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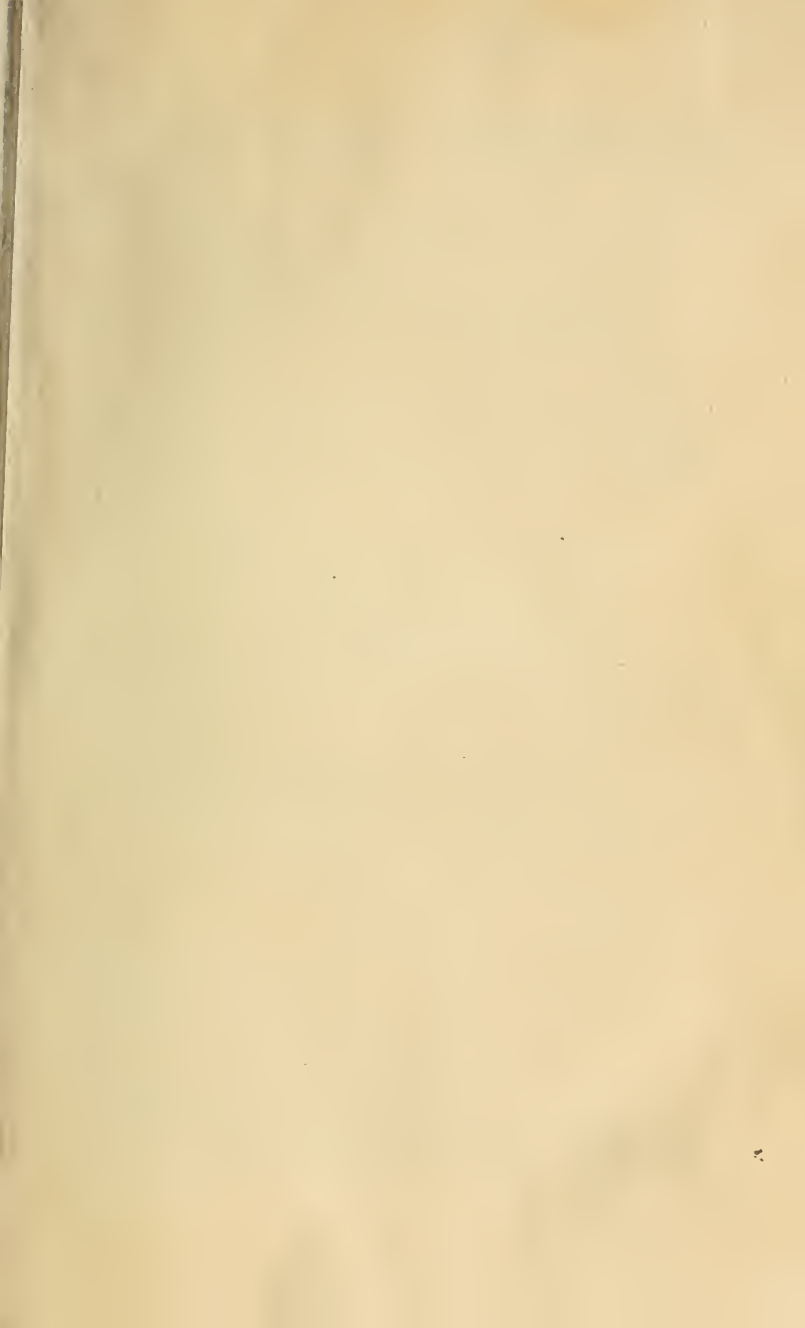
§ 5. If any person injure or fail to return any books taken from the Library, within the time prescribed in the foregoing Section, he shall forfeit and pay to the Librarian, for the benefit of the Library, three times the value thereof, or of the net to which it belongs; and before the Controller shall issue his warrant in favor of any Member or Officer of the Legislature, or of this State, for his per diem allowance, or salary, he shall be satisfied that such Member or Officer has returned all books taken out of the Library by him, and has settled all accounts for injuring such books or otherwise.

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BOGLE CORBET;

OR,

THE EMIGRANTS.

“ Truth severe by fairy fiction dressed.”

BY JOHN GALT, Esq.

AUTHOR OF “LAWRIE TODD,” “THE LIFE OF LORD BYRON,”

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

THE object of this work has been to give expression to the probable feelings of a character upon whom the commercial circumstances of the age have had their natural effect, and to show what a person of ordinarily genteel habits has really to expect in emigrating to Canada.

Information given as incidents of personal experience is more instructive than opinion. The author's opportunities to acquire knowledge of the kind which he has here prepared, have been, at least, not common, and it was studiously gathered to be useful to others.

