that should protect his name in my presence."

"Hoity, toity!"

"I will ask you to hear me if you please, sir. I have received very many good offices from you, for which I heartily thank you. I am aware that I owe to you all my education and support up to this time. This debt I fear I can never pay."

"And therefore, like some other people, you are inclined to resent it."

"No, by heaven! I would resent nothing said by you to myself; but I will not sit by and hear my father ill spoken of. I will not — no; not for all the money which you could give or leave me. It seems to me

that what I spend of your money is added up as a debt against my father—”

“Pray don't imagine, my boy, that that is any burden to him.”

“It is a burden to me, and I will endure it no longer. While at school, I knew nothing of these things, and not much while I was at college. Now I do know something, and feel something. If you please, sir, I will renounce any further assistance from you whatever; and beg, in return, that you will say nothing further to me as to any quarrel there may be between you and Sir Lionel.”

“Quarrel!” said his uncle, getting up and standing with his back to the fire. “He has not spirit enough to quarrel with me.”

“Well, I have,” said George, who was now walking about the room; and from the fire in his eyes, it certainly appeared that he spoke the truth in this respect.

“I know the bitterness of your spirit against your brother,” continued George; “but your feelings should teach you not to show it before his son.”

Mr. Bertram was still standing with his hands in his pockets, leaning against the mantelpiece, with his coat-tails over his arms. He said nothing further at once, but continued to fix his eyes on his nephew, who was now walking backwards and forwards from one end of the room to the other with great vehemence. “I think,” at last said George, “that it will be better that I should go back to town. Good-night, sir.”

“You are an ass,” said his uncle.

“Very likely,” said George. “But asses will kick sometimes.”

"And bray too," said his uncle.

There was a certain spirit about them both which made it difficult for either altogether to get the better of the other.

"That I may bray no more in your hearing, I will wish you good-night." And again he held out his hand to the old man.

His uncle took hold of his hand, but he did not go through the process of shaking it, nor did he at once let it go again. He held it there for a time, looking stedfastly into his nephew's face, and then he dropped it. "You had better sit down and drink your wine," he said at last.

"I had rather return to town," said George, stoutly.

"And I had rather you stayed here," said his uncle, in a tone of voice that for him was good-humoured. "Come, you need not be in a pet, like a child. Stay where you are now, and if you don't like to come again, why you can stay away."

As this was said in the manner of a request, George did again sit down. "It will be foolish to make a fuss about it," said he to himself; "and what he says is true. I need not come again, and I will not." So he sat down and again sipped his wine.

"So you saw Caroline at Jerusalem?" said the old man, after a pause of about twenty minutes.

"Yes, I met her with Miss Baker. But who told you?"

"Who told me? Why, Miss Baker, of course. They were both here for a week after their return."

"Here in this house?"

"Why shouldn't they be here in this house? Miss Baker is usually here three or four times every year."

“Is she?” said George, quite startled by the information. Why on earth had Miss Baker not told him of this?

“And what did you think of Caroline?” asked Mr. Bertram.

“Think of her?” said George.

“Perhaps you did not think anything about her at all. If so, I shall be delighted to punish her vanity by telling her so. She had thought a great deal about you; or, at any rate, she talked as though she had.”

This surprised George a great deal, and almost made him forgive his uncle the inquiry he had received. “Oh, yes, I did think of her,” said he. “I thought of her a little at least.”

“Oh, a little!”

“Well, I mean as much as one does generally think of people one meets — perhaps rather more than of others. She is very handsome and clever, and what I saw of her I liked.”

“She is a favourite of mine — very much so. Only that you are too young, and have not as yet a shilling to depend on, she might have done for a wife for you.”

And so saying, he drew the candles to him, took up his newspaper, and was very soon fast asleep.

George said nothing further that night to his uncle about Caroline, but he sat longing that the old man might again broach the subject. He was almost angry with himself for not having told his uncle the whole truth; but then he reflected that Caroline had not yet acknowledged that she felt anything like affection for him; and he said to himself, over and over again, that he was sure she would not marry him without loving

him for all the rich uncles in Christendom; and yet it was a singular coincidence that he and his uncle should have thought of the same marriage.

The next morning he was again more surprised. On coming down to the breakfast-parlour, he found his uncle there before him, walking up and down the room with his hands behind his back. As soon as George had entered, his uncle stopped his walk, and bade him shut the door.

"George," said he, "perhaps you are not very often right, either in what you do or what you say; but last night you were right."

"Sir!"

"Yes, last night you were right. Whatever may have been your father's conduct, you were right to defend it; and, bad as it has been, I was wrong to speak of it as it deserved before you. I will not do so again."

"Thank you, sir," said George, his eyes almost full of tears.

"That is what I suppose the people in the army call an ample apology. Perhaps, however, it may be made a little more ample."

"Sir, sir," said George, not quite understanding him; "pray do not say anything more."

"No, I won't, for I have got nothing more to say; only this: Pritchett wants to see you. Be with him at three o'clock to-day."

At three o'clock Bertram was with Pritchett, and learned from that gentleman, in the most frozen tone of which he was capable, and with sundry little, good-humoured, asthmatic chuckles, that he had been desired to make arrangements for paying to Mr. George regu-

larly an income of two hundred a year, to be paid in the way of annuity till Mr. Bertram's death, and to be represented by an adequate sum in the funds whenever that much-to-be-lamented event should take place.

"To be sure, sir," said Pritchett, "two hundred a year is nothing for you, Mr. George; but—"

But two hundred a year was a great deal to George. That morning he had been very much puzzled to think how he was to keep himself going till he might be able to open the small end of the law's golden eggs.

CHAPTER XIII.

Littlebath.

I ABHOR a mystery. I would fain, were it possible, have my tale run through from its little prologue to the customary marriage in its last chapter, with all the smoothness incidental to ordinary life. I have no ambition to surprise my reader. Castles with unknown passages are not compatible with my homely muse. I would as lief have to do with a giant in my book — a real giant, such as Goliath — as with a murdering monk with a scowling eye. The age for such delights is, I think, gone. We may say historically of Mrs. Radcliffe's time that there were mysterious sorrows in those days. They are now as much out of date as are the giants.

I would wish that a serene gratification might flow from my pages, unsullied by a single start. Now I am aware that there is that in the last chapter which appears to offend against the spirit of calm recital which I profess. People will begin to think that they are to

be kept in the dark as to who is who; that it is intended that their interest in the novel shall depend partly on a guess. I would wish to have no guessing, and therefore I at once proceed to tell all about it.

Miss Caroline Waddington was the granddaughter of old Mr. George Bertram; and was, therefore, speaking with absolute technical propriety, the first-cousin once removed of her lover, young Mr. George Bertram — a degree of relationship which happily admits of love and matrimony.

Old Mr. Bertram has once or twice been alluded to as a bachelor; and most of those who were best acquainted with him had no doubt of his being so. To you, my reader, is permitted the great privilege of knowing that he was married very early in life. He, doubtless, had his reasons for keeping this matter a secret at the time, and the very early death of his wife saved him from the necessity of much talking about it afterwards. His wife had died in giving birth to a daughter, but the child had survived. There was then living a sister of Mrs. Bertram's, who had been married some few years to a Mr. Baker, and the infant was received into this family, of which our friend Miss Baker was a child. Miss Baker was therefore a niece, by marriage, of Mr. Bertram. In this family, Caroline Bertram was educated, and she and Mary Baker were brought up together as sisters. During this time Mr. Bertram did his duty by his daughter as regards money, as far as his means then went, and was known in that family to be her father; but elsewhere he was not so known. The Bakers lived in France, and the fact of his having any such domestic tie was not suspected among his acquaintance in England.

In the course of time his daughter married one Mr. Waddington, hardly with the full consent of the Bakers, for Mr. Waddington's means were small — but not decidedly in opposition to it; nor had the marriage been opposed by Mr. Bertram. He of course was asked to assist in supplying money for the young couple. This he refused to give; but he offered to Mr. Waddington occupation by which an income could be earned. Mr. Waddington wisely acceded to his views, and, had he lived, would doubtless have lived to become a rich man. He died, however, within four years of his marriage, and it so fell out that his wife did not survive him above a year or two.

Of this marriage, Caroline Waddington, our heroine, was the sole offspring. Mr. Waddington's commercial enterprises had not caused him to live in London, though he had been required to be there frequently. Mr. Bertram had, therefore, seen more of him than of his own daughter. The infant had been born in the house of the Bakers, and there she was brought up. As an orphan of four years old, she had come under the care of Mary Baker, and under her care she remained. Miss Baker was therefore not in truth her aunt. What was their exact relationship I leave as a calculation to those conversant with the mysteries of genealogy. I believe myself that she was almost as nearly connected with her lover.

When Mr. Waddington and his daughter were both dead, Mr. Bertram felt himself to be altogether relieved from family ties. He was not yet an old man, being then about fifty five; but he was a very rich man. It was of course considered that he would provide liberally for his grandchild. But when asked to do so by Miss

Baker, he had replied that she was provided for; that he had enabled the child's father to leave behind him four thousand pounds, which for a girl was a provision sufficiently liberal; that he would not give rise to false hopes that she would be his heiress; but that if his niece, Mary Baker, would take the charge of her, he would allow an income for the purpose. This he had done with sufficient liberality.

All that is mysterious has now, I believe, been unravelled, and we may go back to our story. Of Mr. Pritchett, we should perhaps say a word. He had been habituated in his sundry money dealings to look on Miss Baker as his patron's niece, and had always called her as such. Indeed, the connection had been so far back that he usually styled her Miss Mary. But he did not know, nor — though he was very suspicious on the matter — did he quite suspect what was the truth as to Miss Waddington. She was niece to his patron's niece; he knew no more than that, excepting, of course, that she was the daughter of Mr. Waddington, and that she was mistress in her own right of four thousand pounds.

Mr. Pritchett was very anxious about his patron's wealth. Here was Mr. Bertram turned seventy years of age — Mr. Pritchett himself was sixty-six — and no one knew who was to be his heir. As far as he, Mr. Pritchett, was aware, he had no heir. Mr. George would naturally be so — so thought Mr. Pritchett; and the old man's apparent anxiety respecting his nephew, the habit which he had now given himself for years of paying the cost of that nephew's education, and the income which he now allowed him, all led to such a conclusion. But then the uncle liked so well to lead, and Mr. George was so unwilling to be led! Had Waddington lived, he

would have been the heir, doubtless. Miss Waddington might still be so, or even Miss Baker. Mr. Bertram, in his way, was certainly very fond of Miss Baker. It was thus that Mr. Pritchett speculated from day to day. George, however, was always regarded by him as the favourite in the race.

And now at last we may return to our story.

Having seen his uncle, George's next business was to see his lady-love. His was a disposition which would not allow him to remain quiet while his hopes were so doubtful and his heart so racked. Had he been travelling with Miss Baker ever since, and living in daily intercourse with Caroline, it is probable enough that he might by this time have been half tired of her. But his love had had no such safety-valve, and was now, therefore, bubbling and boiling within his heart in a manner very subversive of legal accuracy and injurious to legal studies.

It was absolutely necessary, he said to himself, that he should know on what ground he stood; absolutely necessary, also, that he should be able to talk to some one on the subject. So he wrote to Miss Baker, saying that he intended to do himself the pleasure of renewing his acquaintance with her at Littlebath, and he determined to see Arthur Wilkinson on his way. These were the days in which Wilkinson was taking pupils at Oxford, the days in which he used to think so much of Adela Gauntlet.

The meeting of the two friends was sufficiently joyous; for such love sorrows as those which oppressed Bertram when sitting in the chambers of Mr. Neversaye Die rarely oppress a young man in moments which would otherwise be jovial. And Arthur had at this time

gotten over one misery, and not yet fallen into another. He had obtained the fellowship which he had hardly expected, and was commencing the life of a don, with all a don's comforts around him.

"Well, upon my word, I envy you, Arthur; I do, indeed," said Bertram, looking round his cousin's room at Balliol as they sat down to pass an evening quietly together. "This was what I always looked forward to, as you did also; you have obtained it, I have forsworn it."

"Your envy cannot be very envious," said Wilkinson, laughing, "as all my bliss is still within your own reach. You have still your rooms at Oriel if you choose to go into them." For Bertram had been elected to a fellowship at that college.

"Ah! that's easily said; but somehow it couldn't be. I don't know why it is, Arthur; but I have panted to have the privileges of an ordained priest, and yet it is not to be so. I have looked forward to ordination as the highest ambition of a man, but yet I shall never be ordained."

"Why not, George?"

"It is not my destiny."

"On such a subject, do not talk such nonsense."

"Well, at any rate it will not be my lot. I do not mind telling you, Arthur, but there is no one else to whom I could own how weak I am. There have been moments since I have been away in which I have sworn to devote myself to this work, so sworn when every object around me was gifted with some solemn tie which should have made my oath sacred; and yet —"

"Well — and yet? as yet everything is in your own power."

“No, Arthur, no, it is not so; I am now one of the myrmidons of that most special of special pleaders, Mr. Neversaye Die. I have given myself over to the glories of a horse-hair wig; ‘whereas’ and ‘heretofore’ must now be my gospel; it is my doom to propagate falsehood instead of truth. The struggle is severe at first; there is a little revulsion of feeling; but I shall do it very well after a time; as easily, I have no doubt, as Harcourt does.”

“It is Harcourt who has led you to this.”

“Perhaps so, partly; but no — I wrong myself in that. It has not been Harcourt. I have been talked over; I have weakly allowed myself to be talked out of my own resolve, but it has not been done by Harcourt. I must tell you all: it is for that that I came here.”

And then he told the history of his love; that history which to men of twenty-four and girls of twenty is of such vital importance. A young man when first he loves, and first knows that his love is frequent in the thoughts of the woman he has chosen, feels himself to be separated from all humanity by an amber-tinted cloud — to be enveloped in a mystery of which common mortals know nothing. He shakes his mane as he walks on with rapid step, and regards himself almost as a god.

“And did she object to your taking orders?” asked Wilkinson.

“Object! no, I am nothing to her; nothing on earth. She would not have objected to my being a shoemaker; but she said that she would advise me to think of the one trade as soon as the other.”

“I cannot say that I think she showed either good feeling or good taste,” said Wilkinson, stiffly.

“Ah! my dear fellow, you do not know her. There was no bad taste in it, as she said it. I would defy her to say anything in bad taste. But, Arthur, that does not matter. I have told her that I should go to the bar; and, as a man of honour, I must keep my word to her.”

His cousin had not much inclination to lecture him. Wilkinson himself was now a clergyman; but he had become so mainly because he had failed in obtaining the power of following any other profession. He would have gone to the bar had he been able; and felt himself by no means called to rebuke Bertram for doing what he would fain have done himself.

“But she has not accepted you, you say. Why should she be so unwilling that you should take orders? Her anxiety on your behalf tells a strong tale in your own favour.”

“Ah! you say that because you do not understand her. She was able to give me advice without giving the least shadow of encouragement. Indeed, when she did advise me, I had not even told her that I loved her. But the fact is, I cannot bear this state any longer. I will know the worst at any rate. I wish you could see her, Arthur; you would not wonder that I should be uneasy.”

And so he went on with a lover's customary eloquence till a late hour in the night. Wilkinson was all patience; but about one o'clock he began to yawn, and then they went to bed. Early on the following morning, Bertram started for Littlebath.

The Littlebath world lives mostly in lodgings, and Miss Baker and Caroline lived there as the world mostly does. There are three sets of persons who resort to

Littlebath: there is the heavy fast, and the lighter fast set; there is also the pious set. Of the two fast sets neither is scandalously fast. The pace is never very awful. Of the heavies, it may be said that the gentlemen generally wear their coats padded, are frequently seen standing idle about the parades and terraces, that they always keep a horse, and trot about the roads a good deal when the hounds go out. The ladies are addicted to whist and false hair, but pursue their pleasures with a discreet economy. Of the lighter fast set, assembly balls are the ruling passion; but even in these there is no wild extravagance. The gentlemen of this division keep usually two horses, on the sale of one of which their mind is much bent. They drink plentifully of cherry-brandy on hunting days; but, as a rule, they do not often misbehave themselves. They are very careful not to be caught in marriage, and talk about women much as a crafty knowing salmon might be presumed to talk about anglers. The ladies are given to dancing, of course, and are none of them nearly so old as you might perhaps be led to imagine. They greatly eschew card-playing; but, nevertheless, now and again one of them may be seen to lapse from her sphere and fall into that below, if we may justly say that the votaries of whist are below the worshippers of Terpsichore. Of the pious set much needs not be said, as their light has never been hid under a bushel. In spite of hunt-clubs and assembly-rooms, they are the predominant power. They live on the fat of the land. They are a strong, unctuous, moral, uncharitable people. The men never cease making money for themselves, nor the women making slippers for their clergymen.

But though the residents at Littlebath are thus se-

parated as a rule into three classes, the classes do not always keep themselves accurately to their divisions. There will be some who own a double allegiance. One set will tread upon another. There will be those who can hardly be placed in either. Miss Baker was among this latter number: on principle, she was an admirer of the great divine on the domestic comfort of whose toes so many fair fingers had employed themselves; but, nevertheless, she was not averse to a rubber in its mildest forms. Caroline did not play whist, but she occasionally gave way to the allurements prevalent among the younger female world of Littlebath.

Miss Baker lived in lodgings, and Bertram therefore went to an hotel. Had she been mistress of the largest house in Littlebath, he would hardly have ventured to propose himself as a guest. The "Plough," however, is a good inn, and he deposited himself there. The hunting season at Littlebath had commenced, and Bertram soon found that had he so wished he could with but little trouble have provided himself with a stud in the coffee-room of his hotel.

He had intended to call on Miss Baker on the evening of his arrival; but he had not actually told her that he would do so: and though he walked down to the terrace in which she lived, his courage failed him when he got there, and he would not go in. "It may be that evening calls are not the thing at Littlebath," he said to himself; and so he walked back to his hotel.

And on the following day he did not go before two o'clock. The consequence was, that poor Miss Baker and her niece were kept at home in a state of miserable suspense. To them his visit was quite as important as

to himself; and by one of them, the elder namely, it was regarded with an anxiety quite as nervous.

When he did call, he was received with all the hospitality due to an old friend. "Why had he not come to tea the night before? Tea had been kept for him till eleven o'clock. Why, at any rate, had he not come to breakfast? He had been much nicer in Jerusalem," Miss Baker said.

Bertram answered hardly with the spirit which had marked all that he had said in that far-away land. "He had been afraid to disturb them so late; and had been unwilling to intrude so early." Miss Waddington looked up at him from the collar she was working, and began to ask herself whether she really did like him so much.

"Of course you will dine with us," said Miss Baker. George said he would, but assured her that he had not intended to give so much trouble. Could this be the same man, thought Caroline, who had snubbed Mr. M'Gabbery, and had stood by laughing when she slipped into the water?

All manner of questions were then asked and answered respecting their different journeys. Constantinople was described on one side, and the Tyrol; and on the other the perils of the ride to Jaffa, the discomforts of the Austrian boat to Alexandria, and the manners of the ladies from India with whom Miss Baker and her niece had travelled in their passage from Egypt to Marseilles. Then they said something about uncle George — not that Miss Baker so called him — and Bertram said that he had learnt that Miss Baker had been staying at Hadley.

"Yes," said she; "when I am in town, I have al-

ways money matters to arrange with Mr. Bertram, or rather to have arranged by Mr. Pritchett; and I usually stay a day or two at Hadley. On this occasion I was there a week."

George could not but think that up to the period of their meeting at Jerusalem, Miss Baker had been instructed to be silent about Hadley, but that she was now permitted to speak out openly.

And so they sat and talked for an hour. Caroline had given her aunt strict injunctions not to go out of the room, so as to leave them together during Bertram's first visit. "Of course it would be palpable that you did so for a purpose," said Caroline.

"And why not?" said Miss Baker, innocently.

"Never mind, aunt; but pray do not. I don't wish it." Miss Baker of course obeyed, as she always did. And so George sat there, talking about anything or nothing, rather lack-a-daisically, till he got up to take his leave.

"You have not a horse here, I suppose?" said Miss Baker.

"No; but why do you ask? I can get one in ten minutes, no doubt."

"Because Caroline will be so glad to have some one to ride with her."

"Nothing will induce aunt Mary to mount a steed since the day she was lifted out of her saddle at Jaffa," said Caroline.

"Oh, that journey, Mr. Bertram! but I am a stronger woman than I ever thought I was to have lived through it."

It was soon arranged that George should go back to his inn and hire a horse, and that he and Caroline should

then ride together. In another hour or so they were cantering up the face of Ridgebury Hill.

But the ride produced very little. Caroline here required her attention, and George did not find it practicable to remain close enough to his love, or long enough close to her, to say what he had to say with that emphasis which he felt that the subject demanded. There were some little tender allusions to feats of horsemanship done in Syria, some mention of the Mount of Olives, of Miss Todd's picnic, and the pool of Siloam, which might, if properly handled, have led to much; but they did lead to nothing: and when George helped Miss Waddington to dismount at Miss Baker's door, that young lady had almost come to the conclusion that he had thought better of his love, and that it would be well that she should think better of hers.

In accordance with our professed attempt at plain speaking, it may be as well explained here that Miss Baker, with the view of sounding her uncle's views and wishes, had observed to him that George had appeared to her to admire Caroline very much. Had the old man remarked, as he might so probably have done, that they were two fools, and would probably become two beggars, Miss Baker would have known that the match would be displeasing to him. But he had not done so. "Ah!" he said; "did he? It is singular they should have met." Now Miss Baker in her wisdom had taken this as a strong hint that the match would not be displeasing to him.

Miss Baker had clearly been on George's side from the beginning. Perhaps, had she shown a little opposition, Caroline's ardour might have been heightened. As it was, she had professed to doubt. She had nothing to

say against George; much might doubtless be said in his favour, but —. In fact, Miss Waddington would have been glad to know what were the intentions of Mr. George Bertram senior.

“I really wish he had stayed away,” she said to her aunt as they were getting ready for dinner.

“Nonsense, Caroline; why should he have stayed away? Why should you expect him to stay away? Had he stayed away, you would have been the first to grumble. Don't be missish, my dear.”

“Missish! Upon my word, aunt Mary, you are becoming severe. What I mean is, that I don't think he cares so very much for me; and on the whole, I am not — not *quite* sure, whether — well, I won't say anything more; only it does seem to me that you are much more in love with him than I am.”

Bertram came to dinner; and so also did one of the Littlebath curates, a very energetic young man, but who had not yet achieved above one or two pairs of worked slippers and a kettle-holder. Greater things, however, were no doubt in store for him if he would remain true to his mission. Aunt Mary had intended to ask no one; but Caroline had declared that it was out of the question to expect that Mr. Bertram should drink his wine by himself.

The whole evening was dull enough, and the work of disenchantment on Caroline's part was nearly accomplished; but Bertram, a few minutes before he went away, as the curate was expatiating to Miss Baker on the excellence of his rector's last sermon, found an occasion to say one word.

“Miss Waddington, if I call to-morrow, early after breakfast, will you see me?” Miss Waddington looked

as though there were nothing in the proposition to ruffle her serenity, and said that she would. George's words had been tame enough, but there had been something in the fire of his eye that at last reminded her of Jerusalem.

On the next morning, punctually at ten, his knock was heard at the door. Caroline had at first persisted that her aunt should not absent herself; but even Miss Baker would not obey such an injunction as this.

"How do you expect that the poor young man is to behave?" she had said. "I do not much care how he behaves," Caroline had replied. But, nevertheless, she did care.

She was therefore sitting alone when Bertram entered the room. He walked up to her and took her hand, and as he did so he seemed to be altogether a different man from that of yesterday. There was purpose enough in his countenance now, and a purpose, apparently, which he had an intention of pursuing with some energy.

"Miss Waddington," he said, still holding her hand; "Caroline! Or am I to apologize for calling you so? or is the privilege to be my own?" and then, still holding her hand, he stood as though expectant of an answer that should settle the affair at once.

"Our connection through your uncle entitles you to the privilege," said Caroline, smiling, and using a woman's wiles to get out of the difficulty.

"I will take no privilege from you on such a basis. What I have to ask of you must be given on my own account, or on my own refusal. Caroline, since we parted in that room in Jerusalem, I have thought seriously of little else than of you. You could not answer me then; you gave me no answer; you did not know your own heart, you said. You must

know it now. Absence has taught me much, and it must have taught you something."

"And what has it taught you?" said she, with her eyes fixed on the ground.

"That the world has but one thing desirable for me, and that I should not take a man's part unless I endeavoured to obtain it. I am here to ask for it. And now, what has absence taught you?"

"Oh, so many things! I cannot repeat my lesson in one word, as you do."

"Come, Caroline, I look at least for sincerity from you. You are too good, too gracious to indulge a girlish vanity at the cost of a man's suspense."

Missish and girlish! Miss Waddington felt that it behoved her to look to her character. These were words which had not usually been applied to her.

"Indeed, Mr. Bertram, I should think myself unpardonable to keep you in suspense."

"Then answer me," said he. He had by this time let go her hand, and was standing at a little distance from her, on the hearth-rug. Never had lady been wooed in a sterner manner; but Caroline almost felt that she liked him the better for it. He had simpered and said his little nothings so like an ordinary gentleman during their ride, that his present brusqueness was quite a relief to her.

But still she did not answer him at once. She essayed to stick her needle into her work, and pricked her finger in lieu of it.

"Come, Caroline; am I wrong in supposing that now at least you must know your own feelings? Or shall I tell you again how dearly, how truly I love you?"

"No! — no! — no!"

"Answer me, then. In honest, plain, Christian sincerity, answer me; as a true woman should answer a true man. Do you love me?"

For a moment there was no answer.

"Well, I will not ask again. I will not torment you."

"Oh, Mr. Bertram! What am I to say? What would you have me say? Do not be so stern with me."

"Stern!"

"Well, are you not stern?" And coming up close to him, she looked into his face.

"Caroline," said he, "will you be my wife?"

"I will." It was a motion of the lips rather than a spoken word; but, nevertheless, he heard it. Fool that he was not to have heard it before in the beating of her heart; not to have seen it in the tear in her eye; not to have felt it in the warmth of her hand.

On that afternoon Miss Waddington's ride was much more energetic, and on that evening Miss Baker did not think it necessary to catch a curate to drink wine with George Bertram. He was made quite at home, and given to understand that he had better leave the dining-room when the ladies did so.

There was much talked over that evening and the next day: the upshot of which was, that no marriage could take place till next summer; that perhaps it might be expedient to postpone it till the summer twelve-months. To this George put, or would have put, an absolute veto; but Miss Baker only shook her head, and smilingly said that she thought it must be so. Nothing was to be done before Christmas; but as Miss Baker was to be at Hadley very early in January, she undertook to

inform Mr. Bertram, and gave strong hopes that he would be prevailed on to favour the marriage.

"It can make no difference to my purpose whether he does or no," said George, very independently.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ways and Means.

ON the following day Bertram returned to town. Now that he was a successful lover, and about to take upon himself at some future time the responsible duties of a married man, he became very energetic in the chambers of Mr. Die. He could hardly spare a day during the winter for running down to Littlebath, and whenever he did do so, he took Coke upon Lyttleton down with him. Nor did he work in vain. He never had worked in vain. Facility of acquiring the special knowledge which he sought had ever been one of his gifts. Mr. Die was already beginning to prophesy great things; and his friend Harcourt, who occasionally wanted his society, declared that he overdid his labours.

Down at Littlebath they did not quite approve of all this industry. Caroline naturally thought that more of her lover's hours should be devoted to her; and Miss Baker, who looked on Mr. Bertram's money as certainly destined either for Caroline or George, considered that he was wasting his time with his fusty books. She had not dared to say much to George on this subject, and he had not taken very well the little that she did say. She could not tell him that Caroline was Mr. Bertram's granddaughter, but she did remind him that he himself was Mr. Bertram's nephew, and hinted that though a profession might be very eligible for a young man of such

brilliant prospects, it could hardly be necessary for him absolutely to make a slave of himself. To this George had answered, somewhat curtly, that he had no reason to expect anything further from his uncle; and that as he looked forward to maintain himself and his wife by his successful exertions as a barrister, it was absolutely necessary that he should at present work very hard. "I have lost a whole year," he said to Miss Baker; "and nothing but very sharp work can atone for that."

He never once saw his uncle after his first visit to Littlebath till the next year was far advanced. He felt no desire to see him, and certainly no wish to be the bearer of tidings as to his own engagement. Miss Baker had undertaken to do this, and might do so if she so pleased. As far as he was concerned, he had no idea of asking permission to marry from any one.

"Why should I ask him," he had once said to Miss Baker. "I shall marry just the same, whether he permits it or whether he does not."

This was grievous to the ladies at Littlebath. Very little had been said about money between George and Miss Baker up to this time; nothing had been said between George and Caroline; but the two ladies knew that there could be no marriage till there was an adequate income. The income of the gentleman when stripped of his fellowship would be two hundred pounds a year; that of the lady was about the same. Now Caroline Waddington had no intention whatever of marrying on four hundred pounds a year; and it must be more than three years at the very least before all this profound study would result in golden fees.

Now that the matter was so far settled — settled as Bertram considered it — he did tell Harcourt of his love.

"Harcourt," said he, one day. "I have a piece of news which perhaps I ought to tell you. I am engaged to be married."

"Are you?" said Harcourt, rather too coolly to satisfy his friend's expectation.

"I am not joking."

"Who ever accused you of joking since you took to the law and Mr. Die? I did not give you credit for a joke; not even for so bad a one as that would be. Shall I congratulate or condole with you?"

"Either or neither. Perhaps you had better wait till you see the lady."

"And when is it to be?"

"Well; in this coming summer, I suppose. That is my wish, at least."

"And your wish of course will be law. I presume then that I may be justified in surmising that the lady has some considerable fortune?"

"No, indeed, she has not. Something she has got; about as much, perhaps, as myself. We shall have bread to eat."

"And occasionally cheese," said Harcourt, who could not understand that any rising man could marry early, unless in doing so he acquired money.

"And occasionally cheese," repeated Bertram. "This is a state of things that would not suit your book, I know."

"Not exactly," said Harcourt. "But men have very different ideas about women. I could do, and have done, and am doing with a small income myself; but a wife is in some respects like a horse. If a gentleman does keep a horse, it should be well groomed."

"You could not endure a woman who was not always got up in satin and velvet?"

“Not satin and velvet exactly. I do not require a curiously-mounted saddle for my horse. But I don't think I should have much enjoyment with a cheap wife. I like cold mutton and candle-ends myself very well, but I do not love feminine economies. Family washing-bills kept at the lowest, a maid-of-all-work with an allowance in lieu of beer, and a dark morning gown for household work, would not, if I know myself, add fuel to the ardour of my conjugal affection. I love women dearly; I like them to be near me; but then I like them to be nice. When a woman is nasty, she is very nasty.”

Bertram said in his heart that Harcourt was a beast, an animal without a soul, a creature capable of no other joys than those of a material nature; but he kept this opinion at the present moment to himself. Not, however, that he was averse to express himself openly before his friend. He often gave Harcourt to understand that he suspected him of being deficient in the article of a soul; and Harcourt would take the reproach with perfect good-humour, remarking, perhaps, that he might probably find it possible to get on decently without one.

“Is the lady's name a secret?” he asked.

“No; not to you, at least. I believe it is generally considered advisable that these sort of things should not be talked about quite openly till the consummation of them is nigh at hand. I have no wish for any mystery in the matter. Her name is Caroline Waddington.”

“What! a daughter of Sir Augustus?”

“No; nothing to Sir Augustus, that I have heard.”

“She must, then, be one of the General's family?”

“Not that either. Her only relative, that I know, is a Miss Baker.”

"Miss Baker!" said Harcourt; and the tone of his voice was not encouraging.

"Yes, Miss Baker," said Bertram; and the tone of his voice was hardly conciliatory.

"Oh — ah — yes. I don't exactly think I know her. Miss Baker!"

"It would be odd if you did, for she lives at Little-bath, and hardly ever comes to town. When she does, she stays down at Hadley with my uncle."

"Oh — h! That's a horse of another colour. I beg your pardon entirely, my dear fellow. Why did you not tell me at first that this is a match of your uncle's making?"

"My uncle's making! It is not a match of my uncle's making."

"Well, well; one that he approves. I hardly gave you credit for so much prudence. That will be as good as having everything settled exactly as you could wish it."

"You are giving me a great deal too much credit," said Bertram, laughing. "My uncle knows nothing about my marriage, and I have not the slightest idea of consulting him. I should think it mean to do so, considering everything."

"Mean to consult the only relative you have who can do anything for you?"

"Yes. He has told me over and over again that I have no claim on him; and, therefore, I will make none."

Bertram had said to himself frequently that he cared nothing for this man's judgment in such matters; but, nevertheless, after what had passed, he did desire that Harcourt should see Caroline. He was aware, judging

rather from Harcourt's tone than from his words, that that keen-sighted friend of his had but a low opinion of Miss Waddington; that he thought that she was some ordinary, intriguing girl, who had been baiting a hook for a husband, after the manner which scandal states to be so common among the Littlebathians; and Bertram longed, therefore, to surprise his eyes and astound his intellect with a view of her charms and a near knowledge of her attributes. Nothing should be said of her beauty, and the blaze of it should fall upon him altogether unprepared.

George was right in his feelings in this respect. Harcourt had formed a very false idea of Miss Waddington; — had led himself to imagine that she was second-rate and unattractive. In the first place, he had his own ideas about Littlebath, and conceived that it was not the place in which the highest beauty of England should be looked for; and in the next place, he knew George Bertram, and regarded him as a man peculiarly liable to such dangers as these.

“You must come down with me to Littlebath. When will you give me a day?”

Harcourt demurred, as he did not wish to be called on imperiously to praise a woman of whom he knew he should disapprove, and endeavoured to excuse himself from the journey. But Bertram persisted, and at last it was settled that he would go down.

This did not happen till towards the end of winter. Miss Baker had, as she promised, seen Mr. Bertram in the meantime, and the answer returned from the Hadley oracle had, like most oracle-answers, been neither favourable nor unfavourable. Mr. Bertram had expressed no great anger at the tale of love that was told him; but

neither had he expressed any gratification. "Well," he had said, "it is odd that they should have come together; very odd. He is a clever young man, and I dare say may do well." Miss Baker had then ventured, but in a very modest way, to ask him his opinion as to the sufficiency of the young people's income. "They must judge of that themselves," he had said, rather sharply. "But I suppose they have no idea of marrying as yet. They mean to wait, don't they, till he begins his profession?" To this Miss Baker had made no answer, and nothing further had been said at that meeting.

Early in March, Miss Baker had again seen the great man. She had then ventured to explain to him that George was working very hard.

"Ah! you have his word for that, I suppose," said the uncle; "but if so, believe me he will get on at such work as that quicker without a wife than he will with one."

But at this interview Miss Baker did ask him plainly, as had been agreed beforehand between her and her niece that she should do, whether he would on their marriage make any increase to his granddaughter's fortune.

"She has a liberal, ladylike provision," said he.

"But they will not have enough to live on," said Miss Baker.

"They will have a third more, Mary, than I had when I married your aunt. And yet I saved money on my income."

"But remember how they have been brought up, sir."

"If they will be fine ladies and gentlemen, they must take the penalties of being so. Fine ladies and gentle-

men cannot marry at a moment's notice, as do plough-boys and milkmaids. If they cannot live on a limited income, they must wait." He did, however, on this occasion go so far as to say, that if they would wait for another twelvemonth, and that if he were then living, he would add two thousand pounds to Caroline's fortune. As to George, he had done as much as he intended to do — certainly for the present. "George likes his own way," said the old man, "and as far as I am concerned, he shall have it. It will be well for him to make his own career in the world; he will be happier so than in spending my money."

On this occasion Miss Baker was permitted to tell Caroline all the circumstances of her parentage and grandparentage. The same story might now be told to George. But they were both to be cautioned that their relative's displeasure would be incurred by any useless repetition of it. "And, Mary," said he, "do not let them mislead themselves. Do not let them marry with the idea that by so doing they will inherit between them my money. I wish them both to understand that my views are altogether different."

Miss Baker, when she returned to Littlebath, could not think that she had been successful in her mission; and Caroline immediately declared that any idea of a marriage for that year, or even for the next, must now be altogether out of the question. She was very much startled at hearing that Mr. Bertram was her mother's father, but did not pretend to any suddenly intense affection for him. "If that be so," said she, coldly, "if George and I are his only near connections, and if he does not disapprove of our marriage, he ought to give us an income on which we can live." It is astonishing how

different are the views of grandfathers and grandchildren on such matters!

Unfortunately there was no unanimity of opinion on this matter, either between the lovers themselves or between them and their aunt. George was of opinion that they should marry immediately on their present income, and trust to Providence and his exertions for a future increase. For one year he would have the income of his fellowship: in two years and a half he would be called; and in the meantime, he could make something by the Magazines. If Caroline was not afraid, he was not.

But Caroline was very much afraid. It had by no means formed part of the project of her life to live in London as a married woman on four hundred pounds a year. "She knew," she said to Miss Baker, "what effect that would have on her husband's affections." She seemed, indeed, to share some of Harcourt's opinions on the subject, and to have a dislike to feminine economies, or at least to the use of them under the surveillance of a man's eye. As far as she could see, the marriage must be postponed indefinitely — at any rate, till after George should have been called to the bar.

Miss Baker's voice was for a middle course. She suggested that they should wait for Mr. Bertram's two thousand pounds and then marry. They would then have an income increased to some extent. They would also show a deference to the old man's views, which would undoubtedly — so Miss Baker thought — have ultimate results of a most beneficial nature. "After all," as she remarked more than once to her niece, "who else is there?"

But the young people were quite as obstinate as the

old man. George would make no concession whatever to his uncle. He was ready to marry on love and a small income, and he expected Caroline to show an equal warmth. Caroline would by no means alter her views, or risk the misery of an ill-provided nursery. It had been the one great resolve of her life, that she would not be a poor man's wife. "She was ready to wait," she said. "If she could trust and wait, surely George might do so. A man, with all the world around him, encountered neither the misery nor the risk in waiting that fell to a girl's lot."

The disputes incidental to these different opinions did not ever take place between George and Caroline. He, from a feeling of chivalry, abstained from discussing money matters with her; and she, from a feeling of prudence, was equally silent with him. Poor Miss Baker was the medium for it all. George of course would press with a lover's ardour for an early day; and Caroline would of course say that an immediate marriage was, she found, impracticable. And then each would refer the other to Miss Baker.

Things went on in this way till the middle of May. Sometimes George was almost angry, and wrote letters that were somewhat savage; sometimes Caroline would be haughty, and then she too could write letters which would tell her mind in good plain set terms. But they were not near enough, or sufficiently often with each other, to quarrel.

So matters went on till May; and then, on one fine May-day, Harcourt and George together took their places in the train for Littlebath.

"I wonder what you'll think of her?" said George. "Of course you'll tell the truth?"

"Oh, of course," said Harcourt, with his mind duly made up to praise her.

"You haven't the pluck to find fault with her," said George; "you would be afraid not to call her handsome, even if you thought her as ugly as Hecate."

"Exactly," said Harcourt; "and therefore these little experimentary trips are never of any use."

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Harcourt visits Littlebath.

DURING the whole of the winter and spring, George's attention to his work had been unremitting. Mr. Die was always prophesying still greater things, and still greater. Once a fortnight, on every other Saturday, Bertram had gone down to Littlebath, but he had always returned to London by the first train on Monday morning, and was always up to his elbows in law, even on that morning, before eleven.

During the whole of this time, he had not once seen his uncle, although Miss Baker had softly endeavoured to talk him into visiting Hadley. "I never go there without being asked," he had said. "It is quite understood between us."

He had made but one excursion out of London, except those to Littlebath, and that had been to Hurst Staple. Mr. Wilkinson had died very suddenly, as has been told, about the end of the winter, and Bertram had of course not been able to see him. Arthur Wilkinson had then been quickly put into the living, and as soon as he had taken up his residence in the parsonage, Bertram had gone down. This visit had been made before the last walk to West Putford; but even then the young

barrister had found the young vicar in rather a plaintive mood. Wilkinson, however, had said nothing of his love, and George was too much occupied with talking of his own heart to think much of his cousin's.

Miss Gauntlet — I hope the reader has not altogether forgotten Adela Gauntlet — had also an aunt living at Littlebath, Miss Penelope Gauntlet; and it so happened, that very shortly after that memorable walk and the little scene that took place in the West Putford drawing-room, Adela visited her aunt. Bertram, who had known her well when they were children together, had not yet seen her there; indeed, her arrival had taken place since his last visit; but there she was, staying with Miss Penelope Gauntlet when he and Harcourt went down to Littlebath together.

Caroline and Adela had for years been friends. Not bosom friends, perhaps; that is, they did not correspond three times a week, each sending to the other on each occasion three sheets of note paper crossed over on every page from top to bottom. Caroline had certainly no such bosom friend, and perhaps neither had Adela; but they were friends enough to call each other by their Christian names, to lend each other music and patterns, and perhaps to write when they had anything special to say. There had been a sort of quasi-connection between Miss Baker and the elder Miss Gauntlet — a connection of a very faint local character — in years gone by. Miss Baker, by reason of her Bertram relations, had been at Hurst Staple, and Miss Gauntlet had been at West Putford at the same time. They had thus become acquainted, and the acquaintance there had led to a Littlebath friendship. Friendships in Littlebath are not of a very fervid description.

Miss Waddington had now been engaged for six months, and hitherto she had made no confidante. She knew no resident at Littlebath whom she would willingly trust with her heart's secret: her aunt, and her aunt's cognizance of the matter were quite another thing. No one could be more affectionate than aunt Mary, no one more trustworthy, no one more thoroughly devoted to another than she was to her niece. But then she was not only old, but old-fashioned. She was prudent, and Caroline also was prudent; but their prudence was a different kind. There was no dash, no ambition about aunt Mary's prudence. She was rather humdrum, Caroline thought; and, which was worse, though she liked George Bertram, she did not seem to understand his character at all in the same light as that in which Caroline regarded it.

From these circumstances it came to pass that Adela had not been a week at Littlebath before she was made acquainted with the grand secret. She also had a secret of her own; but she did not tell that in return. Secrets such as Caroline's are made to be told; but those other secrets, those which burn up the heart instead of watering it as with a dew from heaven, those secrets for the most part are not made to be told.

"And yet, Adela, I suppose it will never happen." This had been said on the morning of that Saturday which was to bring down not only Bertram, but Harcourt. Caroline knew well that the London friend, the man of the world, was being brought to inspect her, and was by no means afraid of undergoing the inspection. She was not timid by nature; and though, as has been already said, she was hardly yet conscious of her powers of attracting, she was never ashamed of herself.

“And why not? I think that is nonsense, Caroline. If you really thought that, you would not receive him as you will do, nor his friend neither.”

“I do think it; that is to say, I think it very probable. I cannot explain to you, Adela, all the turns of my mind, or of my heart. I would not for worlds of gold marry a man I did not love.”

“And do not you love Mr. Bertram?”

“Yes, I do; at times very, very much; but I fear the time may come when I may love him less. You will not understand me; but the fact is I should love him better if he were less worthy of my love — if he were more worldly.”

“No, I do not understand that,” said Adela, thinking of her love, and the worldly prudence of him who should have been her lover.

“That is it — you do not understand me; and yet it is not selfishness on my part. I would marry a man in the hope of making him happy.”

“Certainly,” said Adela; “no girl should marry unless she have reasonable hope that she can do that.”

“He would wish me to go to him now, at once; when we have no sufficient income to support us.”

“Four hundred a year!” said Adela, reproachfully.

“What would four hundred a year do in London? Were I to consent, in a year or two he would be sick of me. He would be a wretched man, unless, indeed, his law-courts and his club kept him from being wretched; — his home would not do so.”

Adela silently compared the matter with her own affairs: her ideas were so absolutely different. “If he could have contented himself to live upon potatoes,” she had once thought to herself, “I could have contented

myself to live on the parings." She said nothing of this however to Caroline. Their dispositions she knew were different. After all, it may be that Miss Waddington had a truer knowledge of human nature.

"No, I shall not consent; I will not consent to be the cause of his misery and poverty; and then he will be angry with me, and we shall quarrel. He can be very stern, Adela; very."

"He is impetuous; but however angry he may be, he forgives immediately. He never bears malice," said Adela, remembering her early dealings with the boy-friend of her girlhood.

"He can be very stern now. I know it will come to our quarrelling; and when he finds that he cannot have his own way, that I cannot yield to him, his proud heart will revolt from me; I know it will."

Adela could only say that were she in her friend's place she would not think so much about income; but her gentle speech, the eloquence of which had an inward, rather than an outward tendency, had no effect on Caroline. If Bertram could not persuade her, it certainly was not probable that Adela Gauntlet should do so.

Messrs. Harcourt and Bertram reached Littlebath quite safely. Harcourt was to dine with the ladies in Montpellier Crescent — it was in Montpellier Crescent that Miss Baker lived — and as some sort of party was necessary for his honour, the curate was again invited, as were also the two Miss Gauntlets.

"You'll go on first, I suppose?" said Harcourt, when they had secured their rooms at the "Plough," and were preparing to dress. Bertram was well known at the "Plough" now, and there was not a boots or chamber-

maid about the house who did not know why he came to Littlebath.

"Oh, no," said Bertram, "I'll wait for you."

"I didn't know; I thought there might be some lover's privileges to be exercised, for which the eyes of the world might be inconvenient."

"They shall be postponed on your behalf, my dear fellow." And so the two went off together.

They found Miss Baker in her drawing-room, and with her Adela and aunt Penelope.

"And where is Caroline?" said George, when the introductions had been duly performed. He had to make a little effort to say this in a voice that should signify that he was at home there, but which should not savour too much of the lover. On the whole, he succeeded pretty well.

"Why, to tell the truth," said Miss Baker, laughing, "she is doing duty at this moment as head butler in the dining-room. If you feel any vocation that way, you may go and help her."

"Well, I am a fairish good hand at drawing a cork," said Bertram, as he left the room.

"So the lovers' privileges are all arranged for," thought Harcourt to himself.

When Bertram entered the dining-room, the butler's duties seemed to be complete; at any rate, Miss Waddington was not engaged in their performance. She was leaning on the mantelpiece, and was apparently engaged in contemplating a bouquet of flowers which Bertram had contrived to send to the house since his arrival at Littlebath. It was no wonder that the boots should know all about it.

Let us agree to say nothing about the lovers' privi-

leges. Caroline Waddington was not a girl to be very liberal of such favours, and on the occasion in question she was not more liberal than usual.

"Is Mr. Harcourt here?" said she.

"Yes, of course he is. He is upstairs."

"And I am to go up to be looked at. How vain you men are of your playthings! Not that you have anything in this respect of which you ought to be vain."

"But a great deal of which I ought to be, and am, very proud. I am proud of you, Caroline; proud at this moment that my friend should see how beautiful is the girl that loves me."

"Tush!" said Caroline, putting the back of her nose up to his mouth. "What delightful nonsense you can talk. But come, your London friend won't much appreciate my excellence if I keep him waiting for his dinner." And so they went upstairs.

But Caroline, though she laughed at her lover for showing her off, had not failed to make the best of herself. She was sufficiently anxious that Bertram should be proud of her, should have cause to be proud of her; and she seemed to be aware that if she could satisfy Mr. Harcourt's fastidious judgment, she might probably hope to pass as approved of among his other friends. She determined, therefore, to look her best as she walked into the drawing-room; and she did look her best.

"Mr. Harcourt, my niece, Miss Waddington," said Miss Baker. Harcourt, as he rose and bowed, was lost in wonder.

Bertram fell immediately into conversation with Miss Penelope Gauntlet, but even while listening to her enthusiasm as to Arthur Wilkinson's luck in getting the

living of Hurst Staple, and her praise of Lord Stapledean, he contrived to keep an eye on his friend Harcourt. "Yes, indeed, quite fortunate; wasn't it?" But as he thus spoke, his very soul within him was rejoicing at his own triumph. He had said nothing about Caroline personally; he had refrained his tongue, and now he had his reward.

We have said that Harcourt was lost in wonder, and such was literally the case. He had taught himself to believe that Caroline Waddington was some tall, sharp-nosed dowdy; with bright eyes, probably, and even teeth; with a simpering, would-be-witty smile, and full of little quick answers such as might suit well for the assembly-rooms at Littlebath. When he heard that she was engaged in seeing that the sherry-bottles were duly decantered, the standard of her value did not at all rise in his estimation. Candle-ends and cold mutton would doubtless be her forte, an economical washing-bill her strong point.

So was he thinking, much distressed in mind — for, to do him justice, he was as anxious on behalf of Bertram as it was in his nature to be anxious for any one — when a Juno entered the room. She did not swim in, or fly in, or glide in, but walked in, as women should walk if they properly understood their parts. She walked in as though she were mistress of her own soul, and afraid to meet no pair of eyes which any human being could bend upon her. He had intended in his good-nature to patronise her; but that other question instantly occurred to him — would she patronise him? Bertram he had known long and intimately, and held him therefore somewhat cheap in many respects, as we are all accustomed to hold our dearest friends.

But now, at once he rose in his estimation a hundred per cent. What might not be expected of a man whom such a woman would acknowledgē that she loved?

A Juno had entered the room; for her beauty, as we have said before, was that rather of the queen of the gods. George immediately acknowledged to himself that he had never before seen her look so grandly beautiful. Her charms have been related, and that relation shall not be repeated; but when first seen by Harcourt, their power was more thoroughly acknowledged by him, much more thoroughly than they had been by her lover when he had first met her. Then, however, she had been sitting at dinner between her aunt and Mr. M'Gabbery, quite unconscious that any one was arriving whose existence could be of importance to her.

There was no time for conversation then. The surprise arising from her entrance had, on Harcourt's part, hardly subsided, when the servant announced dinner, and he was called on to give his arm to Miss Baker.

"I hope you approve your friend's choice," said that lady, smiling.

"Miss Waddington is certainly the most lovely girl I ever beheld," replied he, with enthusiasm.

The Rev. Mr. Meek handed down Miss Penelope Gauntlet, and Bertram followed with the two girls, happy and high-spirited. He first tendered his arm to Adela, who positively refused it; then to Caroline, who was equally determined. Then, putting a hand behind the waist of each of them, he pushed them through the door before him. There are certainly some privileges which an accepted lover may take in a house, and no one but an accepted lover.

George took his seat at the bottom of the table, as

though he were quite at home; and Harcourt, happy sinner! found himself seated between Adela and Caroline. He was not good enough for such bliss. But had his virtues been ever so shining, how could they have availed him? Neither of his neighbours had a portion of a heart left to call her own.

But he was able to perceive that Caroline was not only beautiful. She talked to him almost exclusively, for she had capriciously seated herself away from her lover, and next to her aunt. "Adela," she had whispered, going downstairs, "I shall look to you to talk to George all the evening, for I mean to make a new conquest."

Bertram was delighted. It was hardly in him to be jealous, even had there been a shadow of cause. As it was, his love was doing exactly that which he wished her to do. She was vindicating his choice to the man whose judgment on the matter was most vitally essential to him.

When the ladies left the dining-room, both Bertram and Harcourt heartily wished that Miss Baker had not been so scrupulously hospitable. They hardly knew what to do with Mr. Meek. Mr. Meek remarked that Miss Baker was a very nice person, that Miss Waddington was a charming person, that Miss Penelope Gauntlet was a very nice person indeed, and that Miss Adela was a very sweet person; and then it seemed that all conversation was at end. "Eh! what! none especially; that is to say, the Middle Temple." Such had been Harcourt's reply to Mr. Meek's inquiry as to what London congregation he frequented; and then the three gentlemen seemed to be much occupied with their wine and biscuits. This invitation to Mr.

Meek had certainly been a mistake on Miss Baker's part.

But the misery did not last long. Of the first occasion on which Mr. Meek's glass was seen to be well empty, George took advantage. "If you don't take any more wine, Mr. Meek, we may as well go upstairs; eh, Harcourt?" and he looked suppliantly at his friend.

"Oh, I never take any more wine, you know. I'm an anchorite on such occasions as these." And so they went into the drawing-room, long before Miss Baker had her coffee ready for them.

"You see a good deal of Arthur now, I suppose?" said Bertram, addressing Adela.

"Yes; that is, not a very great deal. He has been busy since he took up the parish. But I see Mary frequently."

"Do you think Arthur likes it? He seemed to me to be hardly so much gratified as I should have thought he would have been. The living is a good one, and the marquis was certainly good-natured about it."

"Oh, yes, he was," said Adela.

"It will be a long time, I know, before I earn five hundred pounds a year. Do you know, he never wrote about it as though he thought he'd been lucky in getting it."

"Didn't he?"

"Never; and I thought he was melancholy and out of spirits when I saw him the other day. He ought to marry; that's the fact. A young clergyman with a living should always get a wife."

"You are like the fox that lost its tail," said Adela, trying hard to show that she joined in the conversation without an effort.

"Ah! but the case is very different. There can be no doubt that Arthur ought to lose his tail. His position in the world is one which especially requires him to lose it."

"He has his mother and sisters, you know."

"Oh, mother and sisters! Mother and sisters are all very well, or not very well, as the case may be; but the vicar of a parish should be a married man. If you can't get a wife for him down there in Hampshire, I shall have him up to London, and look one out for him there. Pray take the matter in hand when you go home, Miss Gauntlet."

Adela smiled, and did not blush; nor did she say that she quite agreed with him that the vicar of a parish should be a married man.

"Well, I shan't ask any questions," said Bertram, as soon as he and Harcourt were in the street, "or allow you to offer any opinion; because, as we have both agreed, you have not pluck enough to give it impartially." Bertram as he said this could hardly preserve himself from a slight tone of triumph.

"She is simply the most lovely woman that my eyes ever beheld," said Harcourt.

"Tush! can't you make it a little more out of the common way than that? But, Harcourt, without joke, you need not trouble yourself. I did want you to see her; but I don't care twopence as to your liking her. I shall think much more of your wife liking her — if you ever have a wife."

"Bertram, upon my word, I never was less in a mood to joke."

"That is saying very little, for you are always in a mood to joke." Bertram understood it all; saw clearly

what impression Miss Waddington had made, and for the moment was supremely happy.

"How ever you had the courage to propose yourself and your two hundred pounds a year to such a woman as that!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Why, Harcourt, you are not at all like yourself. If you admire her so much, I shall beg you not to come to Littlebath any more."

"Perhaps I had better not. But, Bertram, I beg to congratulate you most heartily. There is this against your future happiness —"

"What?"

"Why, you will never be known as Mr. George Bertram; but always as Mrs. George Bertram's husband. With such a bride-elect as that, you cannot expect to stand on your own bottom. If you can count on being lord-chancellor, or secretary of state, you may do so; otherwise, you'll always be known as an appendage."

"Oh, I'll put up with that misery."

This visit of inspection had been very successful, and George went to bed in the highest spirits. In the highest spirits also he walked to church with Harcourt, and there met the two ladies. There was something especially rapturous in the touch of his fingers as he shook hands with Caroline when the service was over; and Miss Baker declared that he looked almost handsome when he went home with them to lunch.

But that afternoon his bliss was destined to receive something of a check. It was imperative that Harcourt should be in town early on the Monday morning, and therefore it had been settled that they should return by the latest train that Sunday evening. They would just be able to dine with Miss Baker, and do this afterwards.

Harcourt had, of course, been anxious to be allowed to return alone; but Bertram had declined to appear to be too much in love to leave his mistress, and had persisted that he would accompany him.

This having been so decided, he had been invited to a little conference at Miss Baker's to be holden upstairs in her private little sitting-room before dinner. He had had one or two chats with Miss Baker in that same room before now, and therefore did not think so much of the invitation; but on this occasion he also found Caroline there. He felt at once that he was to be encountered with opposition.

Miss Baker opened the battle. "George," said she, "Caroline has made me promise to speak to you before you go up to town. Won't you sit down?"

"Upon my word," said he, seating himself on a sofa next to Caroline; "I hardly know what to say to it. You look so formal both of you. If I am to be condemned, my lord, I hope you'll give me a long day."

"That's just it," said Miss Baker; "it must be a long day, I'm afraid, George."

"What do you mean?"

"Why this; we think the marriage must be put off till after you have been called. You are both young, you know."

"Nonsense!" said George, rather too imperiously for a lover.

"Nay, but George, it is not nonsense," said Caroline, in her sweetest voice, almost imploringly. "Don't be impetuous; don't be angry with us. It is for your sake we say so."