The author had proposed to offer the result of his observations in a regularly didactic form,

but upon reflection, a theoretic biography seemed better calculated to ensure the effect desired. We disguise medicine, and he but mixes truth with fiction.

Whatever, therefore, shall be thought of his attempt, the book will, perhaps, be considered as possessing in some degree a redeeming quality, inasmuch as it contains instruction that may help to lighten the anxieties of those whom taste or fortune prompts to quit their native land, and to seek in the wilderness new objects of industry, enterprise, and care.

20th April, 1831.

N. B. The view in the Appendix of more than two-thirds of the Provinces will probably be esteemed valuable.

BOGLE CORBET;

OR,

THE EMIGRANTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROLOGUE.

I HAVE led but a rigmarole life, and in preparing to give the world some account of it, I feel myself considerably embarrassed. If I commence with my childhood and school-boy days, assuredly it will oblige me to repeat many things that have been a hundred times better told by as many others; so much alike is the early history of all men. Only monsters and princes are objects of wonder at their birth; and I happen to be neither the one nor the other; but in capacity and in all my characteristics a very ordinary man, distinguished, however, I must

say, by a few strange adventures, and, without having an eye in my neck, a little able to discern something within the bosoms of others.

I will in consequence properly begin the history of myself about the period when I attained the years of discretion. Perhaps it may be thought in that case it will be a short work, and that I should have better consulted the innate modesty of my nature, had I merely said, leaving all the tale of pleasing sports and boyish days behind, I intend to commence with the æra at which, according to our Scottish law, I exercised the rights of judgment, and chose my curators — those worthies who are known in vernacular parlance by the style and title of doers. But to do so abruptly would perplex my task, and therefore, although I propose to relate only the moving accidents which checquered my fortune from the age of fourteen to the present time, it is still necessary that I should inform the courteous reader that both my parents died early, and that I inherited a small modicum of money, which obliged my friends to advise me, at the legal epoch, to place myself under the care of wise and prudent

persons, chosen by myself, when possessed of the usual wisdom and knowledge of the world commonly enjoyed by boys of that age.

How early other people may date their recollections is a matter of perfect indifference to me; my own remembrance does not distinctly extend farther back than the close of my second year—I mean a clear remembrance of dates and epochal events; for undoubtedly I enjoy a hazy reminiscence of anterior occurrences. I recollect, for example, the sight of a great water, of men who made a loud noise, and of a narrow bed in a dark place. I think also, when at times in the solitariness of the twilight I recall the past, that a dim and distant vision of bright faces smile from the other side of a cold rough wave, and that there is one among them lovely. Oh, how sadly that lovely face still wistfully looks on me!

There was another kind one of a different hue; methinks I see her, blithe and carolling, with large good-natured eyes, and though she be black, she has such cheerful teeth, every one of them is a smile in ivory. Her name rings to my heart like a note of the musical

glasses—It was Baba. More than fifty eventful years have passed away since the downy-hearted creature left me, and the wound of our parting is still fresh and painful.

She had been my nurse on Plantagenet estate, in Jamaica, and was sent with me to this country to see me safely consigned to the care of Mrs. Busby, a relation of my mother. But never was I in arms more fond and kind than in thine, my dear, my dark, but comely Baba!

It is just fifty years, a month, a week, and a day, counting backwards from this very night, that Baba left me. It was a beautiful evening, hallowed in my memory by many caresses, and the tears are yet warm on my neck with which she fondled over me, and then departed. From the window I saw her embark in a chaise; I stretched out my hands towards her; the sun was setting; in a little time the carriage moved away, and the sun disappeared behind the mountains;—but the only sun that set to me that night, and it never rose again, was the singing and ever-caressing Baba. Many an evening after, as I have since been told, did I stand watching at the window, and as often as

the sun sank behind the hills I stretched out my hands and wept, because she would come no more.

Strange! that I should be thus so sentimental—I, who have so often been deemed but indifferently furnished with the gentler feelings. But so I fancy it is with most men; the outward gladness and the inward grief are often in harsh discord with one another. They have through life been so with me—and with others.—Alas! man is less a hypocrite than Fortune; she it is that makes us wear a mask—a smiling countenance with a weeping heart, and to assume a virtue when we have it not.—But to return:—

I once knew an old man, a man of genius too, as those who are endowed above the commonalty of humankind are said to be, and in speaking with him, as I am now to the reader, he incidentally observed, that were it in his power to live his life again, and had a choice of fate, he would ask for no other than that life and lot with which Providence had been pleased to favour him. It struck me, as he said so, it was with the cunning of age, to ascertain if in my

youth and prosperity—for then I was young and prosperous—I anticipated the fruit which my hopes have not yet produced.