"For my sake!"

"Yes, for your sake; for your sake;" and she put

his hand inside her arm, and almost pressed it to her bosom. "For your sake, certainly, George; you of whom we are so much bound to think."

"Then for my own sake I disdain any such solicitude. I know the world, at any rate, as well as either of you —"

"Ah! I am not sure of that," said Caroline.

"And I know well, that our joint income should be ample for the next four or five years. You will have to give up your horse —"

"I should think nothing of that, George; nothing."

"And that is all. How many thousand married couples are there, do you suppose, in London, who are now living on less than what our income will be?"

"Many thousands, doubtless. But very few, probably not one, so living happily, when the husband has been brought up in such a manner as has been Master George Bertram."

"Caroline, my belief is, that you know nothing about it. Some of your would-be-grand friends here in Littlebath have been frightening you on the score of income."

"I have no friend in Littlebath to whom I would condescend to speak on such a matter, except aunt Mary." Caroline's tone as she said this showed some slight offence; but not more than she had a right to show.

"And what do you say, aunt Mary?"

"Well, I really agree with Caroline; I really do."

"Ah, she has talked you over." This was true.

"And what is the date, Miss Waddington, that you are now kind enough to name for our wedding-day?" asked George, in a tone half of anger and half of banter. To Caroline's ear, the anger seemed to predominate.

"The day after you shall have been called to the bar, Mr. Bertram. That is, if the press of two such great events together will not be too much for you."

"Of course you know that that is putting it off for nearly three years?"

"For more than two, I believe, certainly."

"And you can talk quite coolly about such a delay as that?"

"Not quite coolly, George; but, at any rate, with a fixed purpose."

"And am not I then to have a fixed purpose also?"

"Certainly, dearest, you can. You can say, if you are cruel enough, that it shall be postponed for two years again after that. Or you can say, if you will do so, that under such circumstances you will not marry me at all. We have each got what you lawyers call a veto. Now, George, I put my veto upon poverty for you, and discomfort, and an untidy house, and the perils of a complaining, fretful wife. If I can ever assist you to be happy, and prosperous, and elate before the world, I will try my best to do so; but I will not come to you like a clog round your neck, to impede all your efforts in your first struggle at rising. If I can wait, George, surely you can? An unfulfilled engagement can be no impediment to a man, whatever it may be to a girl."

It may have been perceived by this time that Miss Waddington was not a person easy to be talked over. On this occasion, Bertram failed altogether in moving her. Even though at one moment aunt Mary had almost yielded to him, Caroline remained steady as a rock. None of his eloquence — and he was very eloquent on the occasion — changed her at all. She became soft in her tone, and affectionate, almost caressing in her manner;

but nothing would induce her to go from her point. Bertram got on a very high horse, and spoke of the engagement as being thus practically broken off. She did not become angry, or declare that she took him at his word; but with a low voice she said that she was aware that her determination gave him an option in the matter. He would certainly be justified in so resolving; nay, might do so without the slightest stain upon his faith. She herself would not violate the truth by saying that such a decision would give her pleasure; that it would — would —” Here for the first time she became rather agitated, and before she could finish, George was at her feet, swearing that he could not, would not live without her; that she knew that he could not, and would not do so.

And so the little conference ended. George had certainly gained nothing. Caroline had gained this, that she had made known her resolution, and had, nevertheless, not lost her lover. To all the expressions of her determination not to marry till George should be a barrister, aunt Mary had added a little clause — that such decision might at any moment be changed by some new act of liberality on the part of uncle Bertram. In aunt Mary's mind, the rich uncle, the rich grandfather, was still the god that was to come down upon the stage and relieve them from their great difficulty.

As George returned to town with his friend, his love was not quite so triumphant as it had been that morning on his road to church.

CHAPTER XVI.

The New Member for the Battersea Hamlets.

I MUST now ask my readers to pass over two years with me. It is a terrible gap in a story; but in these days the unities are not much considered, and a hiatus which would formerly have been regarded as a fault utterly fatal is now no more than a slight impropriety.

But something must be told of the occurrences of these two years. In the first place, no marriage had taken place — that is, among our personages; nor had their ranks been thinned by any death. In our retrospective view we will give the *pas* to Mr. Harcourt, for he had taken the greatest stride in winning that world's success, which is the goal of all our ambition. He had gone on and prospered greatly; and nowadays all men at the bar said all manner of good things of him. He was already in Parliament as the honourable member for the Battersea Hamlets, and was not only there, but listened to when it suited him to speak. But when he did speak, he spoke only as a lawyer. He never allowed himself to be enticed away from his own profession by the meretricious allurements of general politics: On points of law reform, he had an energetic opinion; on matters connected with justice, he had ideas which were very much his own — or which at least were stated in language which was so; being a denizen of the common law, he was loud against the delays and cost of Chancery, and was supposed to have supplied the legal details of a very telling tale which was written about this time with the object of upsetting the lord-chancellor as then constituted.

But though he worked as a member only in legal matters, of course he was always ready to support his party with his vote in all matters. His party! here had been his great difficulty on first entering the House of Commons. What should be his party?

He had worked hard as a lawyer. In so doing no party had been necessary to him. Honest hard work—honest, that is, as regarded the work itself, if not always so as regarded the object. Honest hard work, and some cunning in the method of his eloquence, had at first sufficed him. He was not called upon to have, or at any rate to state, any marked political tenets. But no man can rise to great note as a lawyer without a party. Opulence without note would by no means have sufficed with Mr. Harcourt.

When, therefore, he found it expedient in the course of his profession to go into Parliament, and with this object presented himself to the inhabitants of the Battersea Hamlets, it was necessary that he should adopt a party. At that time the political watchword of the day was the repeal of the corn laws. Now the electors of the Battersea Hamlets required especially to know whether Mr. Harcourt was or was not for free trade in corn.

To tell the truth, he did not care two straws about corn. He cared only for law — for that and what was to be got by it. It was necessary that he should assume some care for corn — learn a good deal about it, perhaps, so as to be able, if called on, to talk on the subject by the hour at a stretch; but it was not a matter on which he was personally solicitous a fortnight or so before he began his canvass.

The Conservatives were at that time in, and were declared foes to free trade in corn. They were committed

to the maintenance of a duty on imported wheat — if any men were ever politically committed to anything. Indeed, it had latterly been their great shibboleth — latterly; that is, since their other greater shibboleths had been cut from under their feet.

At that time men had not learnt thoroughly by experience, as now they have, that no reform, no innovation — experience almost justifies us in saying no revolution — stinks so foully in the nostrils of an English Tory politician as to be absolutely irreconcilable to him. When taken in the refreshing waters of office any such pill can be swallowed. This is now a fact recognized in politics; and it is a great point gained in favour of that party that their power of deglutition should be so recognized. Let the people want what they will, Jew senators, cheap corn, vote by ballot, no property qualification, or anything else, the Tories will carry it for them if the Whigs cannot. A poor Whig premier has none but the Liberals to back him; but a reforming Tory will be backed by all the world — except those few whom his own dishonesty will personally have disgusted.

But at that time — some twelve or fifteen years since — all this was not a part of the political A B C; and Harcourt had much doubt in his own mind as to the party which ought to be blessed with his adherence. Lord chancellorships and lord chief-justiceships, though not enjoyed till middle life, or, indeed, till the evening of a lawyer's days, must, in fact, be won or lost in the heyday of his career. One false step in his political novitiate may cost him everything. A man when known as a recognized Whig may fight battle after battle with mercenary electors, sit yawning year after year till twelve o'clock, ready to attack on every point the tactics of his

honourable and learned friend on the Treasury seats, and yet see junior after junior rise to the bench before him — and all because at starting he decided wrongly as to his party.

If Harcourt had predilections, they were with the Whigs; but he was not weak enough to let any predilection be a burden to his interests. Where was the best opening for him? The Tories — I still prefer the name, as being without definite meaning; the direct falsehood implied in the title of Conservative amounts almost to a libel — the Tories were in; but from the fact of being in, were always liable to be turned out. Then, too, they were of course provided with attorneys and solicitors-general, lords-advocate and legal hangers-on of every sort. The coming chances might be better with the Whigs.

Under these circumstances, he went to his old friend Mr. Die, Mr. Neversaye Die, the rich, quiet, hard-working, old chancery barrister, to whose fostering care he had some time since recommended his friend Bertram. Every one has some quiet, old, family, confidential friend; a man given to silence, but of undoubted knowledge of the world, whose experience is vast, and who, though he has not risen in the world himself, is always the man to help others to do so. Every one has such a friend as this, and Mr. Neversaye Die was Harcourt's. Mr. Die himself was supposed to be a Tory, quite of the old school, a Lord Eldon Tory; but Harcourt knew that this would in no way bias his judgment. The mind of a barrister who has been for fifty years practising in court will never be biassed by his predilections.

Mr. Die soon understood the whole matter. His young friend Harcourt was going into Parliament with

the special object of becoming a-solicitor-general as soon as possible. He could so become by means only of two moving powers. He must be solicitor-general either to the Whigs or to the Tories. To which he should be so was a question mainly indifferent to Mr. Harcourt himself, and also to Mr. Die in framing his advice.

Mr. Die himself of course regarded corn-law repeal as an invention of the devil. He had lived long enough to have regarded Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform in the same light. Could you have opened his mind, you would probably have found there a settled conviction that the world was slowly coming to an end, that end being brought about by such devilish works as these. But you would also have found a conviction that the Three per Cents. would last his time, and that his fear for the future might with safety be thrown forward, so as to appertain to the fourth or fifth, or, perhaps, even to the tenth or twelfth coming generation. Mr. Die was not, therefore, personally wretched under his own political creed.

"I should be inclined to support the government if I were going into Parliament as a young man," said Mr. Die.

"There are nine seniors of mine in the House who now do so." By seniors, Mr. Harcourt alluded to his seniors at the bar.

"Yes; but they like young blood nowadays. I think it's the safest."

"I shall never carry the Battersea Hamlets unless I pledge myself on this corn-law question."

"Well," said Mr. Die — "well; a seat is certainly a great thing, and not to be had at any moment. I think I should be inclined to yield to the electors."

“And commit myself to the repeal of the corn laws?”

“Commit yourself!” said Mr. Die, with a gentle smile. “A public man has to commit himself to many things nowadays. But my opinion is, that — that you may hold the popular opinion about free trade, and be not a whit the less useful to Sir Robert on that account.”

Mr. Harcourt was still a young man, and was, therefore, excusable in not seeing to the depth of Mr. Die’s wisdom. He certainly did not see to the depth of it; but he had come to his oracle with faith, and wisely resolved to be guided by wisdom so much superior to his own.

“Never bind yourself wantonly to an expiring policy,” said Mr. Die. “The man who does so has surely to unbind himself; and, to say the least of it, that always takes time.”

So Mr. Harcourt presented himself to the electors of the Battersea Hamlets as a man very anxious in their behalf in all things, but anxious in their behalf above all things for free trade in corn. “Is it credible, that now, in this year of grace 184-, —” and so on. Such were the eloquent words which he addressed to the electors on this subject, and so taken were they by his enthusiasm that they returned him by a large majority.

Mr. Dod, therefore, in his remarkably useful little parliamentary compendium, put down Mr. Harcourt as a liberal: this he had an opportunity of doing immediately after Mr. Harcourt’s election: in his next edition, however, he added, “but supports the general policy of Sir Robert Peel’s government.”

Mr. Harcourt had altogether managed this little affair so well that, despite his youth, despite also those nine

political seniors of his, men began to talk of him as one who might shortly hope to fill high places. He made himself very useful in the House, and did so in a quiet, business-like, unexciting manner, very pleasant to the leading politician of the Treasury bench.

And then there came the Irish famine, and all the bindings of all the Tories were scattered to the winds like feathers. The Irishman's potato-pot ceased to be full, and at once the great territorial magnates of England were convinced that they had clung to the horns of a false altar. They were convinced; or at least had to acknowledge such conviction. The prime minister held short little debates with his underlings — with dukes and marquises, with earls and viscounts; held short debates with them, but allowed to no underling — to no duke, and to no viscount — to have any longer an opinion of his own. The altar had been a false altar: it was enough for them that they were so told. With great wisdom the majority of them considered that this *was* enough; and so the bill for the repeal of the corn laws was brought before the House, and the world knew that it would be carried.

And now there was a great opportunity for Mr. Harcourt. He could support the prime minister and merit all manner of legal genrealships without any self-unbinding. Alas! such comfort as this can only belong to the young among politicians! Up to this period he had meddled only with law questions. Now was the time for him to come out with that great liberal speech, which should merit the eternal gratitude of the Tory leader. Just at the time at which we recommence our tale he did come out with a very great liberal speech, in which, as an independent member, he vehemently

eulogized the daring policy of that great man who, as he said, was brave enough, and wise enough, and good enough to save his country at the expense of his party. Whether there were not men who could have saved their country without betraying their friends — who would have done so had not Sir Robert been ready with his apostacy; who in fact did so by forcing Sir Robert to his apostacy — as to that, Mr. Harcourt then said nothing. What might not be expected from the hands of a man so eulogized? of a man who was thus able to keep the votes of the Tories and carry the measures of the Liberals? of a man of whom it might now be predicated that his political power would end only with his political life? We should be going on too fast were we to declare in how few months after this triumph that great political chieftain was driven from the Treasury bench.

Mr. Harcourt's name was now mentioned in all clubs and all dining-rooms. He was an acute and successful lawyer, an eloquent debater, and a young man. The world was at his feet, and Mr. Die was very proud of him. Mr. Die was proud of him, and proud also of his own advice. He said nothing about it even to Harcourt himself, for to Mr. Die had been given the gift of reticence; but his old eye twinkled as his wisdom was confessed by the youth at his feet. "In politics one should always look forward," he said, as he held up to the light the glass of old port which he was about to sip; "in real life it is better to look back, — if one has anything to look back at." Mr. Die had something to look back at. He had sixty thousand pounds in the funds.

And now we must say a word of Mr. Harcourt, with

reference to the other persons of our story. He was still very intimate with Bertram, but he hardly regarded him in the same light as he had done two years before. Bertram had not hitherto justified the expectation of his friends. This must be explained more at length in the next two chapters; but the effect on Harcourt had been that he no longer looked up with reverence to his friend's undoubted talents. He had a lower opinion of him than formerly. Indeed, he himself had risen so quickly that he had left Bertram immeasurably below him, and the difference in their pursuits naturally brought them together less frequently than heretofore.

But if Harcourt was less concerned than he had been with George Bertram junior, he was much more concerned than he had been with George Bertram senior. He had in former days known nothing of the old merchant; now he was, within certain bounds, almost intimate with him; occasionally dined down at Hadley, and frequently consulted him on money matters of deep import.

With Miss Baker, also, and Caroline Waddington, Mr. Harcourt was intimate. Between him and Miss Baker there existed a warm friendship, and with Caroline, even, he was on such terms that she often spoke to him as to the deep troubles of her love and engagement. For these were deep troubles, as will be seen also in the coming chapters.

George Bertram had been told by Miss Baker that Caroline was the granddaughter of old Mr. Bertram, and George in his confidence with his friend had told him the secret. Indeed, there had been hardly any alternative, for George had been driven to consult his friend more than once as to this delay in his marriage; and

who can ever consult a friend with advantage to any subject without telling him all the circumstances?

It was after this that Harcourt and Miss Baker became so intimate. The ladies at Littlebath had many troubles, and during those troubles the famous young barrister was very civil to them. In the latter of those two years that are now gone, circumstances had brought them up to London for a couple of months in the spring; and then they saw much of Mr. Harcourt, but nothing of George Bertram, though George was still the affianced husband of Miss Waddington.

CHAPTER XVII.

Retrospective. — First Year.

GEORGE BERTRAM had returned to town that Sunday after the conference in Miss Baker's little room not in the very best of moods. He had talked glibly enough on his way back, because it had been necessary for him to hide his chagrin; but he had done so in a cynical tone, which had given Harcourt to understand that something was wrong. For some ten days after that there had been no intercourse between him and Littlebath; and then he had written a letter to Caroline, full of argument, full also of tenderness, in which he essayed to move her from her high resolve. He had certainly written strongly, if not well. "He was working," he said, "nearly as hard as a man could work, in order to insure success for her. Nothing he was aware but the idea that he was already justified in looking on her as his wife would have induced him to labour so strictly; and for this he was grateful to her. She had given him this great and necessary incitement; and he therefore

thanked God that he had on his shoulders the burden, as well as in his heart the blessing, of such an engagement. But the strain would be too great for him if the burden were to remain present to him daily, while the blessing was to be postponed for so long a time. He had already felt his spirits numbed and his energy weakened. It seemed to him in all his daily work that his great hope had been robbed from him. His dreams told him that he was to be happy, but his waking moments brought him back to disappointment. He knew that he could not endure it, that he could not remain there at his post, diligent as he fain would be, if his reward were to be postponed for so long. "As being under a holy engagement to you," he wrote, perhaps almost too solemnly, "I have given up that sort of life to which my natural disposition might have led me. Do not suppose that I say this with regret. I rejoice to have done so, rejoice to be so doing; but it is for you that I do it. Should I not look to you for my reward? Granting that there may be risk, shall not I share it? Supposing that there may be suffering, shall not I endure it? And if a man with his best efforts may protect a woman from suffering, I will protect you." So he had written, and had ended by imploring her to let them be married that autumn.

By return of post he got three lines from her, calling him her dearest, dearest George, and requesting that he would allow her a week to answer his letter at length. It could not be answered without deep thought. This gratified him much, and he wrote another note to her, begging her on no account to hurry herself; that he would wait for her reply with the utmost patience; but again imploring her to be merciful. It was, however,

apparent in the tone of his note, apparent at least to Caroline, that he judged the eloquence of his letter to be unanswerable, and that he was already counting on her surrender. This lessened the effect of it on Caroline's heart; — for when first received it had had a strong effect.

On that first morning, when she read it in her bedroom before she went down to breakfast, it certainly had a strong effect on her. She made up her mind that she would say nothing about it to her aunt, at any rate on that day. Her aunt would have advised her to yield at once, and she would have preferred some counsellor of a sterner sort. So she put the letter in her pocket, went down tranquilly to breakfast, and after breakfast wrote the note which we have mentioned.

All that day she thought about it to herself, and all the next day. On the evening of the second day she had all but brought herself to give in. Then came George's note, and the fancied tone of triumph hardened her heart once more. On the evening of that day she was firm to her principles. She had acted hitherto, and would continue to act, according to the course she had laid down for herself.

On the fourth day she was sitting in the drawing-room alone — for her aunt had gone out of Littlebath for the day — when Adela Gauntlet came to call on her. Adela she knew would counsel her to yield, and therefore she would certainly not have gone to Adela for advice. But she was sad at heart; and sitting there with the letter among her threads and needles before her, she gradually found it impossible not to talk of it — to talk of it, and at last to hand it over to be read.

There could be no doubt at all as to the nature of Adela's advice; but Caroline had had no conception of the impetuosity of matured conviction on the subject, of the impassioned eloquence with which that advice would be given. She had been far from thinking that Adela had any such power of passion.

"Well," said she, as Adela slowly folded the sheet and put it back into its envelope; "well; what answer shall I make to it?"

"Can you doubt, Caroline?" said Adela, and Miss Gauntlet's eyes shone as Caroline had never before seen them shine.

"Indeed, I do doubt; doubt very much. Not that I ought to doubt. What I knew to be wise a week ago, I know also to be wise now. But one is so weak, and it is so hard to refuse those whom we love."

"Hard, indeed!" said Adela. "To my thinking, a woman would have a stone instead of a heart who could refuse such a request as that from a man to whom she has confessed her love."

"But because you love a man, would you wish to make a beggar of him?"

"We are too much afraid of what we call beggary," said Adela. "Beggary, Caroline, with four hundred pounds a year! You had no right to accept a man if you intended to decline to live with him on such an income as that. He should make no request; it should come from him as a demand."

"A demand. No; his time for demands has not yet come."

"But it has come if you are true to your word. You should have thought of all this, and no doubt did

think of it, before you accepted him. You have no right now to make him wretched."

"And, therefore, I will not make him poor."

"Poor, poor! How fearfully afraid we are of poverty! Is there nothing worse than poverty, what you call poverty — poverty that cannot have its gowns starched above once a week?" Caroline stared at her, but Adela went on. "Broken hearts are not half so bad as that; nor daily tears and disappointed hopes, nor dry, dull, dead, listless despondency without one drop of water to refresh it! All that is as nothing to a well-grounded apprehension as to one's larder! Never marry till you are sure that will be full, let the heart be ever so empty."

"Adela!"

"For others there may be excuse," she continued, thinking then, as always, of that scene at West Putford, and defending to herself him whom to herself she so often accused; "but for you there can be none. If you drive him from you now, whatever evil may befall him will lie like a weight of lead upon your heart. If you refuse him now, he is not the man to take it quietly and wait."

"I can live without him."

"Yes; it is your pride to say so; and I believe you could live without him. But I think too well of you to believe that you could live happily without him; nor will he be happy without you. You will both be proud, and stony-hearted, and wretched — stony-hearted at least in appearance; not fortunate enough to become so in reality."

"Why, Adela, one would think that you yourself

were the victim of some passion nipped in its bud by a cruel prudence."

"And so I am." As she said this she rose from her seat as though she intended, standing there before her companion, to go on with her impassioned warning. But the effect was too much for her; and falling down on her knees, with her face buried in her hands, she rested them on the sofa, and gave way to sobs and tears.

Caroline was of course much shocked, and did what she could to relieve her; but Adela merely begged that she might be left to herself one minute. "One minute," she said plaintively, in a voice so different from that she had used just now; "one minute and I shall be well again. I have been very foolish, but never say anything about it; never, never, not to any one; promise me, promise me, Caroline. Dear Caroline, you do promise me? No one knows it; no one must know it."

Caroline did promise; but with a natural curiosity she wanted to know the whole story. Adela, however, would tell her nothing, would say no more about herself. In the agony of her strong feeling she had once pointed to herself as a beacon; but even she herself could not endure to do this again. She would say nothing further about that; but in a more plaintive and softer tone she did not cease to implore her friend not to throw away from her the rich heart which was still within her grasp.

A scene such as this could not but have an effect on Caroline; but it did not ultimately have that which Adela had wished. It was Miss Waddington's doctrine that she should not under any circumstances of life permit herself to be carried away by passion. Why

then should she allow Adela's passion to convince her? What were the facts? Of Adela's own case she knew nothing. It might be that she had been cruelly treated. Her friends, her lover, or even she herself might have been in fault. But it would surely be the extreme of folly for her, Caroline Waddington, to allow herself to be actuated by the example of one who had not even shown her of what that example consisted.

The upshot of it all was, that at the end of the week she wrote to George, declaring that, grieved as she was to grieve him, she felt herself obliged to adhere to her former resolution. She also wrote strongly, and perhaps with more force of logic than her lover had done. "I trust the time will come," she said, "when you will acknowledge that I have been right. But of this I am quite sure, that were I now to yield to you, the time would come very quickly when you would acknowledge me to have been wrong; and that you should then think me to have been wrong would kill me. I am not, I know, fitted, either by disposition or education, to be a poor man's wife. I say this with no pride; though if you choose to take it for pride, I cannot help myself. Nor are you fitted to be the husband of a poor wife. Your love and enthusiasm now make you look on want as a slight evil; but have you ever tried want? Since you left school, have you not had everything that money could buy you? Have you ever been called on to deny yourself any reasonable wish? Never, I believe. Nor have I. What right have we then to suppose that we can do that for each other which we have never yet done for ourselves?

"You talk of the misery of waiting. Is it not because you have as yet known no misery? Have not all

men to wait who look for success in life? — to work, and wait, and bide their time? Your present work is, I know, too hard. In whatever you do, you have too much enthusiasm. Do not kill yourself by work. For my sake, if I may still plead my own sake, do not do so. You say you have given up that sort of life to which your disposition would have led you. I do not believe your disposition to be bad, and I should be grieved to think that you debar yourself from pleasures that are not bad because you are engaged to me." There was that in the eagerness of Bertram's protestations on this point which could not but be flattering to any girl; but Caroline, when she thought of it, did not wish to be so flattered. She required less passion in her lover and more judgment. She wanted him to be more awake to the fact that the true meaning of their engagement was this, that they two should join themselves together in their world's battle, in order that together each might fight that battle more successfully than either of them could do apart.

"I write this with great grief," she continued, "as I know that what I write will grieve you. But I write it under a conviction that I am doing my duty by you. I am ready, however, to acknowledge that such a delay may not be in consonance with your intentions when you proposed to me. That neither of us have deceived the other wilfully I am quite sure; but it may be that we have misunderstood each other. If so, dear George, let all this be as though it had never been. I do not say this on my own behalf. If you so wish it, I am ready to hold myself as yours, and to wait. Ready, I have said! That is a cold word, and you may supply any other that your heart wishes. But if this waiting

be contrary to your wishes, be what you are not willing to endure, then consider the matter as altogether in your own hands. I certainly have no right to bind you to my will; all that I ask in such case is, that your decision shall not be delayed."

Such was Miss Waddington's letter; a portion of it, at least, for not above the half has been given here. Its effect upon Bertram had not been exhilarating. In his heart he called her cold and heartless, and at first resolved to take her at her word and break off from her. He would willingly have done so as far as she was concerned; but he could not bring himself to do it on his own part. He could not endure to part with her, though he would willingly have punished her by telling her that she had forfeited her claim to him. As it was, he did nothing. For three weeks he neither answered the letter nor went near her, nor gave her any token that he was thinking about her.

Then came a note from Miss Baker, asking him to come to Littlebath. It was good-humoured, playful, almost witty; too much so for Miss Baker's unassisted epistle-craft, and he at once saw that Caroline had dictated it. Her heart at any rate was light. He answered it by one equally good-humoured and playful, and perhaps more witty, addressed of course to Miss Baker, in which he excused himself at present in consequence of the multiplicity of his town engagements. It was June, and he could not get away without making himself guilty of all manner of perjuries; but in August he would certainly take Littlebath on his way to Scotland.

He had intended that every light word should be a dagger in Caroline's bosom; but there was not a pin's prick in the whole of it. Sullen grief on his part would

have hurt her. And it would have hurt her had he taken her at her word and annulled their engagement; for she had begun to find that she loved him more than she had thought possible. She had talked in her prudence, and written in her prudence, of giving him up; but when the time came in which she might expect a letter from him, saying that so it should be, her heart did tremble at the postman's knock; she did feel that she had something to fear. But his joyous, clever, laughing answer to her aunt was all that she could wish. Though she loved him, she could wait; though she loved him, she did not wish him to be sad when he was away from her. She had reason and measure in her love; but it was love, as she began to find — almost to her own astonishment.

George had alluded not untruly to his own engagements. On the day after he received Caroline's letter he shut up Coke upon Lyttleton for that term, and shook the dust off his feet on the threshold of Mr. Die's chambers. Why should he work? why sit there filling his brain with cobwebs, pouring over old fusty rules couched in obscure language, and useful only for assisting mankind to cheat each other? He had had an object; but that was gone. He had wished to prove to one heart, to one soul, that, young as he was, poor as he was, she need not fear to trust herself to his guardianship. Despite his musty toils, she did fear. Therefore, he would have no more of them. No more of them at any rate then, while the sun was shining so brightly. So he went down to Richmond with Twisleton and Madden, and Hopgood and Fortescue. Heaven knows what they did when they got back to town that night — or, rather, perhaps heaven's enemy. And why not? Caro-

line did not care whether or no he amused himself as other men do. For her sake he had kept himself from these things. As she was indifferent, why need he care? He cared no longer. There was no more law that term; no more eulogy from gratified Mr. Die; but of jovial days at Richmond or elsewhere there were plenty; plenty also of jovial Bacchanalian nights in London. Miss Waddington had been very prudent; but there might perhaps have been a prudence yet more desirable.

He did go down to Littlebath on his way to Scotland, and remained there three days. He made up his mind as he journeyed down to say nothing about their late correspondence to Caroline till she should first speak of it; and as she had come to an exactly similar resolution on her part, and as both adhered to their intentions, it so fell out that nothing in the matter was said by either of them. Caroline was quite satisfied; but not so Bertram. He again said to himself that she was cold and passionless; as cold as she is beautiful, he declared as he walked home to the "Plough." How very many young gentlemen have made the same soliloquy when their mistresses have not been so liberal as they would have had them!

The lovers passed the three days together at Littlebath with apparent satisfaction. They rode together, and walked together, and on one evening danced together; nay, they talked together, and Miss Baker thought that everything was smooth. But Bertram, as he went off to Scotland, said to himself that she was very, very cold, and began to question with himself whether she did really love him.

"Do write to me, and tell me what sport you have," Caroline had said when he went away. What a subject

for a woman to choose for her lover's letters! She never said, "Write, write often; and always when you write, swear that you love me." "Oh, yes, I'll write," said Bertram, laughing. "I'll give you a succinct account of every brace." "And send some of them too," said Miss Baker. "Certainly," said George; and so he did.

He was joined with Harcourt and one or two others in this trip to Scotland, and it was then that he told his friend how much he was disturbed by Miss Waddington's obstinacy; and how he doubted, not as to her heart being his, but as to her having a heart to belong to any one. In answer to this, Harcourt gave him pretty nearly the same counsel as she had done. "Wait, my dear fellow, with a little patience; you'll have lots of time before you for married troubles. What's the use of a man having half-a-score of children round him just when he is beginning to enjoy life? It is that that Miss Waddington thinks about; though, of course, she can't tell you so."

And then, also — that is to say, on some occasion a little subsequent to the conversation above alluded to — Bertram also told his friend what he knew of Miss Waddington's birth.

"Whew-w-w," whistled Harcourt; "is that the case? Well, now I am surprised."

"It is, indeed."

"And he has agreed to the marriage?"

"He knows of it, and has not disagreed. Indeed, he made some peddling little offer about money."

"But what has he said to you about it?"

"Nothing, not a word. I have only seen him once since Christmas, and then I did not speak of it; nor did he."

Harcourt asked fifty other questions on the matter, all eagerly, as though he considered this newly-learned fact to be of the greatest importance: all of which Bertram answered, till at last he was tired of talking of his uncle.

"I cannot see that it makes any difference," said he, "whose granddaughter she is."

"But it does make the greatest difference. I own that I am surprised now that Miss Waddington should wish to delay the marriage. I thought I understood her feelings and conduct on the matter, and must say that I regarded them as admirable. But I cannot quite understand her now. It certainly seems to me that with such a guarantee as that she needs be afraid of nothing. Whichever of you he selected, it would come to the same thing."

"Harcourt, if she would marry me to-morrow because by doing so she would make sure of my uncle's money, by heaven, I would not take her! If she will not take me for myself, and what I can do for her, she may let me alone." Thus majestically spoke Bertram, sitting with his friend on the side of a Scottish mountain, with a flask of brandy and a case of sandwiches between them.

"Then," said Harcourt, "you are an ass;" and as he spoke he finished the flask.

Bertram kept his word, and told his lady-love all particulars as to the game he killed; some particulars also he gave her as to scenery, as to his friends, and as to Scotch people. He wrote nice, chatty, amusing letters, such as most people love to get from their friends; but he said little or nothing about love. Once or twice he ventured to tell her of some pretty girl that he met, of

some adventure with a laird's daughter; nay, insinuated laughingly that he had not escaped from it quite heart-whole. Caroline answered his letter in the same tone; told him, with excellent comedy, of the leading facts of life in Littlebath; recommended him by all means to go back after the laird's daughter; described the joy of her heart at unexpectedly meeting Mr. M'Gabbery in the pump-room, and her subsequent disappointment at hearing that there was now a Mrs. M'Gabbery. He had married that Miss Jones, of whom the parental Potts had so strongly disapproved. All this was very nice, very amusing, and very friendly. But Bertram, as a lover, knew that he was not satisfied.

When he had done with the grouse and the laird's daughter he went to Oxford, but he did not then go again to Littlebath. He went to Oxford, and from thence to Arthur Wilkinson's parsonage. Here he saw much of Adela; and consoled himself by talking with her about Caroline. To her he did not conceal his great anger. While he was still writing good-humoured, witty letters to his betrothed, he was saying of her to Adela Gauntlet things harsh — harsher perhaps in that they were true.

"I had devoted myself to her," he said. "I was working for her as a galley-slave works, and was contented to do it. I would have borne anything, risked anything, endured anything, if she would have borne it with me. All that I have should have gone to shield her from discomfort. I love her still, Miss Gauntlet; it is perhaps my misery that I love her. But I can never love her now as I should have done had she come to me then."

"How can I work now?" he said again. "I shall be called to the bar of course; there is no difficulty in

that; and may perhaps earn what will make us decently respectable. But the spirit, the high spirit is gone. She is better pleased that it should be so. She is intolerant of enthusiasm. Is it not a pity, Miss Gauntlet, that we should be so different?"

What could Adela say to him? Every word that he uttered was to her a truth — a weary, melancholy truth; a repetition of that truth which was devouring her own heart. She sympathized with him fully, cordially, ardently. She said no word absolutely in dispraise of Caroline, but she admitted, and at last admitted so often, that, according to her thinking, Caroline was wrong.

"Wrong!" Bertram would shout. "Can there be a doubt? Can any one with a heart doubt?" Adela said, "No; no one with a heart could doubt."

"She has no heart," said Bertram. "She is lovely, clever, fascinating, elegant. She has everything a woman should have except a heart — except a heart." And then, as he turned away his face, Adela could see that he brushed his hand across his eyes.

What could she do but weep too? And is it not known to all men — certainly it is to all women — how dangerous are such tears?

Thus during his stay at Hurst Staple, Bertram was frequently at West Putford. But he observed that Adela was not often at his cousin's vicarage, and that Arthur was very seldom at West Putford. The families, it was clear, were on as good terms as ever. Adela and Mary and Sophia would be together, and old Mr. Gauntlet would dine at Hurst Staple, and Arthur would talk about the old rector freely enough. But Bertram rarely saw Adela unless he went to the rectory, and though he

dined there with the Wilkinson girls three or four times, Arthur only dined there once.

"Have you and Arthur quarrelled?" said he to Adela one day, laughing as he spoke.

"Oh, no," said she; but she could not keep down her rebellious colour as she answered him, and Bertram at once took the hint. To her he said nothing further on that matter.

"And why don't you marry, Arthur?" he asked the next morning.

And Arthur also blushed, not thinking then of Adela Gauntlet, but of that pledge which he had given to Lord Stapledean — a pledge of which he had repented every day since he had given it.

And here it may be explained, that as Arthur Wilkinson had repented of that pledge, and had felt more strongly from day to day that it had put him in a false and unworthy position, so did his mother from day to day feel with less force the compunction which she had at first expressed as to receiving her son's income. This had become less and less, and now, perhaps, it could no longer boast of an existence. The arrangement seemed to her to be so essentially a good one, her children were provided for in so convenient and so comfortable a manner, it was so natural that she should regard herself as the mistress of that house, perhaps no blame is due to her in that this compunction ceased. No blame is now heaped upon her, and the fact is merely stated. She had already learned to regard herself as the legal owner of that ecclesiastical income; and seeing that her son deducted a stipend of one hundred and fifty pounds for merely doing the duty — a curate would have only had the half of that sum, as she sometimes

said to herself — and seeing also that he had his fellowship, she had no scruple in making him pay fairly for whatever extra accommodation he received at home — exactly as she would have done had poor dear old Mr. Wilkinson not been out of the way. Considering all these comfortable circumstances, poor dear old Mr. Wilkinson was perhaps not regretted quite so much as might otherwise have been the case.

Mrs. Wilkinson was in the habit of saying many things from day to day in praise of that good Lord Stapledean, who had so generously thought of her and her widowhood. When she did so Arthur would look grim and say nothing, and his mother would know that he was displeased. "Surely he cannot begrudge us the income," she had once said to her eldest daughter. "Oh, no; I am sure he does not," said Mary; "but, somehow, he is not so happy about things as he used to be." "Then he must be a very ungrateful boy," said the mother. Indeed, what more could a young full-fledged vicar want than to have a comfortable house under his mother's apron-string?

"And why don't you marry?" Bertram had asked his cousin. It was odd that Arthur should not marry, seeing that Adela Gauntlet lived so near him, and that Adela was so very, very beautiful.

Up to that day, Bertram had heard nothing of the circumstances under which the living had been given. Then did Wilkinson tell him the story, and ended by saying — "You now see that my marriage is quite out of the question."

Then Bertram began to think that he understood why Adela also remained unmarried, and he began to ask himself whether all the world were as cold-hearted

as his Caroline. Could it be that Adela also had refused to venture till her future husband should have a good, comfortable, disposable income of his own? But, if so, she would not have sympathized so warmly with him; and if so, what reason could there be why she and Arthur should not meet each other? Could it then be that Arthur Wilkinson was such a coward?

He said nothing on the matter to either of them, for neither of them had confided to him their sorrows — if they had sorrows. He had no wish to penetrate their secrets. What he had said, and what he had learnt, he had said and learnt by accident. He himself had not their gift of reticence, so he talked of his love occasionally to Arthur, and he talked of it very often to Adela.

And the upshot of his talking to Adela was always this: "Why, oh why, was not his Caroline more like to her?" Caroline was doubtless the more beautiful, doubtless the more clever, doubtless the more fascinating. But what are beauty and talent and fascination without a heart? He was quite sure that Adela's heart was warm.

He went to Littlebath no more that year. It was well perhaps that he did not. Well or ill as the case may be. Had he done so, he would, in his then state of mind, most assuredly have broken with Miss Waddington. In lieu, however, of accepting Miss Baker's invitation for Christmas, he went to Hadley and spent two or three days there, uncomfortable himself, and making the old man uncomfortable also.

Up to this time he had been completely idle — at any rate, as far as the law was concerned — since the day of his great break down on the receipt of Miss

Waddington's letter. He still kept his Temple chambers, and when the day came round in October, he made another annual payment to Mr. Die. On that occasion Mr. Die had spoken rather seriously to him; but up to that time his period of idleness had mainly been the period of the long vacation, and Mr. Die was willing to suppose that this continued payment was a sign that he intended to settle again to work.

"Will it be impertinent to ask," his uncle at Hadley had said to him — "will it be impertinent to ask what you and Caroline intend to do?" At this time Mr. Bertram was aware that his nephew knew in what relationship they all stood to each other.

"No impertinence at all, sir. But, unfortunately, we have no intentions in common. We are engaged to be married, and I want to keep my engagement."

"And she wants to break hers. Well, I cannot but say that she is the wiser of the two."

"I don't know that her wisdom goes quite so far as that. She is content to abide the evil day; only she would postpone it."

"That is to say, she has some prudence. Are you aware that I have proposed to make a considerable addition to her fortune — to hers, mind — on condition that she would postpone her marriage till next summer?"

"I did hear something about some sum of money — that you had spoken to Miss Baker about it, I believe; but I quite forget the particulars."

"You are very indifferent as to money matters, Mr. Barrister."

"I am indifferent as to the money matters of other people, sir. I had no intention of marrying Miss

Waddington for her money before I knew that she was your granddaughter; nor have I now that I do know it."

"For her money! If you marry her for more money than her own fortune, and perhaps a couple of thousands added to it, you are likely to be mistaken."

"I shall never make any mistake of that kind. As far as I am concerned, you are quite welcome, for me, to keep your two thousand pounds."

"That's kind of you."

"I would marry her to-morrow without it. I am not at all sure that I will marry her next year with it. If you exercise any authority over her as her grandfather, I wish you would tell her so, as coming from me."

"Upon my word you carry it high as a lover."

"Not too high, I hope, as a man."

"Well, George, remember this once for all" — and now the old man spoke in a much more serious voice — "I will not interfere at all as her grandfather. Nor will I have it known that I am such. Do you understand that?"

"I understand, sir, that it is not your wish that it should be generally talked of."

"And I trust that wish has been, and will be complied with by you."

This last speech was not put in the form of a question; but George understood that it was intended to elicit from him a promise for the future and an assurance as to the past.

"I have mentioned the circumstance to one intimate friend with whom I was all but obliged to discuss the matter —"

“Obliged to discuss my private concerns, sir!”

“With one friend, sir; with two, indeed; I think — indeed, I fear I have mentioned it to three.”

“Oh! to three! obliged to discuss your own most private concerns as well as mine with three intimate friends! You are lucky, sir, to have so many intimate friends. As my concerns have been made known to them as well as your own, may I ask who they are?”

George then gave up the three names. They were those of Mr. Harcourt, the Rev. Arthur Wilkinson, and Miss Adela Gauntlet. His uncle was very angry. Had he utterly denied the fact of his ever having mentioned the matter to any one, and had it been afterwards discovered that such denial was false, Mr. Bertram would not have been by much so angry. The offence and the lie together, but joined with the fear and deference to which the lie would have testified, would be nothing so black as the offence without the lie, and without the fear, and without the deference.

His uncle was very angry, but on that day he said nothing further on the matter; neither on the next day did he; but on the third day, just as George was about to leave Hadley, he said, in his usual bantering tone, “Don’t have any more intimate friends, George, as far as my private matters are concerned.”

“No, sir, I will not,” said George.

It was in consequence of what Mr. Bertram had then learnt that he became acquainted with Mr. Harcourt. As Mr. Harcourt had heard this about his grandchild, he thought it better to see that learned gentleman. He did see him; as has been before stated, they became intimate with each other.

And so ended the first of these two years.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Retrospective. — Second Year.

THE next year passed almost more uncomfortably for George Bertram and for the ladies at Littlebath than had the latter months of the last year. Its occurrences can, I hope, be stated less in detail, so that we may get on without too great delay to the incidents of the period which is to be awhile for us the present existing time.

This year was Harcourt's great year. In January and February and March he did great things in Chancery. In April he came into Parliament. In May and June and July, he sat on committees. In August he stuck to his work till London was no longer endurable. In the latter part of autumn there was an extraordinary session, during which he worked like a horse. He studied the corn-law question as well as sundry legal reforms all the Christmas week, and in the following spring he came out with his great speech on behalf of Sir Robert Peel. But, nevertheless, he found time to devote to the cares and troubles of Miss Baker and Miss Waddington.

In the spring Bertram paid one or two visits to Littlebath; but it may be doubted whether he made himself altogether agreeable there. He stated broadly that he was doing little or nothing at his profession: he was, he said, engaged on other matters; the great excitement to work, under which he had commenced, had been withdrawn from him; and under these circumstances he was not inclined to devote himself exclusively to studies which certainly were not to his taste. He did not condescend again to ask Caroline to revoke her sentence; he pressed now for no marriage; but he made it quite apparent that all the changes in himself for the worse — and there

had been changes for the worse — were owing to her obstinacy.

He was now living a life of dissipation. I do not intend that it should be understood that he utterly gave himself up to pleasures disgraceful in themselves, that he altogether abandoned the reins, and allowed himself to live such a life as is passed by some young men in London. His tastes and appetites were too high for this. He did not sink into a slough of despond. He did not become filthy and vicious, callous and bestial; but he departed very widely astray from those rules which governed him during his first six months in London.

All this was well known at Littlebath; nor did Bertram at all endeavour to conceal the truth. Indeed, it may be said of him, that he never concealed anything. In this especial case he took a pride in letting Caroline know the full extent of the evil she had done.

It was a question with them whether he had not now given up the bar as a profession altogether. He did not say that he had done so, and it was certainly his intention to keep his terms, and to be called; but he had now no longer a legal Gamaliel. Some time in the April of this year, Mr. Die had written to him a very kind little note, begging him to call one special morning at the chambers in Stone Buildings, if not very inconvenient to him. Bertram did call, and Mr. Die, with many professions of regard and regret, honestly returned to him his money paid for that year's tutelage. "It had been," he said, "a pleasure and a pride to him to have Mr. Bertram in his chambers; and would still be so to have him there again. But he could not take a gentleman's money under a false pretence; as it seemed to be no longer Mr. Bertram's

intention to attend there, he must beg to refund it." And he did refund it accordingly. This also was made known to the ladies at Littlebath.

He was engaged, he had said, on other matters. This also was true. During the first six months of his anger, he had been content to be idle; but idleness did not suit him, so he sat himself down and wrote a book. He published this book without his name, but he told them at Littlebath of his authorship; and some one also told of it at Oxford. The book — or bookling, for it consisted but of one small demy-octavo volume — was not such as delighted his friends either at Littlebath or at Oxford, or even at those two Hampshire parsonages. At Littlebath it made Miss Baker's hair stand on end, and at Oxford it gave rise to a suggestion in some orthodox quarters that Mr. Bertram should be requested to resign his fellowship.

It has been told how, sitting on the Mount of Olives, he had been ready to devote himself to the service of the church to which he belonged. Could his mind have been known at that time, how proud might one have been of him! His mind was not then known; but now, after a lapse of two years, he made it as it were public, and Oriel was by no means proud of him.

The name of his little book was a very awful name. It was called the "Romance of Scripture." He began in his first chapter with an earnest remonstrance against that condemnation which he knew the injustice of the world would pronounce against him. There was nothing in his book, he said, to warrant any man in accusing him of unbelief. Let those who were so inclined to accuse him read and judge. He had called things by their true names, and that doubtless by some would be

imputed to him as a sin. But it would be found that he had gone no further in impugning the truth of Scripture than many other writers before him, some of whom had since been rewarded for their writings by high promotion in the church. The bishops' bench was the reward for orthodoxy; but there had been a taste for liberal deans. He had gone no further, he said, than many deans.

It was acknowledged, he went on to say, that all Scripture statements could not now be taken as true to the letter; particularly not as true to the letter as now adopted by Englishmen. It seemed to him that the generality of his countrymen were of opinion that the inspired writers had themselves written in English. It was forgotten that they were Orientals, who wrote in the language natural to them, with the customary grandiloquence of orientalism, with the poetic exaggeration which, in the East, was the breath of life. It was forgotten also that they wrote in ignorance of those natural truths which men had now acquired by experience and induction, and not by revelation. Their truth was the truth of heaven, not the truth of earth. No man thought that the sun in those days did rise and set, moving round the earth, because a prolongation of the day had been described by the sun standing still upon Gibeon. And then he took the book of Job, and measured that by the light of his own candle — and so on.

The book was undoubtedly clever, and men read it. Women also read it, and began to talk, some of them at least, of the blindness of their mothers who had not had wit to see that these old chronicles were very much as other old chronicles. "The Romance of Scripture" was to be seen frequently in booksellers' advertisements, and

Mr. Mudie told how he always had two thousand copies of it on his shelves. So our friend did something in the world; but what he did do was unfortunately not applauded by his friends.

Harcourt very plainly told him that a man who scribbled never did any good at the bar. The two trades, he said, were not compatible.

"No," said George, "I believe not. An author must be nothing if he do not love truth; a barrister must be nothing if he do." Harcourt was no whit annoyed by the repartee, but having given his warning, went his way to his work.

It was very well known that the "Romance of Scripture" was Bertram's work, and there was a comfortable row about it at Oxford. The row was all private, of course — as was necessary, the book having been published without the author's name. But much was said, and many letters were written. Bertram, in writing to the friend at Oriel who took up the cudgels in his defence, made three statements. First, that no one at Oxford had a right to suppose that he was the author. Second, that he was the author, and that no one at Oxford had a right to find fault with what he had written. Thirdly, that it was quite a matter of indifference to him who did find fault. To this, however, he added, that he was ready to resign his fellowship to-morrow if the Common-room at Oriel wished to get rid of him.

So the matter rested — for awhile. Those who at this time knew Bertram best were confident enough that his belief was shaken, in spite of the remonstrance so loudly put forth in his first pages. He had intended to be honest in his remonstrance; but it is not every man who exactly knows what he does believe. Every man!

Is there, one may almost ask, any man who has such knowledge? We all believe in the resurrection of the body; we say so at least, but what do we believe by it?

Men may be firm believers and yet doubt some Bible statements — doubt the letter of such statements. But men who are firm believers will not be those to put forth their doubts with all their eloquence. Such men, if they devote their time to Scripture history, will not be arrested by the sun's standing on Gibeon. If they speak out at all, they will speak out rather as to all they do believe than as to the little that they doubt. It was soon known to Bertram's world that those who regarded him as a freethinker did him no great injustice.

This and other things made them very unhappy at Littlebath. The very fact of George having written such a book nearly scared Miss Baker out of her wits. She, according to her own lights, would have placed freethinkers in the same category with murderers, regicides, and horrid mysterious sinners who commit crimes too dreadful for women to think of. She would not believe that Bertram was one of these; but it was fearful to think that any one should so call him. Caroline, perhaps, would not so much have minded this flaw in her future husband's faith if it had not been proof of his unsteadiness, of his unfitness for the world's battle. She remembered what he had said to her two years since on the Mount of Olives; and then thought of what he was saying now. Everything with him was impulse and enthusiasm. All judgment was wanting. How should such as he get on in the world? And had she indissolubly linked her lot to that of one who was so incapable of success? No; indissolubly she had not so linked it; not as yet.

One night she opened her mind to her aunt, and spoke very seriously of her position. "I hardly know what I ought to do," she said. "I know how much I owe him; I know how much he has a right to expect from me. And I would pay him all I owe; I would do my duty by him even at the sacrifice of myself if I could plainly see what my duty is."

"But, Caroline, do you wish to give him up?"

"No, not if I could keep him; keep him as he was. My high hopes are done with; my ambition is over; I no longer look for much. But I would fain know that he still loves me before I marry him. I would wish to be sure that he means to live with me. In his present mood, how can I know aught of him? how be sure of anything?"

Her aunt, after remaining for some half-hour in consideration, at last and with reluctance gave her advice.

"It all but breaks my heart to say so; but, Caroline, I think I would abandon it: I think I would ask him to release me from my promise."

It may well be imagined that Miss Waddington was not herself when she declared that her high hopes were done with, that her ambition was over. She was not herself. Anxiety, sorrow, and doubt — doubt as to the man whom she had pledged herself to love, whom she did love — had made her ill, and she was not herself. She had become thin and pale, and was looking old and wan. She sat silent for awhile, leaning with her head on her hand, and made no answer to her aunt's suggestion.

"I really would, Caroline; indeed, I would. I know you are not happy as you are."

"Happy!"

“You are looking wretchedly ill, too. I know all this is wearing you. Take my advice, Caroline, and write to him.”

“There are two reasons against it, aunt; two strong reasons.”

“What reasons, love?”

“In the first place, I love him.” Aunt Mary sighed. She had no other answer but a sigh to give to this. “And in the next place, I have no right to ask anything of him.”

“Why not, Caroline?”

“He made his request to me, and I refused it. Had I consented to marry him last year, all this would have been different. I intended to do right, and even now I do not think that I was wrong. But I cannot impute fault to him. He does all this in order that I may impute it, and that then he may have his revenge.”

Nothing more was said on the matter at that time, and things went on for awhile again in the same unsatisfactory state.

Early in the summer, Miss Waddington and her aunt went up for a few weeks to London. It had been Miss Baker's habit to spend some days at Hadley about this time of the year. She suggested to Caroline, that instead of her doing so, they should both go for a week or so to London. She thought that the change would be good for her niece, and she thought also, though of this she said nothing, that Caroline would see something of her lover. If he were not to be given up, it would be well — so Miss Baker thought — that this marriage should be delayed no longer. Bertram was determined to prove that marriage was necessary to tame him; he had proved it — at any rate to Miss Baker's satisfaction.

There would now be money enough to live on, as uncle Bertram's two thousand pounds had been promised for this summer. On this little scheme Miss Baker went to work.

Caroline made no opposition to the London plan. She said nothing about George in connection with it; but her heart was somewhat softened, and she wished to see him.

Miss Baker therefore wrote up for rooms. She would naturally, one would say, have written to George, but there were now little jealousies and commencements of hot blood even between them. George, though still Caroline's engaged lover, was known to have some bitter feelings, and was believed perhaps by Miss Baker to be more bitter than he really was. So the lodgings were taken without any reference to him. When they reached town they found that he was abroad.

Then Miss Waddington was really angry. They had no right, it is true, to be annoyed in that we has not there to meet them. They had not given him the opportunity. But it did appear to them that, circumstanced as they were, considering the acknowledged engagement between them, he was wrong to leave the country without letting them have a word to say whither he was going or for how long. It was nearly a fortnight since he had written to Caroline, and, for anything they knew, it might be months before she again heard from him.

It was then that they sent for Harcourt, and at this period that they became so intimate with him. Bertram had told him of this foreign trip, but only a day or two before he had taken his departure. It was just at this time that there had been the noise about the "Romance of Scripture." Bertram had defended himself in one or

two newspapers, had written his defiant letter to his friend at Oxford, and then started to meet his father at Paris. He was going no further, and might be back in a week. This however must be uncertain, as his return would depend on that of Sir Lionel. Sir Lionel intended to come to London with him.

Mr. Harcourt was very attentive to them — in spite of his being at that time so useful a public man. He was very attentive to both, being almost as civil to the elder lady as he was to the younger, which, for an Englishman, showed very good breeding. By degrees they both began to regard him with confidence — with sufficient confidence to talk to him of Bertram; with sufficient even to tell him of all their fears. By degrees Caroline would talk to him alone, and when once she permitted herself to do so, she concealed nothing.

Harcourt said not a word against his friend. That friend himself might perhaps have thought that his friend, speaking of him behind his back, might have spoken more warmly in his praise. But it was hard at present to say much that should be true in Bertram's praise. He was not living in a wise or prudent manner; not preparing himself in any way to live as a man should live by the sweat of his brow. Harcourt could not say much in his favour. That Bertram was clever, honest, true, and high-spirited, that Miss Waddington knew; that Miss Baker knew: what they wanted to learn was, that he was making prudent use of these high qualities. Harcourt could not say that he was doing so.

“That he will fall on his legs at last,” said Harcourt once when he was alone with Caroline, “I do not doubt; with his talent, and his high, honest love of virtue, it is all but impossible that he should throw himself away.

But the present moment is of such vital importance! It is so hard to make up for the loss even of twelve months!"

"I am sure it is," said Caroline; "but I would not care for that so much if I thought —"

"Thought what, Miss Waddington?"

"That his disposition was not altered. He was so frank, so candid, so — so — so affectionate."

"It is the manner of men to change in that respect. They become, perhaps, not less affectionate, but less demonstrative."

To this Miss Waddington answered nothing. It might probably be so. It was singular enough that she, with her ideas, should be complaining to a perfect stranger of an uncaressing, unloving manner in her lover; she who had professed to herself that she lived so little for love! Had George been even kneeling at her knee, her heart would have been stern enough. It was only by feeling a woman's wrong that she found herself endowed with a woman's privilege.

"I do not think that Bertram's heart is changed," continued Harcourt; "he is doubtless very angry that his requests to you last summer were not complied with."

"But how could we have married then, Mr. Harcourt? Think what our income would have been; and he as yet without any profession!"

"I am not blaming you. I am not taking his part against you. I only say that he is very angry."

"But does he bear malice, Mr. Harcourt?"

"No, he does not bear malice; men may be angry without bearing malice. He thinks that you have shown a want of confidence in him, and are still showing it."

"And has he not justified that want of confidence?"

To this Harcourt answered nothing, but he smiled slightly.

“Well, has he not? What could I have done? What ought I to have done? Tell, me, Mr. Harcourt. It distresses me beyond measure that you should think I have been to blame.”

“I do not think so; far from it, Miss Waddington. Bertram is my dear friend, and I know his fine qualities; but I cannot but own that he justified you in that temporary want of confidence which you now express.”

Mr. Harcourt, though a member of Parliament and a learned pundit, was nevertheless a very young man. He was an unmarried man also, and a man not yet engaged to be married. It may be surmised that George Bertram would not have been pleased had he known the sort of conversations that were held between his dear friend and his betrothed bride. And yet Caroline at this period loved him better than ever she had done.

A week or ten days after this three letters arrived from Bertram, one for Caroline, one for Miss Baker, and one for Harcourt. Caroline and her aunt had lingered in London, both doubtless in the hope that Bertram would return. There can be little doubt now that had he returned, and had he been anxious for the marriage, Miss Waddington would have consented. She was becoming ill at ease, dissatisfied, what the world calls heart-broken. Now that she was tried, she found herself not to be so strong in her own resolves. She was not sick from love alone; her position was altogether wretched — though she was engaged, and persisted in adhering to her engagement, she felt and often expressed to her aunt a presentiment that she and Bertram would never be married.