I looked at him steadily and replied, “Then you must have passed a youth of anguish.”

He was an artist, one of great reputation in his line; his pencil dropped from his hand as he looked on me and replied:

“Young man, you observe too curiously.”

“Nay,” I rejoined, “I have but said what my experience teaches; no man had ever a happier childhood than mine. It was a morning dew-drop glittering to the rising sun, and only so gently shaken on the blade at which it hung as to make its sparkling brighter.”

He stopped me, and half earnestly half jocularly said,

“You will be happier if you think less of the past; but you have guessed shrewdly of the condition of my early life. It was one scene of unvaried wretchedness; the wherewithal was scant in my father’s house, and poverty beget grudges: my happiness began when that of most men ends.”

“What say you?” cried I, as if moved by

misanthropy. "Your happiness began when that of most men ends! Is such indeed the gold that the alchemist, Age, obtains from the crucibles and ingredients of experience?"

"It is not wise," was his thoughtful answer, "to tell the world what Age teaches; nor is it judicious to reckon too confidently on the results of experience. But though pain was my portion, I would yet live it over again; and all those who write their own biography, even where it tells but of sorrows, are of the same opinion, and delight, by reflection, in their sufferings."

The recollection of this incident reminds me, that in speaking of my life I should not speak of all my actions, and should only let my motives be occasionally disclosed: My intention is to describe frankly, to tell nothing but the truth, not however all the truth; what is not related, the ingenious will be at no loss to discover; and it is only to those able to understand me that the story is addressed. I shall speak as a ghost would relate the tale of its mortal adventures, without fully disclosing the entire motives by which, in that previous state of being, it was actuated. My natural

character, variegated as it has been by many vicissitudes—and sudden haps and surprising chances,—will not be concealed. I do not, however, intend to write my confessions, but only so much about things seen and known as will serve to show why I have resolved to seek another world. In doing this I may be deemed a little eccentric—all my days I have been so—and I suspect emigrants are generally of that description. Impatient under the circumstances of the old world, how wretched would the present generation have been, had not an asylum opened for so many of us across the Atlantic!

CHAPTER II.

MY CURATORS.

IT was during the spring of the year 1789, that I was instructed to choose my curators. Two gentlemen were proposed to me by Mrs. Busby, the richest, and, of course, the most respectable in the village and its immediate neighbourhood. Had I followed the bent of my own inclinations, I would have made a far different election—I would have preferred Mr. Rhomboid, the schoolmaster, one of the most learned men I ever knew—in his own opinion. There was no fathoming the depths of his knowledge, and I was then beginning mathematics under his erudite tuition. Captain Gorget would also have been my other choice, for he possessed a surprising number of the queerest stories

respecting exploits in camps and quarters, and other adventures of subaltern enterprise. I shall never forget how he used to place me on a chest, and talk to me as if I had been King Solomon, comforting me with apples. But I well remember, that although I had not a will in the election, I was yet greatly commended for my prudence, in soliciting the guardianship of the only two gentlemen, who, for many miles around, could in the slightest degree be useful to me in my orphan condition: all their other good qualities and fitness for the office were never mentioned, nor was I ever able to discover them.

Mr. Macindoe deserves to be first described; not that he was superior to his colleague, but he was not second to any body—at least he thought so. He had in early life been a merchant, and made, as it is called, some money; when his uncle, an officer in the East Indies, happened to die, and left him a purse that would not flutter in an ordinary breeze. With it and his own savings he bought a farm adjoining to the village, where, having closed his ledger, he built a handsome house,

and lived at his ease. He had á Glasgow weekly newspaper brought to him regularly ; sometimes he got a letter by the post, and was withal a talkative, hearty, sly, and shrewd retired organization of good humour and corpulency.

In so far as the man was concerned, there was certainly no just cause for much objection. To me he had uniformly been both kind and civil : while I was yet a child he often bestowed on me nuts and sweeties ; and once he gave me a gingerbread lady, with a golden watch by her side, and two black currants for her eyes : she was actually more than two entire hours in my admiring possession before I bit off her head.

Having himself been in trade, he had a great reverence for that way of life ; and he was in the practice of going often to Glasgow, to hear, as he said, what news King William had gotten. This King William is a statue of his Orange Majesty of that name, and is about as intelligent in his intellectual speculations, as many of those in their mercantile, who study the London Prices Current at his feet.