They waited for awhile in the hope that he might

return; but instead of himself, there came three letters. Harcourt, it seemed, had written to him, and hence arose these epistles. That to Miss Baker was very civil and friendly. Had that come alone it would have created no complaint. He explained to her that had he expected her visit to London, he would have endeavoured to meet her; that he could not now return, as he had promised to remain awhile with his father. Sir Lionel had been unwell, and the waters of Vichy had been recommended. He was going to Vichy with Sir Lionel, and would not be in London till August. His plans after that were altogether unsettled, but he would not be long in London before he came to Littlebath. Such was his letter to Miss Baker.

To Harcourt he wrote very shortly. He was obliged to him for the interest he took in the welfare of Miss Waddington, and for his attention to Miss Baker. That was nearly all he said. There was not an angry word in the letter; but nevertheless, his friend was able to deduce from it, short as it was, that Bertram was angry.

But on the head of his betrothed he poured out the vial of his wrath. He had never before scolded her, had never written in an angry tone. Now in very truth he did so. An angry letter, especially if the writer be well loved, is so much fiercer than any angry speech, so much more unendurable! There the words remain, scorching, not to be explained away, not to be atoned for by a kiss, not to be softened down by the word of love that may follow so quickly upon spoken anger. Heaven defend me from angry letters! They should never be written, unless to schoolboys and men at college; and not often to them if they be any way tender-hearted. This at least should be a rule through the

letter-writing world: that no angry letter be posted till four-and-twenty hours shall have elapsed since it was written. We all know how absurd is that other rule, that of saying the alphabet when you are angry. Trash! Sit down and write your letter; write it with all the venom in your power; spit out your spleen at the fullest; 'twill do you good; you think you have been injured; say all that you can say with all your poisoned eloquence, and gratify yourself by reading it while your temper is still hot. Then put it in your desk; and, as a matter of course, burn it before breakfast the following morning. Believe me that you will then have a double gratification.

A pleasant letter I hold to be the pleasantest thing that this world has to give. It should be good-humoured; witty it may be, but with a gentle diluted wit. Concocted brilliancy will spoil it altogether. Not long, so that it be tedious in the reading; nor brief, so that the delight suffice not to make itself felt. It should be written specially for the reader, and should apply altogether to him, and not altogether to any other. It should never flatter. Flattery is always odious. But underneath the visible stream of pungent water there may be the slightest under-current of eulogy, so that it be not seen, but only understood. Censure it may contain freely, but censure which in arraigining the conduct implies no doubt as to the intellect. It should be legibly written, so that it may be read with comfort; but no more than that. Calligraphy betokens caution, and if it be not light in hand it is nothing. That it be fairly grammatical and not ill spelt the writer owes to his schoolmaster; but this should come of habit, not of care. Then let its page be soiled by no business; one touch of utility will destroy it all.

If you ask for examples, let it be as unlike Walpole

as may be. If you can so write it that Lord Byron might have written it, you will not be very far from high excellence.

But, above all things, see that it be good-humoured.

Bertram's letter to the lady that he loved was by no means one of this sort. In the first place, it was not good-humoured; it was very far from being so. Had it been so, it would utterly have belied his feelings. Harcourt had so written to him as to make him quite clearly understand that all his sins and — which was much more to him — all his loves had been fully discussed between his friend and Miss Waddington — between his Caroline and another man. To the pride of his heart nothing could be more revolting. It was as though his dearest possession had been ransacked in his absence, and rifled and squandered by the very guardian to whom he had left the key. There had been sore misgivings, sore differences between him and Caroline; but, nevertheless, she had had all his heart. Now, in his absence, she had selected his worldly friend Harcourt, and discussed that possession and its flaws with him! There was that in all this of which he could not write with good-humour. Nevertheless, had he kept his letter to the second morning, it may probably be said that he would have hesitated to send it.

“My dearest Caroline,” it began. Now I put it to all lovers whether, when they wish to please, they ever write in such manner to their sweet-hearts. Is it not always, “My own love?” “Dearest love?” “My own sweet pet?” But that use of the Christian name, which is so delicious in the speaking during the first days of intimacy, does it not always betoken something stern at the beginning of a lover's letter? Ah, it may betoken

something very stern! "My dearest Jane, I am sorry to say it, but I could not approve of the way in which you danced with Major Simkins last night." "My dearest Lucy, I was at Kensington-garden gate yesterday at four, and remained absolutely till five. You really ought—." Is not that always the angry lover's tone?

I fear that I must give Bertram's letter entire to make the matter sufficiently clear.

"My dearest Caroline,

"I learn from Mr. Harcourt that you and Miss Baker are in town, and I am of course sorry to miss you. Would it not have been better that I should have heard this from yourself?

"Mr. Harcourt tells me that you are dissatisfied; and I understand from his letter that you have explained your dissatisfaction very fully to him. It might have been better, I think, that the explanation should have been made to me; or had you chosen to complain, you might have done so to your aunt, or to your grandfather. I cannot think that you were at liberty to complain of me to Mr. Harcourt. My wish is, that you have no further conversation with him on our joint concerns. It is not seemly; and, if feminine, is at any rate not ladylike.

"I am driven to defend myself. What is it of which you complain, or have a right to complain? We became engaged more than twelve months since, certainly with no understanding that the matter was to stand over for three years. My understanding was that we were to be married as soon as it might reasonably be arranged. You then took on yourself to order this delay, and kindly offered to give me up as an alternative. I could not

force you to marry me; but I loved you too well, and trusted too much in your love to be able to think that that giving up was necessary. Perhaps I was wrong.

“But the period of this wretched interval is at my own disposal. Had you married me, my time would have been yours. It would have been just that you should know how it was spent. Each would then have known so much of the other. But you have chosen that this should not be; and, therefore, I deny your right now to make inquiry. If I have departed from any hopes you had formed, you have no one to blame but yourself.

“You have said that I neglect you. I am ready to marry you to-morrow; I have been ready to do so any day since our engagement. You yourself know how much more than ready I have been. I do not profess to be a very painstaking lover; nay, if you will, the life would bore me, even if in our case the mawkishness of the delay did not do more than bore. At any rate, I will not go through it. I loved, and do love you truly. I told you of it truly when I first knew it myself, and urged my suit till I had a definite answer. You accepted me, and now there needs be nothing further till we are married.

“But I insist on this, that I will not have my affairs discussed by you with persons to whom you are a stranger.

“You will see my letter to your aunt. I have told her that I will visit her at Littlebath as soon as I have returned to England.

“Yours ever affectionately,

“G. B.”

This letter was a terrible blow to Caroline. It seemed to her to be almost incredible that she, she, Caroline

Waddington, should be forced to receive such a letter as that under any circumstances and from any gentleman. Unseemly, unfeminine, unladylike! These were the epithets her lover used in addressing her. She was told that it bored him to play the lover; that his misconduct was her fault; and then she was accused of mawkishness! He was imperative, too, in laying his orders to her. "I insist on this!" Was it incumbent on her to comply with his insistings?

Of course she showed the letter to her aunt, whose advice resulted in this — that it would be better that she should pocket the affront silently if she were not prepared to give up the engagement altogether. If she were so prepared, the letter doubtless would give her the opportunity.

And then Mr. Harcourt came to her while her anger was yet at the hottest. His manner was so kind, his temper so sweet, his attention so obliging, that she could not but be glad to see him. If George loved her, if he wished to guide her, wished to persuade her, why was not he at her right hand? Mr. Harcourt was there instead. It did not bore him, multifold as his duties were, to be near her.

Then she committed the first great fault of which in this history she will be shown as being guilty. She showed her lover's letter to Mr. Harcourt. Of course this was not done without some previous converse; till he had found out that she was wretched, and inquired as to her wretchedness; till she had owned that she was ill with sorrow, beside herself, and perplexed in the extreme. Then at last, saying to herself that she cared not now to obey Mr. Bertram, she showed the letter to Mr. Harcourt.

"It is ungenerous," said Harcourt.

"It is ungentlemanlike," said Caroline. "But it was written in passion, and I shall not notice it." And so she and Miss Baker went back again to Littlebath.

It was September before Bertram returned, and then Sir Lionel came with him. We have not space to tell much of what had passed between the father and the son; but they reached London apparently on good terms with each other, and Sir Lionel settled himself in a bedroom near to his son's chambers, and near also to his own club. There was, however, this great ground of disagreement between them. Sir Lionel was very anxious that his son should borrow money from Mr. Bertram, and George very resolutely declined to do so. It was now clear enough to Sir Lionel that his son could not show his filial disposition by advancing on his own behalf much money to his father, as he was himself by no means in affluent circumstances.

He went down to Littlebath, and took his father with him. The meeting between the lovers was again unloverlike; but nothing could be more affectionate than Sir Lionel. He took Caroline in his arms and kissed her, called her his dear daughter, and praised her beauty. I believe he kissed Miss Baker. Indeed, I know that he made an attempt to do so; and I think it not at all improbable that in the overflowing of his affectionate heart, he made some overture of the same kind to the exceedingly pretty parlour-maid who waited upon them. Whatever might be thought of George, Sir Lionel soon became popular there, and his popularity was not decreased when he declared that he would spend the remainder of the autumn, and perhaps the winter, at Littlebath.

He did stay there for the winter. He had a year's furlough, during which he was to remain in England with full pay, and he made it known to the ladies at Littlebath that the chief object of his getting this leave was to be present at the nuptials of dear Caroline and his son. On one occasion he borrowed thirty pounds from Miss Baker; a circumstance which their intimacy, perhaps, made excusable. He happened, however, to mention this little occurrence casually to his son, and George at once repaid that debt, poor as he was at the time.

"You could have that and whatever more you chose merely for the asking," said Sir Lionel on that occasion, in a tone almost of reproach.

And so the winter passed away. George, however, was not idle. He fully intended to be called to the bar in the following autumn, and did, to a certain extent, renew his legal studies. He did not return to Mr. Die, prevented possibly by the difficulty he would have in preparing the necessary funds. But his great work through the winter and in the early spring was another small volume, which he published in March, and which he called, "The Fallacies of Early History."

We need not give any minute criticism on this work. It will suffice to say that the orthodox world declared it to be much more heterodox than the last work. Heterodox; indeed! It was so bad, they said, that there was not the least glimmer of any doxy whatever left about it. The early history of which he spoke was altogether Bible history, and the fallacies to which he alluded were the plainest statements of the book of Genesis. Nay, he had called the whole story of Creation a myth; the whole story as there given: so at least said the rabbis of

Oxford, and among them outspoke more loudly than any others the outraged and very learned rabbis of Oriel.

Bertram however denied this. He had, he said, not called anything a myth. There was the printed book, and one might have supposed that it would be easy enough to settle this question. But it was far from being so. The words myth and mythical were used half a dozen times, and the rabbis declared that they were applied to the statements of Scripture. Bertram declared that they were applied to the appearance those statements must have as at present put before the English world. Then he said something not complimentary to the translators, and something also very uncivil as to want of intelligence on the part of the Oxford rabbis. The war raged warmly, and was taken up by the metropolitan press, till Bertram became a lion — a lion, however, without a hide, for in the middle of the dispute he felt himself called on to resign his fellowship.

He lost that hide, but he got another in lieu which his friends assured him was of a much warmer texture. His uncle had taken considerable interest in this dispute, alleging all through that the Oxford men were long-eared asses and bigoted monks. It may be presumed that his own orthodoxy was not of a high class. He had never liked George's fellowship, and had always ridiculed the income which he received from it. Directly he heard that it had been resigned, he gave his nephew a thousand pounds. He said nothing about it; he merely told Mr. Pritchett to arrange the matter.

Sir Lionel was delighted. As to the question of orthodoxy he was perfectly indifferent. It was nothing to him whether his son called the book of Genesis a

myth or a gospel; but he had said much, very much as to the folly of risking the fellowship; and more, a great deal more, as to the madness of throwing it away. But now he was quite ready to own himself wrong, and did so in the most straightforward manner. After all, what was a fellowship to a man just about to be married? In his position Bertram had of course been free to speak out. If, indeed, there had been any object in holding to the college, then the expression of such opinions, let alone their publication, would not have been judicious.

As it was, however, nothing could have been more lucky. His son had shown his independence. The rich uncle had shown the warm interest which he still took in his nephew, and Sir Lionel was able to borrow two hundred and fifty pounds, a sum of money which, at the present moment, was very grateful to him. Bertram's triumph was gilded on all sides; for the booksellers had paid him handsomely for his infidel manuscript. Infidelity that can make itself successful will, at any rate, bring an income.

And this brings us to the period at which we may resume our story. One word we must say as to Caroline. During the winter she had seen her lover repeatedly, and had written to him repeatedly. Their engagement, therefore, had by no means been broken. But their meetings were cold, and their letters equally so. She would have married him at once now if he would ask her. But he would not ask her. He was quite willing to marry her if she would herself say that she was willing so far to recede from her former resolution. But she could not bring herself to do this. Each was too

proud to make the first concession to the other, and therefore no concession was made by either.

Sir Lionel once attempted to interfere; but he failed. George gave him to understand that he could manage his own affairs himself. When a son is frequently called on to lend money to his father, and that father is never called on to repay it, the parental authority is apt to grow dull. It had become very dull in this case.

CHAPTER XIX.

Richmond.

It was in the midst of this noise about Bertram's new book that the scene is presumed to be reopened. He had resigned his fellowship, and pocketed his thousand pounds. Neither of these events had much depressed his spirits, and he appeared now to his friends to be a happy man in spite of his love troubles. At the same time, Harcourt also was sufficiently elate. He had made his great speech with considerable *éclat*, and his sails were full of wind — of wind of a more substantial character than that by which Bertram's vessel was wafted.

And just now Harcourt and Bertram were again much together. A few months since it had appeared to Harcourt that Bertram intended to do nothing in the world, to make no figure. Even now there was but little hope of his doing much as a barrister; but it seemed probable that he might at any rate make himself known as an author. Such triumphs, as Harcourt well knew, were very barren; but still it was well to know men who were in any way triumphant; and therefore the barrister, himself so triumphant, considered it judicious not to drop his friend.

It may be said that Bertram had given up all idea of practising as a barrister. He still intended to go through the form of being called; but his profession was to be that of an author. He had all manner of works in hand: poems, plays, political pamphlets, infidel essays, histories, and a narrative of his travels in the East. He had made up his mind fully that there were in England only two occupations worthy of an Englishman. A man should be known either as a politician or as an author. It behoved a man to speak out what was in him with some audible voice, so that the world might hear. He might do so either by word of mouth, or by pen and paper; by the former in Parliament, by the latter at his desk. Each form of speech had its own advantage. Fate, which had made Harcourt a member of Parliament, seemed to intend him, Bertram, to be an author.

Harcourt, though overwhelmed by business at this period, took frequent occasion to be with Bertram; and when he was with him alone he always made an effort to talk about Miss Waddington. Bertram was rather shy of the subject. He had never blamed Harcourt for what had taken place while he was absent in Paris, but since that time he had never volunteered to speak of his own engagement.

They were together one fine May evening on the banks of the river at Richmond. George was fond of the place, and whenever Harcourt proposed to spend an evening alone with him, they would go up the river and dine there.

On this occasion Harcourt seemed determined to talk about Miss Waddington. Bertram, who was not in the best possible humour, had shown, one might say plainly enough, that it was a subject on which he did not wish

to speak. One might also say that it was a subject as to talking on which the choice certainly ought to have been left to himself. A man who is engaged may often choose to talk to his friend about his engaged bride; but the friend does not usually select the lady as a topic of conversation except in conformity with the Benedict's wishes.

On this occasion, however, Harcourt would talk about Miss Waddington, and Bertram, who had already given one or two short answers, began to feel that his friend was almost impertinent.

They were cracking decayed walnuts and sipping not the very best of wine, and Bertram was expatiating on Sir Robert Peel's enormity in having taken the wind out of the sails of the Whigs, and rehearsing perhaps a few paragraphs of a new pamphlet that was about to come out, when Harcourt again suddenly turned the conversation.

"By-the-by," said he, "I believe there is no day absolutely fixed for your marriage."

"No," said Bertram, sharply enough. "No day has been fixed. Could anything on earth have been more base than the manner in which he has endeavoured to leave Cobden as a necessary legacy to the new government? Would he have put Cobden into any place in a government of his own?"

"Oh, d— Cobden! One has enough of him in the House, — quite."

"But I have not that advantage."

"You shall have some of these days. I'll make over the Battersea Hamlets to you as soon as I can get a judge's wig on my head. But I'm thinking of other

things now. I wonder whether you and Caroline Waddington ever will be man and wife?

"Probably about the time that you are made a judge."

"Ha! ha! Well, I hope if you do do it, it will come off before that. But I doubt it's coming off at all. Each of you is too proud for the other. Neither of you can forgive what the other has done."

"What do you mean? But to tell you the truth, Harcourt, I have no great inclination to discuss that matter just at present. If you please, we will leave Miss Waddington alone."

"What I mean is this," said the embryo judge, perseveringly, "that you are too angry with her on account of this enforced delay, and she is too angry with you because you have dared to be angry with her. I do not think you will ever come together."

Bertram looked full at Harcourt as this was said, and observed that there was not the usual easy, gentleman-like smile on the barrister's face; and yet the barrister was doing his best to look as usual. The fact was, that Harcourt was playing a game, and playing it with considerable skill, but his performance was not altogether that of a Garrick. Something might have been read in his face had Bertram been cunning enough to read it. But Bertram was not a cunning man.

Bertram looked full in the other's face. Had he been content to do so and to say nothing, he would have gained his point, and the subject would have been at once dropped. Harcourt then could have gone no further. But Bertram was now angry, and, being angry, he could not but speak.

“Harcourt, you have interfered once before between me and Miss Waddington—”

“Interfered!”

“Yes, interfered — in what I then thought and still think to have been a very unwarrantable manner.”

“It was a pity you did not tell me of it at the time.”

“It is a pity rather that you should drive me to tell you of it now; but you do so. When I was in Paris, you said to Miss Waddington what you had no right to say.”

“What did I say?”

“Or, rather, she said to you—”

“Ah! that was no fault of mine.”

“But it was a fault of yours. Do you think that I cannot understand? that I cannot see? She would have been silent enough to you but for your encouragement. I do not know that I was ever so vexed as when I received that letter from you. You took upon yourself—”

“I know you were angry, very angry. But that was not my fault. I said nothing but what a friend under such circumstances was bound to say.”

“Well, let the matter drop now; and let Miss Waddington and myself settle our own affairs.”

“I cannot let the matter drop; you have driven me to defend myself, and I must do it as best I may. I know that you were angry, exceedingly angry—”

“Exceedingly angry!” he repeated; “but that was no fault of mine. When Miss Baker sent for me, I could not but go to her. When I was there, I could not but listen to her. When Caroline told me that she was wretched—”

"Miss Waddington!" shouted Bertram, in a voice that caused the glasses to shake, and made the waiter turn round. And then suddenly recollecting himself, he scowled round the room as he observed that he was noticed.

"Hush, my dear fellow. It shall be Miss Waddington; but not quite so loud. And I beg your pardon, but hearing the lady called by her Christian name so often, both by yourself and Miss Baker, I forgot myself. When she spoke to me of her wretched state, what was I to do? Was I to say, fie! fie! and take my hat and go away?"

"She was very wretched," he continued, for Bertram merely scowled and said nothing, "and I could not but sympathize with her. She thought that you had neglected her. It was clear that you had gone abroad without telling her. Was it to be wondered at that she should be unhappy?"

"Her telling you that she was so was unexcusable."

"At any rate, I am blameless. I myself think that she was also; but that is another question. In what I wrote to you, I did my duty as a friend to both parties. After that, I do confess that I thought your anger too great to allow you ever to stand at the altar with her."

"You do not mean to say that she showed you my letter?" said Bertram, almost leaping at him.

"Your letter! what letter?"

"You know what letter — my letter from Paris? The letter which I wrote to her in reference to the one I received from you? I desire at once to have an answer from you. Did Caroline show you that letter?"

Harcourt looked very guilty, extremely guilty; but he did not immediately make any reply.

"Harcourt, answer me," said Bertram, much more coolly. "I have no feeling of anger now with you. Did Caroline show you that letter?"

"Miss Waddington did show it to me."

And thus the successful Mr. Harcourt had been successful also in this. And now, having narrated this interview in a manner which does not make it redound very much to that gentleman's credit, I must add to the narrative his apology. If even-handed justice were done throughout the world, some apology could be found for most offences. Not that the offences would thus be wiped away, and black become white; but much that is now very black would be reduced to that sombre, uninviting shade of ordinary brown which is so customary to humanity.

Our apology for Mr. Harcourt will by no means make his conduct white — will leave it, perhaps, of a deeper, dingier brown than that which is quite ordinary among men; nay, will leave it still black, many will say.

Mr. Harcourt had seen that which in his opinion proved that Bertram and Miss Waddington could never be happy with each other. He had seen that which in his opinion led to the conclusion that neither of them really wished that this marriage should take place. But he had seen that also which made him believe that both were too proud to ask for a release. Under such circumstances, would he be doing ill if he were to release them? Caroline had so spoken, spoken even to him, that it seemed impossible to him that she could wish for the marriage. Bertram had so written that it seemed equally impossible that he should wish for it. Would it not,

therefore, be madness to allow them to marry? He had said as much to Miss Baker, and Miss Baker had agreed with him. "He cannot love her," Miss Baker had said, "or he would not neglect her so shamefully. I am sure he does not love her."

But there was a man who did love her, who had felt that he could love her from the first moment that he had seen her as an affianced bride: he had not then courted her for himself; for then it was manifest that she both loved and was loved. But now, now that this was altered, was there good cause why he should not covet her now? Mr. Harcourt thought that there was no sufficient cause.

And then this man, who was not by nature a vain man, who had not made himself apt at believing that young beauties fell readily in love with him, who had not spent his years in basking in ladies' smiles, imagined that he had some ground to think that Miss Waddington was not averse to him. Oh, how she had looked when that part of Bertram's letter had been read, in which he professed that he would not be bored by any love-duties for his lady! And then, this man had been kind to her; he had shown that such service would be no bore to him. He had been gentle-mannered to her; and she also, she had been gentle to him:

"The woman cannot be of nature's making
Whom, being kind, her misery makes not kinder."

And Caroline was kind; at least so he thought; and heaven knows she was miserable also. And thus hopes rose which should never have risen, and schemes were made which, if not absolutely black, were as near it as any shade of brown may be.

And then there was the fact that Caroline was the granddaughter, and might probably be the heiress, of one of the wealthiest men in the city of London. The consideration of this fact had doubtless its weight also. The lady would at least have six thousand pounds, might have sixty, might have three times sixty. Harcourt would probably have found it inexpedient to give way to any love had there been no money to gild the passion. He was notoriously a man of the world; he pretended to be nothing else; he would have thought that he had made himself ludicrous if he had married for love only. With him it was a source of comfort that the lady's pecuniary advantages allowed him the hope that he might indulge his love. So he did indulge it.

He had trusted for awhile that circumstances would break off this ill-assorted match, and that then he could step in himself without any previous interference in the matter. But the time was running too close: unless something was done, these two poor young creatures would marry, and make themselves wretched for life. Benevolence itself required that he should take the matter in hand. So he did take it in hand, and commenced his operations — not unskilfully, as we have seen.

Such is our apology for Mr. Harcourt. A very poor one, the reader will say, turning from that gentleman with disgust. It is a poor one. Were we all turned inside out, as is done with ladies and gentlemen in novels, some of us might find some little difficulty in giving good apologies for ourselves. Our shade of brown would often be very dark.

Bertram sat for awhile silent and motionless at the table, and Harcourt seeing his look of grief, almost re-

pented what he had done. But, after all, he had only told the truth. The letter had been shown to him.

"It is incredible," said Bertram, "incredible, incredible! But, nevertheless, his voice showed plainly enough that the statement to him was not incredible.

"Let it be so," said Harcourt, who purposely misunderstood him. "I do not wish you to believe me. Let us leave it so. Come, it is time for us to go back to town." But Bertram still sat silent, saying nothing.

Harcourt called the waiter, and paid the bill. He then told Bertram what his share was, and commenced smoothing the silk of his hat preparatory to moving. Bertram took out his purse, gave him the necessary amount of shillings, and then again sat silent and motionless.

"Come, Bertram, there will be only one train after this, and you know what a crowd there is always for that. Let us go."

But Bertram did not move. "Harcourt, if you would not mind it," he said, very gently, "I would rather go back by myself to-day. What you have said has put me out. I shall probably walk."

"Walk to town!"

"Oh, yes; the walk will be nothing: I shall like it. Don't wait for me, there's a good fellow. I'll see you to-morrow, or next day, or before long."

So Harcourt, shrugging his shoulders, and expressing some surprise at this singular resolve, put his hat on his head and walked off by himself. What his inward reflections were on his journey back to London we will not inquire; but will accompany our other friend in his walk.

Hurriedly as it had been written, he remembered

almost every word of that letter from Paris. He knew that it had been severe, and he had sometimes perhaps regretted its severity. But he knew also that the offence had been great. What right had his affianced bride to speak of him to another man? Was it not fit that he should tell her how great was this sin? His ideas on the matter were perhaps too strong, but they certainly are not peculiar. We — speaking for the educated male sex in England — do not like to think that any one should tamper with the ladies whom we love.

But what was this to that which she had since done? To talk of him had been bad, but to show his letters! to show such a letter as that! to show such a letter to such a person! to make such a confidence, and with such a confidant! It could not be that she loved him; it could not be but that she must prefer that other man to him.

As he thought of this, walking on hurriedly towards London on that soft May night, his bosom swelled, but with anger rather than with sorrow. It must be all over then between them. It could not go on after what he had now been told. She was willing, he presumed, to marry him, having pledged him her word that she would do so; but it was clear that she did not care for him. He would not hold her to her pledge; nor would he take to his bosom one who could have a secret understanding with another man.

“Miss Baker,” he said to himself, “had treated him badly; she must have known this; why had she not told him? If it were so that Miss Waddington liked another better than him, would it not have been Miss Baker’s duty to tell him so? It did not signify however, he had learnt it in time — luckily, luckily, luckily.”

Should he quarrel with Harcourt? What mattered it whether he did or no? or what mattered it what part Harcourt took in the concern? If that which Harcourt had said were true, if Caroline had shown him this letter, he, Bertram, could never forgive that! If so, they must part! And then, if he did not possess her, what mattered who did? Nay, if she loved Harcourt, why should he prevent their coming together? But of this he would make himself fully satisfied; he would know whether the letter had truly been shown. Harcourt was a barrister; and in Bertram's estimation a barrister's word was not always to be taken implicitly.

So he still walked on. But what should he first do? how should he act at once? And then it occurred to him that, according to the ideas generally prevalent in the world on such matters, he would not be held to be justified in repudiating his betrothed merely because she had shown a letter of his to another gentleman. He felt in his own mind that the cause was quite sufficient; that the state of mind which such an act disclosed was clearly not that of a loving, trusting wife. But others might think differently: perhaps Miss Baker might do so; or perhaps Miss Waddington.

But then it was not possible that she could ever wish to marry him after having taken such a course as that. Had he not indeed ample cause to think that she did not wish to marry him? She had put it off to the last possible moment. She had yielded nothing to his urgent request. In all her intercourse with him she had been cold and unbending. She had had her moments of confidence, but they were not with him; they were with one whom perhaps she liked better. There was no jealousy in this, not jealousy of the usual kind. His

self-respect had been injured, and he could not endure that. He hardly now wished that she should love him.

But he would go to Littlebath at once and ask her the question. He would ask her all those questions which were now burning inside his heart. She did not like severe letters, and he would write no more such to her. What further communication might of necessity take place between them should be by word of mouth. So he resolved to go down to Littlebath on the morrow.

And then he reached his chambers, weary and sad at heart. But he was no longer angry. He endeavoured to persuade himself that he was absolutely the reverse of angry. He knelt down and prayed that she might be happy. He swore that he would do anything to make her so. But that anything was not to include any chance of a marriage with himself.

CHAPTER XX.

Juno.

IN spite of his philosophy and his prayers, Bertram went to bed not in a very happy state of mind. He was a man essentially of a warm and loving heart. He was exigent, and perhaps even selfish in his love. Most men are so. But he did love, had loved; and having made up his mind to part from that which he had loved, he could not be happy. He had often lain awake, thinking of her faults to him; but now he lay thinking of his faults to her. It was a pity, he said to himself, that their marriage should have been so delayed; she had acted foolishly in that, certainly; had not known him, had not understood his character, or appreciated his affection; but, nevertheless, he might have borne it

better. He felt that he had been stern, almost savage to her; that he had resented her refusal to marry him at once too violently: he threw heavy blame on himself. But through all this, he still felt that they could not now marry. Was it not clear to him that Caroline would be delighted to escape from her engagement if the way to do so were opened to her?

He lost no time in carrying out his plans. By an early train on the following day he went down to Littlebath, and at once went to his father's lodgings. For Sir Lionel, in order that he might be near his dear daughter, was still living in Littlebath. He had entered the second, or lighter fast set, played a good deal at cards, might constantly be seen walking up and down the assembly-rooms, and did something in horseflesh.

George first went to his father's lodgings, and found him still in bed. The lighter fast set at Littlebath do not generally get up early, and Sir Lionel professed that he had not lately been altogether well. Littlebath was fearfully, fearfully cold. It was now May, and he was still obliged to keep a fire. He was in a very good humour however with his son, for the period of the two hundred and fifty pounds' loan was not long passed by. Gratitude for that had not yet given way to desire for more.

"Oh, George! is that you? I am delighted to see you. Going up to the terrace, I suppose? I was with Caroline for a few minutes last night, and I never saw her looking better — never."

George answered by asking his father where he meant to dine. Sir Lionel was going to dine out. He usually did dine out. He was one of those men who have a knack of getting a succession of gratis dinners;

and it must be confessed in his favour — and the admission was generally made in the dining-out world, — that Sir Lionel was worth his dinner.

“Then I shall probably return this evening; but I will see you before I go.”

Sir Lionel asked why he would not dine as usual in Montpellier Terrace; but on this subject George at present gave him no answer. He merely said that he thought it very improbable that he should do so, and then went away to his work. It was hard work that he had to do, and he thoroughly wished that it was over.

He did not however allow himself a moment to pause. On the contrary, he walked so quick, that when he found himself in Miss Baker's drawing-room, he was almost out of breath, and partly from that cause, and partly from his agitation, was unable to speak to that lady in his usual unruffled manner.

“Ah, how do you do, Miss Baker? I'm very glad to see you. I have run down to-day in a great hurry, and I am very anxious to see Caroline. Is she out?”

Miss Baker explained that she was not out; and would be down very shortly.

“I'm glad she's not away, for I am very anxious to see her — very.”

Miss Baker, with her voice also in a tremble, asked if anything was the matter.

“No; nothing the matter. But the truth is, I'm tired of this, Miss Baker, and I want to settle it. I don't know how she may bear it, but it has half killed me.”

Miss Baker looked at him almost aghast, for his manner was energetic and almost wild. Only that he so frequently was wild, she would have feared that something dreadful was about to happen. She had not,

however, time to say anything further, for Caroline's step was heard on the stairs.

"Could you let us be alone for ten minutes," said George. "But I feel the shame of turning you out of your own drawing-room. Perhaps Caroline will not mind coming down with me into the parlour."

But Miss Baker of course waived this objection, and as she retreated, the two ladies met just at the drawing-room door. Caroline was about to speak, but was stopped by the expression on her aunt's face. Ladies have little ways of talking to each other, with nods and becks and wreathed smiles, which are quite beyond the reach of men; and in this language aunt Mary did say something as she passed which gave her niece to understand that the coming interview would not consist merely of the delights which are common among lovers. Caroline, therefore, as she entered the room composed her face for solemn things, and walked slowly, and not without some dignity in her mien, into the presence of him who was to be her lord and master.

"We hardly expected you, George," she said.

His father had been right. She was looking well, very well. Her figure was perhaps not quite so full, nor the colour in her cheek quite so high as when he had first seen her in Jerusalem; but, otherwise, she had never seemed to him more lovely. The little effort she had made to collect herself, to assume a certain majesty in her gait, was becoming to her. So also was her plain morning dress, and the simple braid in which her hair was collected. It might certainly be boasted of Miss Waddington that she was a beauty of the morning rather than of the night; that her complexion was fitted for the sun rather than for gas-light.

He was going to give up all this! And why? That which he saw before him, that which he had so often brought himself to believe, that which at this moment he actually did believe to be as perfect a form of feminine beauty as might be found by any search in England, was as yet his own. And he might keep it as his own. He knew, or thought he knew enough of her to be sure that, let her feelings be what they might, she would not condescend to break her word to him. Doubtless, she would marry him; and that in but a few months hence if only he would marry her! Beautiful as she was, much as she was his own, much as he still loved her, he had come there to reject her! All this flashed through his mind in a moment. He lost no time in idle thoughts.

"Caroline," he said, stretching out his hand to her — usually when he met her after any absence he had used his hand to draw her nearer to him with more warmth than his present ordinary greeting showed — "Caroline, I have come down to have some talk with you. There is that between us which should be settled."

"Well; what is it?" she said, with the slightest possible smile.

"I will not, if I can help it, say any word to show that I am angry —"

"But are you angry, George? If so, had you not better show it? Concealment will never sit well on you."

"I hope not; nor will I conceal anything willingly. It is because I so greatly dislike concealment that I am here."

"You could not conceal anything if you tried, George. It is useless for you to say that you will not show that you are angry. You are angry, and you do show it."

What is it? I hope my present sin is not a very grievous one. By your banishing poor aunt out of the drawing-room, I fear it must be rather bad."

"I was dining with Mr. Harcourt last night; and it escaped him in conversation that you had shown to him the letter which I wrote to you from Paris. Was it so, Caroline? Did you show him that very letter?"

Certainly, no indifferent listener would have said that there was any tone of anger in Bertram's voice; and yet there was that in it which made Miss Waddington feel that the room was swimming round and round her. She turned ruby red up to her hair. Bertram had never before seen her blush like that; for he had never before seen her covered by shame. Oh! how she had repented showing that letter! How her soul had grieved over it from the very moment that it had passed out of her hand! She had done so in the hotness of her passion. He had written to her sharp stinging words which had maddened her. Up to that moment she had never known how sharp, how stinging, how bitter words might be. The world had hitherto been so soft to her! She was there told that she was unfeminine, unladylike! And then, he that was sitting by her was so smooth, so sympathizing, so anxious to please her! In her anger and her sympathy she had shown it; and from that day to this she had repented in the roughness of sackcloth and the bitterness of ashes. It was possible that Caroline Waddington should so sin against a woman's sense of propriety; that, alas! had been proved; but it was impossible that she should so sin and not know that she had sinned, not feel the shame of it.

She did stand before him red with shame; but at the first moment she made no answer. It was in her

heart to kneel at his feet, to kneel in the spirit if not in the body, and ask his pardon; but hitherto she had asked pardon of no human being. There was an effort in the doing of it which she could not at once get over. Had his eyes looked tenderly on her for a moment, had one soft tone fallen from his lips, she would have done it. Down she would have gone and implored his pardon. And who that he had once loved had ever asked aught in vain from George Bertram? Ah, that she had done so! How well they might have loved each other! What joy there might have been!

But there was nothing tender in his eye, no tender tone softened the words which fell from his mouth.

“What!” he said, and in spite of his promise, his voice had never before sounded so stern, — “what! show that letter to another man; show that letter to Mr. Harcourt! Is that true, Caroline?”

A child asks pardon from his mother because he is scolded. He wishes to avert her wrath in order that he may escape punishment. So also may a servant of his master, or an inferior of his superior. But when one equal asks pardon of another, it is because he acknowledges and regrets the injury he has done. Such acknowledgement, such regret will seldom be produced by a stern face and a harsh voice. Caroline, as she looked at him and listened to him, did not go down on her knees — not even mentally. Instead of doing so, she remembered her dignity, and wretched as she was at heart, she continued to seat herself without betraying her misery.

“Is that true, Caroline? I will believe the charge against you from no other lips than your own.”

“Yes, George; it is true. I did show your letter

to Mr. Harcourt." So stern had he been in his bearing that she could not condescend even to a word of apology.

He had hitherto remained standing; but on hearing this he flung himself into a chair and buried his face in his hands. Even then she might have been softened, and he might have relented, and all might have been well!

"I was very unhappy, George," she said; "that letter had made me very unhappy, and I hardly knew where to turn for relief."

"What!" he said, jumping up and flashing before her in a storm of passion to which his former sternness had been as nothing — "what! my letter made you so unhappy that you were obliged to go to Mr. Harcourt for relief! You appealed for sympathy from me to him! from me who am — no, who was, your affianced husband! Had you no idea of the sort of bond that existed between you and me? Did you not know that there were matters in which you could not look for sympathy to such as him without being false, nay, almost worse than false? Have you ever thought what it is to be the one loved object of a man's heart, and to have accepted that love?" She had been on the point of interrupting him, but the softness of these last words interrupted her for a moment.

"Such a letter as that! Do you remember that letter, Caroline?"

"Yes, I remember it; remember it too well; I would not keep it. I would not feel that such words from you were ever by me."

"You mean that it was harsh?"

"It was cruel."

“Harsh or cruel, or what you will — I shall not now stop to defend it — it was one which from the very nature of it should have been sacred between us. It was written to you as to one to whom I had a right to write as my future wife.”

“No one could have a right to write such a letter as that.”

“In it, I particularly begged that Mr. Harcourt might not be made an arbiter between us. I made a special request that to him, at least, you would not talk of what causes of trouble there might be between us; and yet you selected him as your confidant, read it with him, poured over with him the words which had come hot from my heart, discussed with him my love — my — my — my — Bah! I cannot endure it; had not you yourself told me so, I could not have believed it.”

“George! —”

“Good God! that you should take my letters and read them over with him! Why, Caroline, it admits but of one solution; there is but one reading to the riddle; ask all the world.”

“We sent for him as your friend.”

“Yes, and seem to have soon used him as your own. I have no friend to whom I allow the privilege of going between me and my own heart’s love. Yes, you were my own heart’s love. I have to get over that complaint now as best I may.”

“I may consider then that all is over between us.”

“Yes; there. You have back your hand. It is again your own to dispose of to whom you will. Let you have what confidences you will, they will no longer imply falsehood to me.”

"Then, sir, if such be the case, I think you may cease to scold me with such violence."

"I have long felt that I ought to give you this release; for I have known that you have not thoroughly loved me."

Miss Waddington was too proud, too conscious of the necessity to maintain her pride at the present moment to contradict this. But, nevertheless, in her heart she felt that she did love him, that she would fain not give him up, that, in spite of his anger, his bitter railing anger, she would keep him close to her if she only could do so. But now that he spoke of giving her up, she could not speak passionately of her love — she who had never yet shown any passion in her speech to him.

"It has grown on me from day to day; and I have been like a child in clinging to a hope when I should have known that there was no hope. I should have known it when you deferred our marriage for three years."

"Two years, George."

"Had it been two years, we should now have been married. I should have known it when I learned that you and he were in such close intimacy in London. But now — I know it now. Now at least it is all over."

"I can only be sorry that you have so long had so much trouble in the matter."

"Trouble — trouble! But I will not make a fool of myself. I believe at any rate that you understand me."

"Oh! perfectly, Mr. Bertram."

But she did not understand him; nor perhaps was

it very likely that she should understand him. What he had meant her to understand was this: that in giving her up he was sacrificing only himself, and not her; that he did so in the conviction that she did not care for him; and that he did so on this account, strong as his own love still was, in spite of all her offences. This was what he intended her to understand; — but she did not understand the half of it.

“And I may now go?” said she, rising from her chair. The blush of shame was over, and mild as her words sounded, she again looked the Juno. “And I may now go?”

“Now go! yes; I suppose so. That is, I may go. That is what you mean. Well, I suppose I had better go.” Not a moment since he was towering with passion, and his voice, if not loud, had been masterful, determined, and imperious. Now it was low and gentle enough. Even now, could she have been tender to him, he would have relented. But she could not be tender. It was her profession to be a Juno. Though she knew that when he was gone from her her heart would be breaking, she would not bring herself down to use a woman’s softness. She could not say that she had been wrong, wrong because distracted by her misery, wrong because he was away from her, wrong because disturbed in her spirits by the depth of the love she felt for him; she could not confess this, and then, taking his hand, promise him that if he would remain close to her she would not so sin again. Ah! if she could have done this, in one moment her head would have been on his shoulder and his arm round her waist; and in twenty minutes more Miss Baker would have been informed, sitting as

she now was up in her bedroom, that the wedding-day had been fixed.

But very different news Miss Baker had to hear. Had things turned out so, Miss Waddington would have been a woman and not a goddess. No; great as was the coming penalty, she could not do that. She had been railed at and scolded as never goddess was scolded before. Whatever she threw away, it behoved her to maintain her dignity. She would not bend to a storm that had come blustering over her so uncourteously.

Bertram had now risen to go. "It would be useless for me to trouble your aunt," he said. "Tell her from me that I would not have gone without seeing her had I not wished to spare her pain. Good-bye, Caroline, and may God bless you;" and, so saying, he put out his hand to her.

"Good-bye, Mr. Bertram." She would have said something more, but she feared to trust herself with any word that might have any sound of tenderness. She took his hand, however, and returned the pressure which he gave it.

She looked into his eyes, and saw that they were full of tears; but still she did not speak. Oh, Caroline Waddington, Caroline Waddington! if it had but been given thee to know, even then, how much of womanhood there was in thy bosom, of warm womanhood, how little of goddess-ship, of cold goddess-ship, it might still have been well with thee! But thou didst not know. Thou hadst gotten there at any rate thy Juno's pedestal; and having that, needs was that thou shouldst stand on it.

"God bless you, Caroline; good-bye," he repeated again, and turned to the door.

"I wish to ask you one question before you go," she said, as his hand was on the handle of the lock; and she spoke in a voice that was almost goddess-like; that hardly betrayed, but yet that did betray, the human effort. Bertram paused, and again turned to her.

"In your accusation against me just now —"

"I made no accusation, Caroline."

"You not only made it, Mr. Bertram, but I pleaded guilty to it. But in making it you mentioned Mr. Harcourt's name. While you were absent in Paris, I did talk with that gentleman on our private affairs, yours and mine. I hope I am believed to have done so because I regarded Mr. Harcourt as your friend?"

Bertram did not understand her, and he showed that he did not by his look.

"It is difficult for me to explain myself" — and now she blushed slightly — very slightly. "What I mean is this; I wish to be acquitted by you of having had recourse to Mr. Harcourt on my own account — from any partiality of my own." She almost rose in height as she stood there before him, uttering these words in all her cold but beautiful dignity. Whatever her sins might have been, he should not accuse her of having dallied with another while her word and her truth had been his. She had been wrong. She could not deny that he had justice on his side — stern, harsh, bare justice — when he came there to her and flung back her love and promises into her teeth. He had the right to do so, and she would not complain. But he should not leave her till he had acquitted her of the vile, missish crime of flirting with another because he was absent. Seeing that he still hardly understood her, she made her speech yet plainer.

"At the risk of being told again that I am unfeminine, I must explain myself. Do you charge me with having allowed Mr. Harcourt to speak to me as a lover?"

"No; I make no such charge. Now, I have no right to make any charge on such a matter."

"No; should Mr. Harcourt be my lover now, that is my affair and his, not yours. But had he been so then — You owe it to me to say whether among other sins, that sin also is charged against me?"

"I have charged and do charge nothing against you, but this — that you have ceased to love me. And that charge will be made nowhere but in my own breast. I am not a jealous man, as I think you might know. What I have said to you here to-day has not come of suspicion. I have thought no ill against you, and believed no ill against you beyond that which you have yourself acknowledged. I find that you have ceased to love me, and finding that, I am indifferent to whom your love may be given." And so saying, he opened the door and went out; nor did he ever again see Miss Wadlington at Littlebath.

Some few minutes after he had left the room, Miss Baker entered it. She had heard the sound of the front door, and having made inquiry of the servant, had learned that their visitor had gone. Then she descended to her own drawing-room, and found Caroline sitting upright at the table, as though in grief she despised the adventitious aid and every-day solace of a sofa. There was no tear in her eye, none as yet; but it required no tears to tell her aunt that all was not well. Judging by the face she looked at, aunt Mary was inclined to say that all was as little well as might be.

There was still to be seen there the beauty, and the dignity, and still even in part the composure of a Juno; but it was such composure as Juno might have shown while she devoted to a third destruction the walls of a thrice-built Troy; of Juno in grief, in jealousy, almost in despair; but of Juno still mindful of her pedestal, still remembering that there she stood a mark for the admiration of gods and men. How long shall this Juno mood serve to sustain her? Ah! how long?

"Has he gone?" said Miss Baker, as she looked at her niece.

"Yes, aunt, he has gone."

"When will he return?"

"He will not return, aunt. He will not come any more; it is all over at last."

Miss Baker stood for a moment trembling, and then threw herself upon a seat. She had at least had no celestial gift by which she could compose herself. "Oh, Caroline!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, aunt Mary; it is all over now."

"You mean that you have quarrelled?" said she, remembering to her comfort, that there was some old proverb about the quarrels of lovers. Miss Baker had great faith in proverbs.

The reader may find it hard to follow Miss Baker's mind on the subject of this engagement. Some time since she was giving advice that it should be broken off, and now she was *au désespoir* because that result had been reached. She had one of those minds that are prone to veering, and which show by the way they turn, not any volition of their own, but the direction of some external wind, some external volition. Nor can one be angry with, or despise Miss Baker for this weathercock

aptitude. She was the least selfish of human beings, the least opinionative, the most good-natured. She had had her hot fits and her cold fits with regard to Bertram; but her hot fits and her cold had all been hot or cold with reference to what she conceived to be her niece's chances of happiness. Latterly, she had fancied that Caroline did love Bertram too well to give him up; and circumstances had led her to believe more strongly than ever that old Mr. Bertram wished the marriage, and that the two together, if married, would certainly inherit his wealth. So latterly, during the last month or so, Miss Baker had blown very hot.

"No, there has been no quarrel," said Caroline, with forced tranquillity of voice and manner. "No such quarrel as you mean. Do not deceive yourself, dear aunt; it is over now, over for ever."

"For ever, Caroline!"

"Yes, for ever. That has been said which can never be unsaid. Do not grieve about it" — aunt Mary was now in tears — "it is better so; I am sure it is better. We should not have made each other happy."

"But three years, Caroline; three years!" said aunt Mary through her tears, thinking of the time that had been so sadly lost. Aunt Mary was widely awake to the fact that three years was a long period in a girl's life, and that to have passed three years as the betrothed of one man and then to leave him was injurious to the matrimonial prospects of a young lady. Miss Baker was full of these little mundane considerations; but then they were never exercised, never had been exercised, on her own behalf.

"Yes, three years!" and Caroline smiled, even through her grief. "It cannot be helped, aunt. And the rest of

it; neither can that be helped. Three years! say thirty, aunt."

Miss Baker looked at her, not quite understanding. "And must it be so?" said she.

"Must! oh, yes, indeed it must. It must now, must — must — must."

Then they both sat silent for awhile. Miss Baker was longing to know the cause of this sudden disruption, but she hesitated at first to inquire. It was not, however, to be borne that the matter should be allowed to remain altogether undiscussed.

"But what is it he has said?" she at last asked. Caroline had never told her aunt that that letter had been shown to Mr. Harcourt, and had no intention of telling her so now.

"I could not tell you, aunt, all that passed. It was not what he said more than what I said. At least — no; that is not true. It did arise from what he said; but I would not answer him as he would have me; and so we agreed to part."

"He wished to have the marriage at once?"

"No; I think he wished no such thing. You may rest assured he wishes no marriage now; none with me, at least. And rest assured of this, too, that I wish none with him. Wish! it is no use wishing. It is now impossible."

Again there was a silence, and again it was broken by Miss Baker. "I wonder whether you ever really loved him? Sometimes I have thought you never did."

"Perhaps not," said she, musing on her fate.

"If it is never to be, I hope that you did not."

"It would be to be hoped — to be hoped for me, and to be hoped also for him."

“Oh, he loved you. There is no doubt of that; no doubt at all of that. If any man ever loved a girl, he loved you.” To this Miss Waddington answered nothing, nor would she just then talk any further with her aunt upon the subject. They were to dine early on that day, as their custom was when they went out in the evening. On this evening they were going to the house—lodgings rather — of an old friend they had not seen for some time. She had arrived a week or two since at Littlebath, and though there had been callings between them, they had not yet succeeded in meeting. When Bertram had arrived it was near their dinner hour and before he went that hour was already passed. Had his manner been as it ordinarily was, he would of course have been asked to join them; but, as we have seen, that had been no moment for such customary civility.

Now, however, they went to dinner, and while seated there, Miss Waddington told her aunt that she did not feel equal to going out that evening. Miss Baker of course said something in opposition to this, but that something was not much. It might easily be understood that a young lady who had just lost her lover was not in a fit state to go to a Littlebath card-party.

And thus early in the evening Caroline contrived to be alone; and then for the first time she attempted to realize all that had come upon her. Hitherto she had had to support herself — herself and her goddess-ship, — first before George Bertram, and then with lighter effort before her aunt. But now that she was alone, she could descend to humanity. Now that she was alone she had so to descend.

Yes; she had lost three years. To a mortal goddess, who possessed her divinity but for a short time, this

was much. Her doctrine had been to make the most of the world. She had early resolved not to throw away either herself or her chances. And now that she was three-and-twenty, how had she kept her resolves? how had her doctrine answered with her? She had lived before the world for the last two years as a girl betrothed to a lover — before such of the world as she knew and as knew her; and now her lover was gone; not dismissed by her, but gone! He had rather dismissed her, and that not in the most courteous manner.

But, to do her justice, this was not the grief that burnt most hotly into her heart. She said to herself that it was so, that this was her worst grief; she would fain have felt that it was so; but there was more of humanity in her, of the sweetness of womanly humanity, than she was aware. He had left her, and she knew not how to live without him. That was the thorn that stuck fast in her woman's bosom. She could never again look into those deep, thoughtful eyes; never again feel the pressure of that strong, manly arm; never hear the poetry of that rich voice as she had heard it when he poured words of love and truth into her ear. Bertram had many faults, and while he belonged to her, she had thought of them often enough; but he had many virtues also, and now she could think but of them.

She had said that he was gone, gone for ever. It was easy enough to say that with composed voice to Miss Baker. There is nothing so easy as bravado. The wretch who is to be hung can step lightly while multitudes are looking at him. The woman who is about to give up all that her heart most values can declare out loud that the matter is very indifferent to her. But when the victim of the law is lying in his solitary cell,

thinking on his doom, the morning before the executioner comes to him; when the poor girl is sitting alone on her bedside, with her heart all empty, — or rather not empty, only hopeless; it is very difficult then to maintain a spirit of bravado!

Caroline Waddington did try it. She had often said to herself, in months now some time past, that she repented of her engagement. If so, now was the time to congratulate herself that she was free from it. But she could not congratulate herself. While he had entirely belonged to her, she had not known how thoroughly she had loved him. When she had only thought of parting with him, she had believed that it would be easy. But now she found that it was not so easy. It was about as easy for her to pluck his image from her heart as to draw one of her limbs from the socket.

But the limb had to be drawn from the socket. There was no longer any hope that it could be saved. Nay, it had been already given up as far as the expression of the will was concerned, and there was nothing left but to bear the pain.

So she sat down and began to draw out the limb. Oh, my sensitive reader! have you ever performed the process? It is by no means to be done with rose-water appliances and gentle motherly pressure. The whole force of the hospital has to be brought out to perform this operation.

She now discovered, perhaps, for the first time, that she had a strong beating heart, and that she loved this violent capricious man with every strong pulse of it. There was more about him now that was lovable by such a woman as Caroline Waddington than when he had first spoken of his love on the side of Mount Olivet.

Then he had been little more than a boy; a boy indeed with a high feeling, with a poetic nature, and much humour. But these gifts had hardly sufficed to win her heart. Now he had added to these a strong will, a power of command, a capability of speaking out to the world with some sort of voice. After all, power and will are the gifts which a woman most loves in a man.

And now that Caroline had lost her lover, she confessed to herself that she did love him. Love him! Yes! How could she recover him? That was her first thought. She could not recover him in any way. That was her second thought. As to asking him to come back to her, the wrenching of the limb from the socket would be better than that. That, at least, she knew she could not do. And was it possible that he of his own accord should come back to her? No, it was not possible. The man was tender-hearted, and could have been whistled back with the slightest lure while yet they two were standing in the room together. But he was as proud as he was tender. Though there might also be some wrenching to be done within his heart, he would never come back again uninvited.

And thus, while Miss Baker was at her old friend's card-party, Miss Waddington sat in her own bedroom, striving, with bitter tears and violent struggles, to reconcile herself to her loss.

CHAPTER XXI.

Sir Lionel in Trouble.

It has been said that Miss Baker was going to spend the evening with an old friend. I trust that Miss Todd, umquhile of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and now of No. 7

Paragon, Littlebath, has not been forgotten; Miss Todd of the free heart and the rosy face.

Yes, Miss Todd had come to Littlebath, and was intent rather on forming a party of Toddites than of joining herself to either of the regular sets. She was perhaps not much given to be pious, and she certainly was but ill inclined to be slow. If fast, however, she chose to be fast in her own line.

But before we have the pleasure of attending at her *soirée*, we must say a word or two of one of the most distinguished of the expected guests. Sir Lionel was to be there.

Now Sir Lionel had been leading a pleasant life at Littlebath, with one single exception — that he was rather in want of funds. He had capital apartments, four rooms *ensuite*, a man-servant, a groom, three horses, and a phaeton, and no one was more looked up to at Littlebath. Ladies smiled, young men listened, old gentlemen brought out their best wines, and all was delightful. All but this, that the “*res angusta*” did occasionally remind him that he was mortal. Oh, that sordid brother of his, who could have given him thousands on thousands without feeling the loss of them! We have been unable to see much of old Mr. Bertram in recapitulating the story of young Mr. Bertram’s latter doings. But it should have been said, that early in the present year he had not been quite as well as his friends could wish. George had gone to see him once or twice, and so also had his niece Miss Baker, and his granddaughter. He had said but very little to them; but on Miss Baker’s mind an impression had been left that it would please him to see the marriage completed.

And at this time likewise his brother, Sir Lionel,

had thought it expedient to see him. There had hitherto been no interview between them since Sir Lionel's return. The colonel had found out, and had been duly astonished at finding out, the history of Miss Baker and her niece. That George and Caroline would be the heirs to a great portion of his brother's money he could not doubt; that Miss Baker would have something he thought probable; and then he reflected, that in spite of all that was come and gone, his brother's heart might relent on his death-bed. It might be that he could talk the sick man round; and if that were impracticable, he might at least learn how others stood in his brother's favour. Sir Lionel was not now a young man himself. Ease and a settled life would be good for him. What, if he married Miss Baker!

He first called on Pritchett. Mr. Pritchett told him that his brother was better — considerably better. Sir Lionel was in raptures. He had hurried up from Littlebath in an agony. He had heard most distressing accounts. He would however go down to Hadley and see his brother.

"I am afraid Mr. Bertram is not very much up to company just at present," wheezed out Mr. Pritchett.

"But a brother, you know," suggested Sir Lionel.

Pritchett knew exactly how the brothers stood with each other; and he himself, though he was very partial to Mr. George, had not any warm love for Sir Lionel.

"Oh, yes; a brother is a brother, surely. But, Mr. Bertram, you know, sir —"

"You mean," said Sir Lionel, "that he is a little vexed about the account."

"Oh, yes, the account; there is the account, Sir

Lionel. If it is to settle that, perhaps I can manage without troubling you to go to Hadley. Not but what settling the account *will* make matters smoother."

Sir Lionel could get nothing more from Mr. Pritchett; but he would not be put off from his intention, and he did go to Hadley. He found his brother sitting up in the dining-room, but he would not have known him. And, indeed, many who had seen him lately might have had some difficulty in recognizing him. He was not only lean and lank, and worn and wan, but he spoke with some difficulty, and on close examination it might be seen that his mouth was twisted as it were from the centre of his face. Since his relatives had seen him he had suffered what is genteelly called a slight threatening of paralysis.

But his mind, if touched at all, had recovered itself; and his spirit was in nowise paralyzed. When Sir Lionel was shown into the room — he had first of all taken the precaution of sending down his card from the hotel and saying that he would call in half an hour — the old man put out his hand to him, but did not attempt to rise from his chair. It must be remembered that the brothers had not seen each other for more than fifteen years.

Sir Lionel had tutored himself carefully as to what he would say and what do. "George," he said, and the old man shrank as he heard the unaccustomed name. "When I heard that you were ill, I could not but come and see you."

"Very good of you, Sir Lionel; very good of you," growled the old man.

"It is fifteen years since we met, and we are both old men now."

"I am an old man now, and nearly worn out; too old and far gone to have many wants. You are not in that condition, I suppose."

There was an amount of sarcasm in his voice as he spoke, and in his eye also as he looked at his brother, which made Sir Lionel perfectly understand that his rich relative was not specially anxious to be kind to him.

"Well, we are neither of us quite so far gone as that, I hope — not quite so far gone as that;" and Sir Lionel looked very pleasant. "But, speaking for myself, I have not many wants now" — nor had he, pleasant old man that he was; only three or four comfortable rooms for himself and his servant; a phaeton and a pair of horses; and another smaller establishment in a secluded quiet street; nothing more than that, including of course all that was excellent in the eating and drinking line — "speaking for myself, I have not many wants now." And he did look very good-humoured and pleasant as he spoke.

Mr. Bertram senior did not look good-humoured or pleasant. There was that in his old eye which was the very opposite to good-humour and pleasantness.

"Ah!" said he. "Well I am glad of that, for you will be able to do the more for poor George. He will have wants; he is going to take care and trouble on himself. Neither he nor his sweetheart have, I take it, been accustomed to do without wants; and their income will be tight enough — forby what you can do for them."

The colonel sat and still looked pleasant, but he began to think that it might be as well for him that he was back at Littlebath.

"Poor George! I hope they will be happy. I think they will; my greatest anxiety now is of course for their happiness; and yours is the same, doubtless. It is odd that my child and your child's child should thus come together, is it not?" so spoke the colonel.

Mr. Bertram looked at him; looked through him almost, but he said nothing.

"It is odd," continued Sir Lionel, "but a very happy circumstance. She is certainly the sweetest girl I ever saw; and George is a lucky fellow."

"Yes, he is a lucky fellow; he will get more than he has any right to expect. First and last she will have six thousand pounds. I have not heard him say what he means to settle on her; but perhaps he was waiting till you had come home."

Sir Lionel's forte during his whole official career had been the making pleasant — by the pleasantness that was innate in him — things which appeared to be going in a very unpleasant manner. But how was he to make things pleasant now?

"Well, you see, George has been so much knocked about! There was his fellowship. I think they behaved shabbily enough to him."

"Fellowship! One hundred and seventy pounds a year and the run of his teeth at feast time, or some such thing as that. A man can't marry on his fellowship very well!"

"Ha! ha! ha! no, he can't exactly do that. On the whole, I think it was quite as well that he threw it up; and so I told him."

"Did you tell him at the same time what his future income was to be?"

"No, upon my soul I did not; but if all I hear be

true, I believe you did. You have been exceedingly generous to him, George — and to me also.”

“Then, Sir Lionel, allow me to tell you that all you hear is not true. Anything at all that you may have heard of that kind, if you have heard anything, is perfectly false. I have said nothing to George about his income, and have nothing to say to him.”

“Well, I may have expressed myself wrongly, and perhaps you did say nothing. I was alluding especially to what you have done.”

“I will tell you exactly what I have done. I thought he showed a high spirit when he threw up his fellowship, and as I had always a great contempt for those Oxford fellows, I sent him a thousand pounds. It was a present, and I hope he will make good use of it.

“I am sure he will,” said Sir Lionel, who certainly had just cause for such confidence, seeing how large a slice out of the sum had been placed at his own disposal.

“I am sure he will,” said Sir Lionel. — “Indeed, I know that he has.”

“Ah, I’m glad to hear of it; of course you know more about it than I do; of course you are arranging these matters. But that is all he has had from me, and all that he is likely to have.”

If such were to be the treatment of George, of George who was certainly in some respects a favourite, what hope could Sir Lionel have for himself? But it was not so much his brother’s words which led him to fear that his brother’s money-bags were impregnable to him as his brother’s eye. That eye was never off him, and Sir Lionel did begin to wish that he was at Little-bath.

"I don't know whether George may have formed any hopes," continued the old man; but here Sir Lionel interrupted him, and not imprudently: if anything was to be said, it should be said now.

"Well, if he has formed hopes, George, you cannot but own that it is natural. He has looked on you as a man without any child of your own, and he has been taught so to look by your treating him almost as though he were your son."

"You mean that I paid his school debts and his Oxford debts when you forgot to do so," growled out the elder brother.

"Yes, and that you afterwards gave him an income when he came up to live in London. I hope you do not think that I am ungrateful, George?" and Sir Lionel used his softest and, at the same time, his most expressive tone.

"Grateful! I seldom look for much gratitude. But I shall be glad to know when it may suit you to settle with me. The account has been running on now for a great many years. Probably Pritchett may have sent it you." And as he spoke Mr. Bertram rose from his chair and took an ominous-looking piece of paper from off the mantelpiece.

"Yes, Mr. Pritchett is punctuality itself in these matters," said Sir Lionel, with a gentle laugh, which had not about it all his usual pleasantness.

"You have probably checked it, and can say whether or no it be correct," said Mr. Bertram senior, looking at the paper in his hand.

"Well, I can't say that I have exactly; but I don't in the least doubt the figures, not in the least; Mr. Pritchett is always correct, I know."

"Yes, Mr. Pritchett is generally correct. And may I ask, Sir Lionel, what you intend to do in the matter?"

It was necessary now that Sir Lionel should summon up his best courage. He reminded himself that after all his brother was but a feeble old man — impotent in all but money; and as it seemed now clear that no further pecuniary aid was to be expected, why need he fear him on this account? Had it been possible for him to get away without further talk, he would have done so; but this was not possible, so he determined to put a good face on it.

"I suppose you are joking now, George," said he.

I wish I could describe the tone of voice in which the word joking was repeated by the elder Mr. Bertram. It made the military knight jump in his chair, and confess to himself that the word impotent could not be safely applied to his ancient relative.

"Well, I dare say it is a joke," the old man went on to say. "If I expect to be paid what I have expended in saving George from being turned loose upon the world without education, I suppose it is a joke. Ha! ha! ha! I never thought of laughing at it before, but now I will. I always heard that you were a joker, Sir Lionel. Ha! ha! ha! I dare say you have laughed at it often enough yourself, eh?"

"What I mean is this, when you took upon yourself George's education and maintenance, you could hardly have intended to have it paid back again by such a poor devil as I am."

"Oh, I couldn't, couldn't I?"

"At any rate, I don't suppose you did count on having your money back."

"Well, I must admit this, I did not feel very sure of

it; I did think there might be a doubt. But what could I do? I could not let poor Wilkinson ruin himself because you would not pay your debts."

"I am sorry that you take it up in such a manner," said the colonel, assuming a tone of injured innocence. "I came here because I heard that you were ill —"

"Thought I was dying, eh?"

"I did not exactly think that you were dying, George; but I knew that you were very ill, and old feelings came back on me. The feelings of our early youth, George; and I could not be happy without seeing you."

"Very kind of you, I am sure. You altogether decline then to settle the account, eh?"

"If you desire it, I will — will make arrangements, certainly; you do not want it all at once, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; half in three months, and other half in six will do for me."

"It would take a great deal more than all my income to do that, I fear."

"Your professional income; yes, I suppose it would. I fear they don't give you five or six thousand a year for staying at home at Littlebath. But surely you must have saved money; you must have intended to do something for your son?"

"I have looked upon him as provided for by his uncle."

"Oh!"

"And have therefore been satisfied that he would do well."

"Now, Sir Lionel, I will tell you how the matter is. I know you will never repay me a shilling of this

money, and therefore I shall tell Pritchett not to bother himself with sending you any more accounts."

"He is a worthy man, and I am sorry he should have had so much trouble."

"So am I, very; but that's done. He has had the trouble, and I've paid the money; and, as far as George is concerned, I do not begrudge it."

"You would not if you knew what his sentiments are."

"I don't care a fig for his sentiments."

"His feelings of gratitude to you are very strong."

"No, they are not. He is not in the least grateful to me, nor do I wish him to be so. He is an honest lad, with a high spirit, a good heart, and a bad head. Sometimes I have thought of making him my heir."

"Ah!" sighed Sir Lionel.

"But I have now firmly made up my mind to do no such thing. He has no knowledge of the worth of money. He does not value money."

"Oh, there you mistake him; indeed, you do."

"He would do no good with it; and, as regards mine, he won't have it." Sir Lionel's face again became very doleful.

"But who will have it, George? Whom else have you got to leave it to?"

"When I want to consult you on that subject, I'll send for you; just at present I have no wish to do so. And now, if you please, we'll say no more about money."

Nothing more was said about money, and very little on any other subject. On what other subject could a pleasant votary of pleasure, such as Sir Lionel, wish to hold conversation with a worn-out old miser from the

city? He had regarded his brother as a very full sponge, from which living water might probably be squeezed. But the sponge, it seemed, was no longer squeezable by him in any way. So he left Hadley as quickly as he could, and betook himself to Littlebath with a somewhat saddened heart. He consoled himself, however, by reflecting that an old man's whims are seldom very enduring, and that George might yet become a participator in the huge prize; if not on his own account, at least on that of his wife.

Sir Lionel returned to Littlebath, resolving that come what might he would not again have personal recourse to his brother. He had tried his diplomatic powers and had failed — failed in that line on being successful in which he so pre-eminently piqued himself. In Ireland it is said of any man who is more than ordinarily persuasive, that he can “talk the devil out of the liver wing of a turkey!” Sir Lionel had always supposed himself to be gifted with this eloquence; but in that discourse at Hadley, the devil had been too stout for him, and he had gone away without any wing at all — liver or other.

On one point on which he had been very anxious to say a word or two, he had been unable to introduce the slightest hint. He had not dreamt that it would be possible to ask his brother in so many words whether or no Miss Baker would be made a participator in the great prize; but he had imagined that he might have led the way to some conversation which would have shown what were the old man's feelings with reference to that lady. But, as the reader will have perceived, he had not been able to lead the conversation in any way; and he had left Hadley without further light for the guidance of

his steps in that matrimonial path in which he had contemplated the expediency of taking a leisurely evening stroll.

The wicked old miser had declared that George should not be his heir; and had also said that which was tantamount to a similar declaration regarding Caroline. She would have six thousand pounds, first and last. Nothing more than a beggarly six thousand pounds, of which two-thirds were already her own without thanks to any one. What a wretched old miser! Who then would have his money? It would hardly be possible that he would leave it all to Miss Baker. And yet he might. It was just possible. Anything was possible with a capricious miserly old fool like that. What a catch would it be if he, Sir Lionel, could become the heir in so deliciously easy a manner!

But, in all probability, anything the old man might say was exactly the opposite of that which he intended to do. He probably would leave his money to George — or very probably to Caroline; but most probably he would do something for Miss Baker; something handsome for that soft, obedient handmaid who had never disobeyed any of his commands; and, better still, had never drawn upon him for more than her regular allowance.

Such were Sir Lionel's thoughts as he made his way back to Littlebath. Yes; he would make himself acceptable to Miss Baker. That George, old George, was not long for this world was very evident to the colonel. He, troublesome old cross-grained churl that he was, would soon be out of the way. Such being certain — could not Sir Lionel manage matters in this way? Could he not engage himself to the lady while his brother was

yet alive, and then marry her afterwards — marry her, or perhaps not marry her, as might then become expedient? He was well sure of this, that if she promised to marry him before her acquisition of fortune, such acquisition would not induce her to break off from the match. "She is too true, too honourable for that," said Sir Lionel to himself, feeling a warm admiration for the truth of her character, as he revolved how he might himself best back out of such an engagement in the event of its being expedient for him so to do.

So passed his thoughts as he made his way back to Littlebath. And when there he did not allow idleness to mar his schemes. He immediately began to make himself pleasant — more than ordinarily pleasant to Miss Baker. He did not make love to her after the manner of his youth. Had he done so, he would only have frightened the gentle lady. But he was assiduous in his attentions, soft and sweetly flattering in his speech, and friendly, oh, so friendly, in his manner! He called almost every day at Montpellier Crescent. To be sure, there was nothing unnatural in this, for was he not about to become the father of his dear Caroline? But dear to him as his dear Caroline might be, his softest whispers, his most sugared words were always for her aunt.

He had ever some little proposition to make, some kind family suggestion to put forward. He was a man of the world; they were ladies, delicate, unfit for coping with the world, necessarily ignorant of its naughtier, darker ways; he would do everything for them: and by degrees he did almost everything for Miss Baker.

And so that lady was charmed without knowing it. Let us do her full justice. She had not the remotest

idea of opening a flirtation with Sir Lionel Bertram. She had looked on him as the future father-in-law of her own dear child; never as anything more: no idea of becoming Lady Bertram had ever for an instant flashed upon her imagination. But, nevertheless, by degrees the warrior's attentions became pleasant to her.

She had had no youthful adorers, this poor, good Miss Baker; never, at least, since she had been merry as other children are, "when her little lovers came." She had advanced to her present nearly mature age without perhaps feeling the want of them. But, nevertheless, even in her bosom was living the usual feminine passion for admiration. She was no "*lusus naturæ*," but a woman with a heart, and blood in her veins; and not as yet a very old woman either. And therefore, though she had no idea that Sir Lionel was her lover, she had learned to be fond of him.

Her little conversations with Caroline on this subject were delightful. The younger lady was certainly the sharper of the two; and though she had her own concern to occupy her, she was able to see that something might perhaps be intended. Her liking for Sir Lionel was by no means a strong passion. Something probably had passed between her and George; for George could keep no secret from her. At any rate, she suspected the knight, but she could not say anything to put her aunt on her guard beyond using cold expressions in speaking of her future father. But Miss Baker, who suspected nothing, who expected nothing, could not be too lavish in her praises.

"Caroline," she would say, "I do think you are so happy in having such a father-in-law."

"Oh, certainly," Caroline had answered. "But, for myself, I think more of my father-in-law's son."

"Oh, of course you do; I know that. But Sir Lionel is such a perfect gentleman. Did you ever know a gentleman of his age so attentive to ladies as he is?"

"Well, perhaps not; except one or two old men whom I have seen making love."

"That's a very different sort of thing, you know—that's absurd. But I must say I think Sir Lionel's behaviour is perfect." What would she have said of Sir Lionel's behaviour had she known all the secrets of his establishments?

And thus, partly on Sir Lionel's account, Miss Baker began in these days to have perhaps her hottest fit, her strongest wish with reference to her niece's marriage. And then just at this hottest moment came the blow which has been told of in the last chapter.

But Miss Baker, as she prepared herself for Miss Todd's party, would not believe that the matter was hopeless. The quarrels of lovers have ever been the renewal of love, since the day when a verb between two nominative cases first became possessed of the power of agreeing with either of them. There is something in this sweet easiness of agreement which seems to tend to such reconciliations. Miss Baker was too good a grammarian to doubt the fact.

She would probably, under existing circumstances, have stayed at home with her niece, but that she knew she should meet Sir Lionel at Miss Todd's party. She was very anxious to learn whether Sir Lionel had heard of this sad interruption to their harmony; anxious to hear what Sir Lionel would say about it; anxious to concert measures with Sir Lionel for repairing the

breach — that is, if Sir Lionel should appear to be cognizant that the breach existed. If she should find that he was not cognizant, she would not tell him; at least she thought she would not. Circumstances must of course govern her conduct to a certain degree when the moment of meeting should arrive. And so Miss Baker went to the party, certainly with a saddened heart, but comforted in some degree by the assurance that she would meet Sir Lionel. “Dear Sir Lionel, what a thing it is to have a friend,” she said to herself as she stepped into the fly. Yes, indeed, the best thing in the world — the very best. But, dear Miss Baker, it is of all things the most difficult to acquire — and especially difficult for both ladies and gentlemen after forty years of age.

In the meantime, Sir Lionel had been calling on Miss Todd — had heard a good deal about Miss Todd; and was strong at heart, as a man is strong who has two good strings to his bow.

CHAPTER XXII.

Miss Todd's Card-Party.

YES. The great Miss Todd had arrived at Littlebath, and had already been talked about not a little. Being a maiden lady, with no family but her one own maid, she lived in lodgings of course. People at Littlebath, indeed, are much given to lodgings. They are mostly a come-and-go class of beings, to whom the possession of furniture and the responsibilities of householding would be burdensome. But then Miss Todd's lodgings were in the Paragon, and all the world knows how much it costs to secure eligible rooms in the Paragon; two spacious sitting-

rooms, for instance, a bedroom: and a closet for one's own maid. And Miss Todd had done this in the very best corner of the Paragon; in that brazen-faced house which looks out of the Paragon right down Montpellier Avenue as regards the front windows, and from the back fully commands the entrance to the railway station. This was Mrs. O'Neil's house; and, as Mrs. O'Neil herself loudly boasted when Miss Todd came to inspect the premises, she rarely took single ladies, or any ladies that had not handles to their names. Her very last lodger had been Lady McGuffern, the widow of the medical director of the great Indian Eyesore district, as Mrs. O'Neil called it. And Lady McGuffern had paid her, oh! ever so much per week; and had always said on every Saturday — "Mrs. O'Neil, your terms for such rooms as these are much too low." It is in such language that the widows of Scotch doctors generally speak of their lodgings when they are paying their weekly bills.

And these rooms Miss Todd had secured. She had, moreover, instantly sent for Mr. Wutsanbeans, who keeps those remarkably neat livery stables at the back of the Paragon, and in ten minutes had concluded her bargain for a private brougham and private coachman in demi-livery at so much per week. "And very wide awake she is, is Miss Todd," said the admiring Mr. Wutsanbeans, as he stood among his bandy-legged satellites. And then her name was down at the assembly-rooms, and in the pump-room, and the book-room, and in the best of sittings in Mr. O'Callaghan's fashionable church, in almost less than no time. There were scores of ladies desirous of being promoted from the side walls to the middle avenues in Mr. O'Callaghan's church; for, after all, what is the use of a French bonnet when stuck

under a side wall? But though all these were desirous, and desirous in vain, Miss Todd at once secured a place where her head was the cynosure of all the eyes of the congregation. Such was Miss Todd's power, and therefore do we call her great.

And in a week's time the sound of her loud but yet pleasant voice, and the step of her heavy but yet active foot, and the glow of her red cherry cheek were as well known on the esplanade as though she were a Littlebathian of two months' standing. Of course she had found friends there, such friends as one always does find at such places — dear delightful people whom she had met some years before for a week at Ems, or sat opposite to once at the hotel table at Harrowgate for a fortnight. Miss Todd had a very large circle of such friends; and, to do her justice, we must say that she was always glad to see them, and always treated them well. She was ready to feed them at all times; she was not candid or malicious when backbiting them; she never threw the burden of her pleasures on her friends' shoulders — as ladies at Littlebath will sometimes do. She did not boast either of her purse or her acquaintance; and as long as she was allowed to do exactly what she liked she generally kept her temper. She had an excellent digestion, and greatly admired the same quality in other people. She did not much care what she said of others, but dearly liked to have mischief spoken of herself. Some one once had said — or very likely no one had said it, but a *soupson* of a hint had in some way reached her own ears — that she had left Torquay without paying her bills. It was at any rate untrue, but she had sedulously spread the report; and now wherever she ordered goods, she would

mysteriously tell the tradesman that he had better inquire about her in Devonshire. She had been seen walking one moonlight night with a young lad at Bangor: the lad was her nephew; but some one had perhaps jested about Miss Todd and her beau, and since that time she was always talking of eloping with her own flesh and blood.

But Miss Todd was not a bad woman. She spent much in feeding those who perhaps were not hungry; but she fed the hungry also: she indulged a good deal in silk brocades; but she bought gingham as well, and calicos for poor women, and flannel petticoats for motherless girls. She did go to sleep sometimes in church, and would sit at a whist-table till two o'clock of a Sunday morning; but having been selected from a large family by an uncle as his heir, she had divided her good things with brothers and sisters, and nephews and nieces. And so there were some hearts that blessed her, and some friends who loved her with a love other than that of her friends of Littlebath and Ems, of Jerusalem and Harrowgate.

And she had loved in her early days, and had been told and had believed that she was loved. But evidence had come to her that her lover was a scamp.— a man without morals and without principle; and she had torn herself away from him. And Miss Todd had offered to him money compensation, which the brute had taken; and since that, for his sake, or rather for her love's sake, she had rejected all further matrimonial tenders, and was still Miss Todd: and Miss Todd she intended to remain.

Being such as she was, the world of Littlebath was soon glad to get about her. Those who give suppers at their card-parties are not long in Littlebath in

making up the complement of their guests. She had been there now ten days, and had already once or twice mustered a couple of whist-tables; but this affair was to be on a larger scale.

Miss Baker she had not yet seen, nor Miss Waddington. The ladies had called on each other, but had missed fire on both occasions; but with Sir Lionel she had already renewed her intimacy on very affectionate terms. They had been together for perhaps three days at Jerusalem; but then three days at Jerusalem are worth a twelvemonth in such a dull, slow place as London. And Sir Lionel, therefore, and Miss Todd had nearly rushed into each other's arms; and they both, without any intentional falsehood, were talking of each other all over Littlebath as old and confidential friends.

And now for Miss Todd's party. Assist me, my muse. Come down from heaven, O, Calliope my queen! and aid me to spin with my pen a long discourse. Hark! do you hear? or does some fond delusion mock me? I seem to hear, and to be already wandering through those sacred recesses — the drawing-rooms, namely, at Littlebath — which are pervious only to the streams and breezes of good society.

Miss Todd stood at her drawing-room door as her guests were ushered in, not by the greengrocer's assistant, but by the greengrocer himself in person. And she made no quiet little curtsies, whispered no unmeaning welcomes with bated breath. No; as they arrived she seized each Littlebathian by the hand, and shook that hand vigorously. She did so to every one that came, rejoiced loudly in the coming of each, and bade them all revel in tea and cake with a voice that demanded and received instant obedience.

“Ah, Lady Longspade! this is kind. I am delighted to see you. Do you remember dear Ems, and the dear Kursaal? Ah, me! Well, do take some tea now, Lady Longspade. What, Miss Finesse — well — well — well. I was thinking of Ostend only the other day. You'll find Flounce there with coffee and cake and all that. You remember my woman, Flounce, don't you? Mrs. Fuzzybell, you really make me proud. But is not Mr. Fuzzybell to be here? Oh, he's behind, is he? well — I'm so glad. Ha! ha! ha! A slow coach, is he? I'll make him faster. But perhaps you won't trust him to me, I'm such a dangerous creature. I'm always eloping with some one. Who knows but I might go off with Mr. Fuzzybell? We were near it you know at the end of that long walk at Malvern — only he seemed too tired — ha! ha! ha! There's tea and cake there, Mrs. Fuzzybell. My dear Sir Lionel, I am delighted. I declare you are five years younger — we are both five years younger than when we were at Jerusalem.”

And so forth. But Sir Lionel did not pass on to the tea-tables as did the Finesses and the Longspades. He remained close at Miss Todd's elbow, as though his friendship was of a more enduring kind than that of others, as though he were more to Miss Todd than Mrs. Fuzzybell, nearer than Miss Ruff who had just been assured at her entrance that the decks should be made ready for action almost at once. A lion-hearted old warrior was Miss Ruff, — one who could not stand with patience the modern practice of dallying in the presence of her enemies' guns. She had come there for a rubber of whist — to fight the good fight — to conquer or to die, and her soul longed to be at it. Wait but one moment longer, Miss Ruff, and the

greengrocer and I will have done with our usherings, and then the decks shall be cleared.

But we must certainly do the honours for our old friend Miss Baker. Miss Todd, when she saw her, looked as though she would have fallen on her neck and kissed her; but she doubtless remembered that their respective head-dresses might suffer in the encounter.

“At last, dear Miss Baker; at last! I am so delighted; but where is Miss Waddington? where is the bride-elect?” These last words were said in a whisper which was not perhaps quite as plainly audible at the other side of the Paragon as were the generality of Miss Todd’s speeches. “Indisposed! Why is she indisposed? you mean that she has love-letters to write. I know that is what you mean.” And the roar again became a whisper fit for Drury Lane. “Well, I shall make a point of seeing her to-morrow. Do you remember Jehoshaphat, dear Jehoshaphat?” And then having made her little answers, Miss Baker also passed on, and left Miss Todd in the act of welcoming the Rev. Mr. O’Callaghan.

Miss Baker passed on, but she did so slowly. She had to speak to Sir Lionel, who kept his place near Miss Todd’s shoulder; and perhaps she had some secret hope — no, not hope; some sort of an anticipation — that her dear friend would give her the benefit of his arm for a few moments. But Sir Lionel did nothing of the kind. He took her hand with his kindest little squeeze, asked with his softest voice after his dear Caroline, and then let her pass on by herself. Miss Baker was a bird easily to be lured to her perch, — or to his. Sir Lionel felt that he could secure her at any time. Therefore, he determined to attach himself to Miss Todd

for the present. And so Miss Baker walked on alone, perhaps a little piqued at being thus slighted.

It was a strange sight to see the Rev. Mr. O'Callaghan among that worldly crowd of pleasure-seeking sinners. There were, as we have said, three sets of people at Littlebath. That Miss Todd, with her commanding genius and great power of will, should have got together portions of two of them was hardly to be considered wonderful. Both the fast and heavy set liked good suppers. But it did appear singular to the men and women of both these sets that they should find themselves in the same room with Mr. O'Callaghan.

Mr. O'Callaghan was not exactly the head and font of piety at Littlebath. It was not on his altars, not on his chiefly, that hecatombs of needlework were offered up. He was only senior curate to the great high-priest, to Dr. Snort himself. But though he was but curate, he was more perhaps to Littlebath — to his especial set in Littlebath — than most rectors are to their own people.

Mr. O'Callaghan was known to be condescending and mild under the influence of tea and muffins — sweetly so if the cream be plentiful and the muffins soft with butter; but still, as a man and a pastor, he was severe. In season and out of season he was hot in argument against the devil and all his works. He was always fighting the battle with all manner of weapons. He would write letters of killing reproach to persons he had never known, and address them by post to —

“John Jones, Esq.,
The Sabbath-breaker,
5 Paradise Terrace,
Littlebath.”

“Mrs. Gambler Smith,
2 Little Paragon,
Littlebath.”

Nothing was too severe for him. One may say that had he not been a clergyman, and therefore of course justified in any interference, he would have been kicked from Littlebath to London and back again long since. How then did it come to pass that he was seen at Miss Todd's party? The secret lay in Miss Todd's unbounded power. She was not as other Littlebathians. When he unintentionally squeezed her hand, she squeezed his in return with somewhat of a firmer grasp. When, gently whispering, he trusted that she was as well in spirit as in body, she answered aloud — and all the larger Paragon heard her — that she was very well in both, thank God. And then, as her guests pressed in, she passed him on rapidly to the tea and cake, and to such generous supplies of cream as Mrs. Flounce, in her piety, might be pleased to vouchsafe to him.

“What, Mr. O'Callaghan!” said Sir Lionel into Miss Todd's ear, in a tone of well-bred wonder and triumphant admiration. “Mr. O'Callaghan among the sinners! My dear Miss Todd, how will he like the whist-tables?”

“If he does not like them, he must just do the other thing. If I know anything of Miss Ruff, a whole college of O'Callaghans would not keep her from the devil's books for five minutes longer. Oh, here is Lady Ruth Revoke, my dear Lady Ruth, I am charmed to see you. When, I wonder, shall we meet again at Baden Baden? Dear Baden Baden! Flounce, green tea for Lady Ruth Revoke.” And so Miss Todd continued to do her duty.

What Miss Todd had said of her friend was quite true. Even then Miss Ruff was standing over a card-

table, with an open pack in her hands, quite regardless of Mr. O'Callaghan. "Come, Lady Longspade," she said, "we are wasting time sadly. It is ever so much after nine. I know Miss Todd means us to begin. She told me so. Suppose we sit down?"

But Lady Longspade merely muttered something and passed on. In the first place, she was not quite so eager as was Miss Ruff; and in the next, Miss Ruff was neither the partner nor the opponent with whom she delighted to co-operate. Lady Longspade liked to play first-fiddle at her own table; but Miss Ruff always played first-fiddle at her table, let the others be whom they might; and she very generally played her tunes altogether "con spirito."

Miss Ruff saw how Lady Longspade passed on, but she was nothing disconcerted. She was used to that, and more than that. "Highly-tighty!" was all she said. "Well, Mrs. Garded, I think we can manage without her ladyship, can't we?" Mrs. Garded said that she thought they might indeed, and stood by the table opposite to Miss Ruff. This was Mrs. King Garded, a widow of great Littlebathian repute, to whom as a partner over the green table few objected. She was a careful, silent, painstaking player, one who carefully kept her accounts, and knew well that the monthly balance depended mainly, not on her good, but on her bad hands. She was an old friend, and an old enemy of Miss Ruff's. The two would say very spiteful things to each other, things incredible to persons not accustomed to the card-tables of Littlebath. But, nevertheless, they were always willing to sit together at the same rubber.

To them came up smirking little Mr. Fuzzybell. Mr. Fuzzybell was not great at whist, nor did he much

delight in it; but, nevertheless, he constantly played. He was taken about by his wife to the parties, and then he was always caught and impaled, and generally plucked and skinned before he was sent home again. He never disported at the same table with his wife, who did not care to play either with him or against him; but he was generally caught by some Miss Ruff, or some Mrs. King Garded, and duly made use of. The ladies of Littlebath generally liked to have one black coat at the table with them. It saved them from that air of destitution which always, in their own eyes, attaches to four ladies seated at a table together.

"Ah, Mr. Fuzzybell," said Miss Ruff, "you are the very person we are looking for. Mrs. Garded always likes to have you at her table. Sit down, Mr. Fuzzybell." Mr. Fuzzybell did as he was told, and sat down.

Just at this moment, as Miss Ruff was looking out with eager eyes for a fourth who would suit her tastes, and had almost succeeded in catching the eye of Miss Finesse — and Miss Finesse was a silent, desirable, correct player — who should walk up to the table and absolutely sit down but that odious old woman, Lady Ruth Revoke! It was Mrs. Garded's great sin, in Miss Ruff's eye, that she toadied Lady Ruth to such an extent as to be generally willing to play with her. Now it was notorious in Littlebath that she had never played well, and that she had long since forgotten all she had ever known. The poor old woman had already had some kind of a fit; she was very shaky and infirm, and ghastly to look at, in spite of her paint and ribbons. She was long in arranging her cards, long in playing them; very long in settling her points, when the points went against her, as they generally did. And yet, in spite of all this,

Mrs. King Garded would encourage her because her father had been Lord Whitechapel!

There was no help for it now. There she was in the chair; and unless Miss Ruff was prepared to give up her table and do something that would be uncommonly rude even for her, the rubber must go on. She was not prepared at any rate to give up her table, so she took up a card to cut for partners. There were two to one in her favour. If fortune would throw her ladyship and Mr. Fuzzybell together there might yet be found in the easiness of the prey some consolation for the slowness of the play.

They cut the cards, and Miss Ruff found herself sitting opposite to Lady Ruth Revoke. It was a pity that she should not have been photographed. "And now, Mr. Fuzzybell," said Mrs. King Garded, triumphantly.

But we must for awhile go to other parts of the room. Lady Longspade, Mrs. Fuzzybell, and Miss Finesse soon followed the daring example of Miss Ruff, and seated themselves with some worthy fourth com-patriot.

"Did you see Miss Ruff?" said Lady Longspade, whose ears had caught the scornful highty-tighty of the rejected lady. "She wanted to get me at her table. But no, I thank you. I like my rubber too, and can play it as well as some other people. But it may cost too dear, eh, Mrs. Fuzzybell? I have no idea of being scolded by Miss Ruff."

"No, nor I," said Mrs. Fuzzybell. "I hate that continual scolding. We are playing only for amusement; and why not play in good temper?" — nevertheless Mrs. Fuzzybell had a rough side to her own tongue. "It is you and I, Miss Finesse. Shillings, I suppose, and —"

and then there was a little whispering and a little grinning between Lady Longspade and Mrs. Fuzzybell, the meaning of which was, that as the occasion was rather a special one, they would indulge themselves with half-a-crown on the rubber and sixpence each hand on the odd trick. And so the second table went to work.

And then there was a third, and a fourth, and a fifth. Miss Ruff's example was more potent than Mr. O'Callaghan's presence in that assembly. That gentleman began to feel unhappy as there was no longer round him a crowd of listening ladies sufficient to screen from his now uninquiring eyes the delinquencies of the more eager of the sinners. The snorting of the warhorse and the sound of the trumpet had enticed away every martial bosom, and Mr. O'Callaghan was left alone in converse with Mrs. Flounce.

He turned to Miss Todd, who was now seated near enough to the door to do honour to any late arriving guest, but near enough also to the table to help herself easily to cake. His soul burned within him to utter one anathema against the things that he saw. Miss Todd was still not playing. He might opine that she objected to the practice. Sir Lionel was still at her back; he also might be a brand that had been rescued from the burning. At a little distance sat Miss Baker; he knew that she at any rate was not violently attached to cards. Could he not say something? Could he not lift up his voice, if only for a moment, and speak forth as he so loved to do, as was his wont in the meetings of the saints, his brethren?

He looked at Miss Todd, and he raised his eyes, and he raised his hands, but the courage was not in him to speak. There was about Miss Todd as she stood, or as

she sat, a firmness which showed itself even in her rotundity, a vigour in the very rubicundity of her cheek which was apt to quell the spirit of those who would fain have interfered with her. So Mr. O'Callaghan, having raised his eyes considerably, and having raised his hands a little, said nothing.

"I fear you do not approve of cards?" said Miss Todd.

"Approve! oh no, how can I approve of them, Miss Todd?"

"Well, I do with all my heart. What are old women like us to do? We haven't eyes to read at night, even if we had minds fit for it. We can't always be saying our prayers. We have nothing to talk about except scandal. It's better than drinking; and we should come to that if we hadn't cards."

"Oh, Miss Todd!"

"You see you have your excitement in preaching, Mr. O'Callaghan. These card-tables are our pulpits; we have got none other. We haven't children, and we haven't husbands. That is, the most of us. And we should be in a lunatic asylum in six weeks if you took away our cards. Now, will you tell me, Mr. O'Callaghan, what would you expect Miss Ruff to do if you persuaded her to give up whist?"

"She has the poor with her always, Miss Todd."

"Yes, she has; the woman that goes about with a clean apron and four borrowed children; and the dumb man with a bit of chalk and no legs, and the very red nose. She has these, to be sure, and a lot more. But suppose she looks after them all the day, she can't be looking after them all the night too. The mind must be unbent sometimes, Mr. O'Callaghan."

"But to play for money, Miss Todd! Is not that gambling?"

"Well, I don't know. I can't say what gambling is. But do you sit down and play for love, Mr. O'Callaghan, and see how soon you'll go to sleep. Come, shall we try? I can have a little private bet, just to keep myself awake, with Sir Lionel, here."

But Mr. O'Callaghan declined the experiment. So he had another cup of tea and another muffin, and then went his way; regretting sorely in his heart that he could not get up into a high pulpit and preach at them all. However, he consoled himself by "improving" the occasion on the following Sunday.

For the next fifteen minutes Sir Lionel stood his ground, saying soft nothings to Miss Todd, and then he also became absorbed among the rubbers. He found that Miss Todd was not good at having love made to her in public. She was very willing to be confidential, very willing to receive flattery, attentions, hand-pressings, and the like. But she would make her confidences in her usual joyous, loud voice; and when told that she was looking remarkably well, she would reply that she always did look well at Littlebath, in a tone that could not fail to attract the attention of the whole room. Now Sir Lionel would fain have been a little more quiet in his proceedings, and was forced to put off somewhat of what he had to say till he could find Miss Todd alone on the top of a mountain. 'Twas thus at least that he expressed his thoughts to himself in his chagrin, as he took his place opposite to Mr. Shortpointz at the seventh and last establishment now formed in the rooms.

The only idlers present were Miss Baker and Miss Todd. Miss Baker was not quite happy in her mind.

It was not only that she was depressed about Caroline: her firm belief in the grammatical axiom before alluded to lessened her grief on that score. But the conduct of Sir Lionel made her uncomfortable; and she began to find, without at all understanding why, that she did not like Miss Todd as well as she used to do at Jerusalem. Her heart took Mr. O'Callaghan's side in that little debate about the cards; and though Sir Lionel, in leaving Miss Todd, did not come to her, nevertheless the movement was agreeable to her. She was not therefore in her very highest spirits when Miss Todd came and sat close to her on the sofa.

"I am so sorry you should be out," said Miss Todd. "But you see, I've had so much to do at the door there, that I couldn't see who was sitting down with who."

"I'd rather be out," said Miss Baker. "I am not quite sure that Mr. O'Callaghan is not right." This was her revenge.

"No; he's not a bit right, my dear. He does — just what the man says in the rhymes — what is it? you know — makes up for his own little peccadilloes by damning yours and mine. I forget how it goes. But there'll be more in by-and-by, and then we'll have another table. Those who come late will be more in your line; not so ready to peck your eyes out if you happen to forget a card. That Miss Ruff is dreadful." Here an awful note was heard, for the Lady Ruth had just put her thirteenth trump on Miss Ruff's thirteenth heart. What Littlebathian female soul could stand that unmoved?

"Oh, dear! that poor old woman!" continued Miss Todd. "You know one lives in constant fear of her

having a fit. Miss Ruff is horrible. She has a way of looking with that fixed eye of hers that is almost worse than her voice." The fact was, that Miss Ruff had one glass eye. "I know she'll be the death of that poor old creature some of these days. Lady Ruth will play, and she hardly knows one card from another. And then Miss Ruff, she will scold. Good heavens! do you hear that?"

"It's just seven minutes since I turned the last trick of the last hand," Miss Ruff had said, scornfully. "We shall have finished the two rubbers about six in the morning, I take it."

"Will your ladyship allow me to deal for you?" said Mr. Fuzzybell, meaning to be civil.

"I'll allow you to do no such thing," croaked out Lady Ruth. "I can deal very well myself; at any rate as well as Miss Ruff. And I'm not the least in a hurry;" and she went on slobbering out the cards, and counting them over and over again, almost as each card fell.

"That's a double and a treble against a single," said Lady Longspade, cheerfully, from another table; "six points, and five — the other rubber — makes eleven; and the two half-crowns is sixteen, and seven odd tricks is nineteen and six. Here's sixpence, Mrs. Fuzzybell; and now we'll cut again."

This was dreadful to Miss Ruff. Here had her rival played two rubbers, won them both, pocketed all but a sovereign, and was again at work; while she, she was still painfully toiling through her second game, the first having been scored against her by her partner's fatuity in having trumped her long heart. Was this to be borne with patience? "Lady Ruth," she said, emitting fire out

of her one eye, "do you ever mean to have done dealing those cards?"

Lady Ruth did not condescend to make any answer, but recommenced her leisurely counting; and then Miss Ruff uttered that terrific screech which had peculiarly excited Miss Todd's attention.

"I declare I don't like it at all," said the tender-hearted Miss Baker. "I think Mr. O'Callaghan was quite right."

"No, my dear, he was quite wrong, for he blamed the use of cards, not the abuse. And after all, what harm comes of it? I don't suppose Miss Ruff will actually kill her. I dare say if we were playing ourselves we shouldn't notice it. Do you play cribbage? Shall we have a little cribbage?" But Miss Baker did not play cribbage; or, at any rate, she said that she did not.

"And do tell me something about dear Caroline," continued Miss Todd. "I am so anxious to see her. But it has been a very long engagement, hasn't it? and there ought to be lots of money, oughtn't there? But I suppose it's all right. You know I was very much in love with young Bertram myself; and made all manner of overtures to him, but quite in vain; ha! ha! ha! I always thought him a very fine fellow, and I think her a very lucky girl. And when is it to be? And, do tell me, is she over head and ears in love with him?"

What was Miss Baker to say to this? She had not the slightest intention of making Miss Todd a confidante in the matter; certainly not now, as that lady was inclined to behave so very improperly with Sir Lionel; and yet she did not know how to answer it.

"I hope it won't be put off much longer," continued Miss Todd. "Is any day fixed yet?"

"No; no day is fixed yet," replied Miss Baker, blushing.

Miss Todd's ear was very quick. "There is nothing the matter, I trust. Well, I won't ask any questions, nor say a word to anybody. Come, there is a table vacant, and we will cut in." And then she determined that she would get it all out from Sir Lionel.

The parties at some of the tables were now changed, and Miss Baker and Miss Todd found themselves playing together. Miss Baker, too, loved a gentle little rubber, if she could enjoy it quietly, without fear of being gobbled up by any Ruff or any Longspade; and with Miss Todd she was in this matter quite safe. She might behave as badly as had the Lady Ruth, and Miss Todd would do no worse than laugh at her. Miss Todd did not care about her points, and at her own house would as soon lose as win; so that Miss Baker would have been happy had she not still continued to sigh over her friend's very improper flirtation with Sir Lionel.

And thus things went on for an hour or so. Every now and again a savage yell was heard from some ill-used angry lady, and low growls, prolonged sometimes through a whole game, came from different parts of the room; but nobody took any notice of them; 'twas the manner at Littlebath: and, though a stranger to the place might have thought, on looking at those perturbed faces, and hearing those uncourteous sounds, that there would be a flow of blood — such a flow as angry nails may produce — the denizens of the place knew better. So the rubbers went on with the amount of harmony customary to the place.

But the scene would have been an odd one for a non-playing stranger, had a non-playing stranger been

there to watch it. Every person in the room was engaged at whist except Mrs. Flounce, who still remained quiescent behind her tea and cakes. It did not happen that the party was made up of a number of exact fours. There were two over; two middle-aged ladies, a maiden and a widow; and they, perhaps more happy than any of the others, certainly more silent, for neither of them had a partner to scold, were hard at work at double-dummy in a corner.

It was a sight for a stranger! It is generally thought that a sad *ennui* pervades the life of most of those old ladies in England to whom fate has denied the usual cares and burdens of the world, or whose cares and burdens are done and gone. But there was no *ennui* here. No stockjobber on 'Change could go about his exciting work with more animating eagerness. There were those who scolded, and those who were scolded. Those who sat silent, being great of mind, and those who, being weak, could not restrain their notes of triumph or their notes of woe; but they were all of them as animated and intense as a tiger springing at its prey. Watch the gleam of joy that lights up the half-dead, sallow countenance of old Mrs. Shortpointz as she finds the ace of trumps at the back of her hand, the very last card. Happy, happy Mrs. Shortpointz! Watch the triumph which illumines even the painted cheeks and half-hidden wrinkles of Lady Longspade as she brings in at the end of the hand three winning little clubs, and sees kings and queens fall impotent at their call. Triumphant, successful Lady Longspade! Was Napoleon more triumphant, did a brighter glow of self-satisfied inward power cross his features, when at Ulm he succeeded in separating poor Mack from all his friends?

Play on, ladies. Let us not begrudge you your amusements. We do not hold with pious Mr. O'Callaghan, that the interchange of a few six-pences is a grievous sin. At other hours ye are still soft, charitable, and tender-hearted; tender-hearted as English old ladies are, and should be. But, dear ladies, would it not be well to remember the amenities of life — even at the whist-table?

So things went on for an hour or so, and then Miss Baker and Sir Lionel again found themselves separated from the card-tables, a lonely pair. It had been Sir Lionel's cue this evening to select Miss Todd for his special attentions; but he had found Miss Todd at the present moment to be too much a public character for his purposes. She had a sort of way of speaking to all her guests at once, which had doubtless on the whole an extremely hilarious effect, but which was not flattering to the *amour propre* of a special admirer. So, *faute de mieux*, Sir Lionel was content to sit down in a corner with Miss Baker. Miss Baker was also content; but she was rather uneasy as to how she should treat the subject of Caroline's quarrel with her lover.

"Of course you saw George to-day?" she began.

"Yes, I did see him; but that was all. He seemed to be in a tremendous hurry, and said he must be back in town to-night. He's not staying, is he?"

"No; he's not staying."

"I didn't know: when I saw that dear Caroline was not with you, I thought she might perhaps have better company at home."

"She was not very well. George went back to London before dinner."

"Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Well, no; I hope not. That is — you haven't heard anything about it, have you, Sir Lionel?"

"Heard anything! No, I have heard nothing; what is it?"

It may be presumed that such a conversation as this had not been carried on in a very loud tone; but, nevertheless, low as Miss Baker had spoken, low as Sir Lionel had spoken, it had been too loud. They had chosen their places badly. The table at which Lady Ruth and her party were sitting — we ought rather to say, Miss Ruff and her party — was in one corner of the room, and our friends had placed themselves on a cushioned seat fixed against the wall in this very corner. Things were still going badly with Miss Ruff. As Sindbad carried the old man, and could not shake him off, so did Miss Ruff still carry Lady Ruth Revoke; and the weight was too much for her.

She manfully struggled on, however — womanfully would perhaps be a stronger and more appropriate word. She had to calculate not only how to play her own hand correctly, but she had also to calculate on her partner's probable errors. This was hard work, and required that all around her should be undisturbed and silent. In the midst of a maze of uncontrollable difficulties, the buzz of Miss Baker's voice fell upon her ears, and up she rose from her chair.

"Miss Todd," she said, and Miss Todd, looking round from a neighbouring table, shone upon her with her rosy face. But all the shining was of no avail.

"Miss Todd, if this is to be a conversazione, we had better make it so at once. But if it's whist, then I must say I never heard so much talking in my life!"

"It's a little of both," said Miss Todd, not *sotto voce*.

"Oh, very well; now I understand," said Miss Ruff; and then she resumed her work and went on with her calculations.

Miss Baker and Sir Lionel got up, of course, and going over to the further part of the room continued their conversation. She soon told him all she knew. She had hardly seen George herself, she said. But Caroline had had a long interview with him, and on leaving him had said that all — all now was over.

"I don't know what to make of it," said Miss Baker, with her handkerchief to her eyes. "What do you think, Sir Lionel? You know they say that lovers always do quarrel, and always do make it up again."

"George is a very headstrong fellow," said Sir Lionel.

"Yes, that is what I have always felt; always. There was no being sure with him. He is so wild, and has such starts."

"Has this been his doing?"

"Oh, yes, I think so. Not but that Caroline is very spirited too: I suppose somehow it came about between them."

"He was tired of waiting."

"That might have been a reason twelve months ago, but there was to be no more delay now; that is as I understood it. No, it has not been that, Sir Lionel. It makes me very unhappy, I know;" and Miss Baker again used her handkerchief.

"You mustn't distress yourself, my dearest friend," said Lionel. "For my sake, don't. Oh, if you knew how it pains me to see you suffering in that way! I think more of you in the matter than even of George; I do indeed." And Sir Lionel contrived to give a little pinch to the top of one of Miss Baker's fingers — not,

however, without being observed by the sharp eyes of his hostess.

"But, Caroline!" sobbed Miss Baker, behind her handkerchief. She was nicely ensconced in the depth of a lounging-chair, so that she could turn her face from the card-tables. It is so sweet to be consoled in one's misery, especially when one really believes that the misery is not incurable. So that on the whole Miss Baker was not unhappy.

"Yes, dear Caroline," said Sir Lionel; "of course I can say nothing till I have heard more of the matter. But do you think Caroline really loves him? Sometimes I have thought —"

"So have I, sometimes; that is I used. But she does love him, Sir Lionel; that is, if I know anything about it."

"Ah, dearest friend, do you know anything about it? that is the very question I want to ask you. Do you know anything about it? Sometimes I have thought you knew nothing. And then sometimes I have thought, been bold enough to think —" And Sir Lionel looked intently at the handkerchief which covered her face; and Miss Todd looked furtively, ever and anon, at Sir Lionel. "I declare I think it would do very well," said Miss Todd to herself good-naturedly.

Miss Baker did not quite understand him, but she felt herself much consoled. Sir Lionel was a remarkably handsome man; as to that she had made up her mind long since: then he was a peculiarly gentlemanlike man, a very friendly man, and a man who exactly suited all her tastes. She had for some weeks past begun to think the day tedious in which she did not see him; and now it was driven in upon her mind that conversation was a

much pleasanter occupation than whist; that is, conversation with so highly-polished a man as Sir Lionel Bertram. But, nevertheless, she did not quite understand what he meant, nor did she know how she ought to answer it. Why need she answer him at all? Could she not sit there, wiping her eyes softly and comfortably, and listen to what might come next?

"I sometimes think that some women never love," said Sir Lionel.

"Perhaps they don't," said Miss Baker.

"And yet in the depth of many a heart there may be a fund of passion."

"Oh, there may, certainly," said Miss Baker.

"And in your own, my friend? Is there no such fund there? Are there no hidden depths there unexplored, still fresh, but still, perhaps still to be reached?"

Again Miss Baker found it easiest to lie well back into her chair, and wipe her eyes comfortably. She was not prepared to say much about the depths of her own heart at so very short a notice.

Sir Lionel was again about to speak — and who can say what might have come next, how far those hidden depths might have been tried? — when he was arrested in the midst of his pathos by seeing Mrs. Garded and Mr. Fuzzybell each rush to a shoulder of Lady Ruth Revoke. The colonel quitted his love for the moment, and hurried to the distant table; while Miss Baker, removing her handkerchief, sat up and gazed at the scene of action.

The quarrelling had been going on unabated, but that had caused little surprise. It is astonishing how

soon the ear becomes used to incivilities. They were now accustomed to Miss Ruff's voice, and thought nothing of her exclamations. "Well, I declare — what, the ten of spades! — ha! ha! ha! well, it is an excellent joke — if you could have obliged me, Lady Ruth, by returning my lead of trumps, we should have been out," &c., &c., &c. All this and more attracted no attention, and the general pity for Lady Ruth had become dead and passive.

But at last Miss Ruff's tongue went faster and faster, and her words became sharper and sharper. Lady Ruth's countenance became very strange to look at. She bobbed her head about slowly in a manner that frightened Mr. Fuzzybell, and ceased to make any remark to her partner. Then Mrs. Garded made two direct appeals to Miss Ruff for mercy.

But Miss Ruff could not be merciful. Perhaps on each occasion she refrained for a moment, but it was only for a moment; and Mrs. Garded and Mr. Fuzzybell ceased to think of their cards, and looked only at the Lady Ruth; and then of a sudden they both rose from their seats, the colonel, as we have said, rushed across the room, and all the players at all the tables put down their cards and stood up in alarm.

Lady Ruth was sitting perfectly still, except that she still bobbed her old head up and down in a strange unearthly manner. She had about ten cards in her hand which she held motionless. Her eyes seemed to be fixed in one continued stare directly on the face of her foe. Her lower jaw had fallen so as to give a monstrous extension to her cadaverous face. There she

sat apparently speechless; but still she bobbed her head, and still she held her cards.

It was known at Littlebath that she had suffered from paralysis, and Mrs. Garded and Mr. Fuzzybell thinking that she was having or about to have a fit, naturally rushed to her assistance.

"What is the matter with her?" said Miss Ruff. "Is anything the matter with her?"

Miss Todd was now at the old lady's side. "Lady Ruth," said she, "do you find yourself not well? Shall we go into my room? Sir Lionel, will you help her ladyship?" And between them they raised Lady Ruth from her chair. But she still clutched the cards, still fixed her eyes on Miss Ruff, and still bobbed her head.

"Do you feel yourself ill, Lady Ruth?" said Miss Todd. But her ladyship answered nothing.

It seemed, however, that her ladyship could walk, for with her two supporters she made her way nearly to the door of the room. There she stood, and having succeeded in shaking off Sir Lionel's arm, she turned and faced round upon the company. She continued to bob her head at them all, and then made this little speech, uttering each word very slowly.

"I wish she had a glass tongue as well, because then perhaps she'd break it." And having so revenged herself, she suffered Miss Todd to lead her away into the bedroom. It was clear at least that she had no fit, and the company was thankful.

Sir Lionel, seeing how it was, left them at the door of the bedroom, and a few minutes afterwards Miss

Todd, Mrs. Flounce, and Lady Ruth's own maid succeeded in getting her into a cab. It is believed that after a day or two she was none the worse for what had happened, and that she made rather a boast of having put down Miss Ruff. For the moment, Miss Ruff was rather put down.

When Miss Todd returned to the drawing-room that lady was sitting quite by herself on an ottoman. She was bolt upright, with her hands before her on her lap, striving to look as though she were perfectly indifferent to what had taken place. But there was ever and again a little twitch about her mouth, and an involuntary movement in her eye which betrayed the effort, and showed that for this once Lady Ruth had conquered. Mr. Fuzzybell was standing with a frightened look at the fireplace; while Mrs. King Garded hung sorrowing over her cards, for when the accident happened she had two by honours in her own hand.

When Miss Todd returned some few of her guests were at work again; but most of the tables were broken up. "Poor dear old lady," said Miss Todd, "she has gone home none the worse. She is very old, you know, and a dear good creature."

"A sweet dear creature," said Mrs. Shortpointz, who loved the peerage, and hated Miss Ruff.

"Come," said Miss Todd, "Parsnip has got a little supper for us down stairs; shall we go down? Miss Ruff, you and I will go and call on Lady Ruth to-morrow. Sir Lionel, will you give your arm to Lady Longspade? Come, my dear;" and so Miss Todd took Miss Baker under her wing, and they all went down to supper. But Miss Ruff said not another word that night.

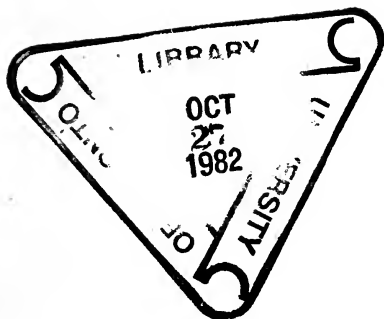
“Ha! ha!” said Miss Todd, poking her fan at Miss Baker, “I see all about it, I assure you; and I quite approve.”

Miss Baker felt very comfortable, but she did not altogether understand her friend’s joke.

END OF VOL. I.





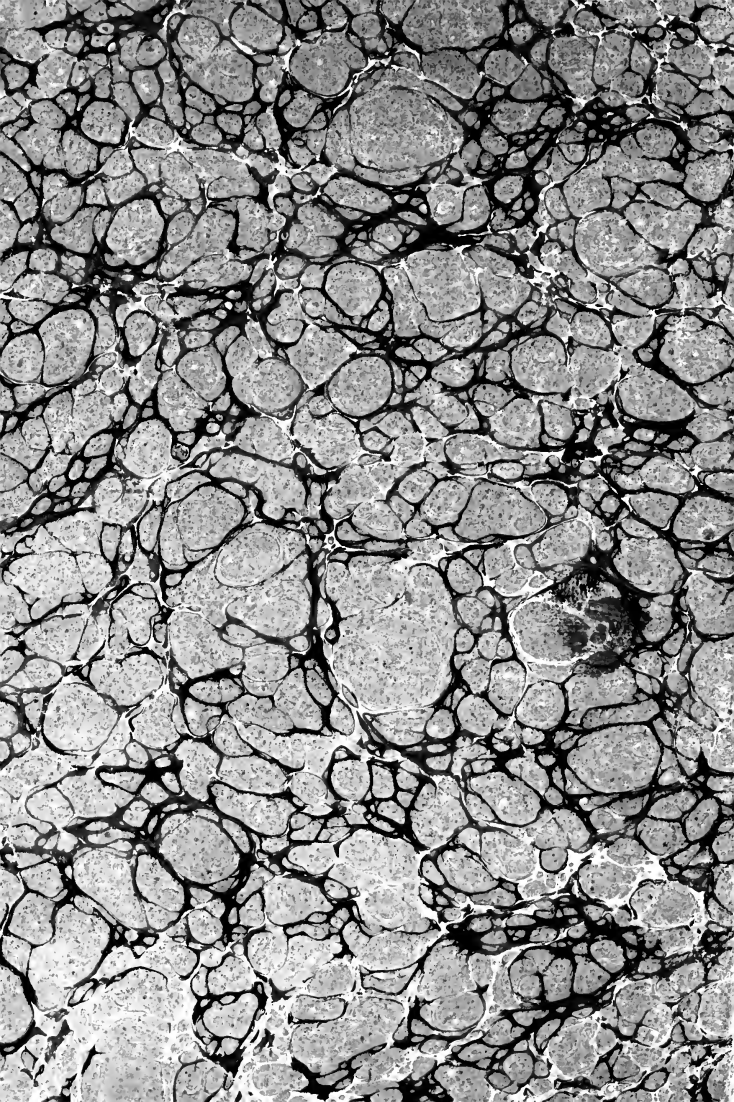


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