But at the period of which I am speaking affairs of commerce did not trouble me ; I was busy with Mr. Rhomboid among the stars, and thought a swaggering comet no less than a planet in the tadpole state, and one of the finest wonders in Nature. To such heights Mr. Macindoe could not aspire. The chief cause of my dislike to him arose from an assurance of his, when I spoke of the heavenly bodies rolling through space millions of miles away, that falling stars were only a kind of scowthers that somehow or another dropped out of the air ; I pitied his supreme ignorance. But nevertheless, upon Mrs. Busby's kind admonitions and maternal hopes that he would be of great use to me, I chose him for one of my curators.

The other was Dr. Leach, the surgeon and physician of the village and its vicinity : of him I knew but little previously ; he had attended me during the measles, and visited his patients on an old horse as pale as the Courser^r of Death in the Revelation.

He was a lean, tall personage, with a white head, a pigtail tie, and had inspected wounds and given physic in the State of New York

during the American war. The exact reason for which he was recommended to me by Mrs. Busby was not very clear; but I think it was because he read pamphlets, and could speak of the improvements in the trade of the world, and the circumstances of man. I do not repeat her precise words, I only give the sense of them in that phraseology with which time has taught me to invest similar ideas. He was, in short, considered an economic philosopher. He knew more of what was then going on among mankind than any of his neighbours; and he had good connexions, in the royal city of Glasgow, not only with gentlemen belonging to the College, but with his brethren of the faculty, and many of the principal merchants.

Him also I did not much relish. He was arid in his address—a dried alligator—spoke what he said with the emphasis appropriated to wisdom, and though his sentences were few and brief, they were like the mint and other sweet herbs that hung from the lines across the ceiling of his study, not eminent for their substance. He had but one fault, and had Mrs. Busby possessed the discernment of the Queen of

Sheba, she would have seen that, although the Doctor so far resembled Solomon, that he could probably talk of the hyssop which grew on the wall, he was never, with all his characteristic taciturnity, solid sentences, and learned pamphlets, able to refuse obedience to the opinions of those who had no pretence to so much knowledge as himself.

I doubt if the courteous reader, after this account of my worthy guardians, will be quite satisfied that they were so fit for the trust as the friends of Mrs. Busby thought; so much do station, wealth, and manners govern the notions of society both in town and country. For myself, I look back in vain to discover, if I can, in what their qualifications consisted. Their chiefest excellence, probably, lay in their wives; Mrs. Leach made delicious tea sometimes, and treated her guests with marmalade, of which Mrs. Busby occasionally partook; and there was not a milder, more submissive lady in the three adjoining parishes than Mrs. Macindoe; but I am not quite sure if her meekness came of nature, or was an effect of her obstreperous, bustling, and good-humoured husband. How-

ever this may be, I am inclined now to think that the preference for the gentlemen originated in some partiality for their ladies, who indeed were ever particularly kind to me.

It being resolved that I should choose the two, Mrs. Busby and myself were invited to take tea in the evening after with the Doctor and his wife—well do I remember the occasion, it was an æra in my existence. The civilities I received from Mrs. Leach would not be credited if I attempted to describe them, but by those who have undergone the same ordeal. She promised that I should find her a mother, and all that; while the Doctor showed me a new book of singular merit. It was the first time I had heard the term; and he told me a still more abstruse fact, that things in France were in a crisis, for man was evidently in a state of perfectability. Altogether, when we came home at night, Mrs. Busby congratulated me on having made so sage a choice, and I only wondered how it was that I could not feel nor see any thing in it to cause rejoicing.

Next day, hearing to what trust and honour he had been called,—for he was on one of his

wanted visits to King William, in Glasgow, when the appointment was made—Mr. Macindoe came himself, and invited Mrs. Busby to bring me with her to dinner; and at dinner it is impossible to describe how much he said and had to say. He talked to me of trade in general, and I replied most pertinently about the wonders of the solar system. Tambouring, he informed me, was making great progress in Glasgow, and was a Godsend to industrious women. Looms were clattering, as he said, and shuttles flying; so that he could not advise me to a trade that was so likely to be a good one as a manufacturer.

This dinner, and the tea-drinking of the preceding evening, with the previous important event of choosing my Curators, assured me that some great change had come upon me. New cares, new hopes, a thousand feelings without name took possession of my breast; I became instantly, as it were, a part of the world, and Mrs. Busby, though I had but turned my fourteenth year, said as we were on the road from Weebeeld, the residence of Mr. Macindoe, that I really looked that afternoon like a man.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHOICE OF LIFE.

FOR some time after the choice of my Curators had been determined, no particular occurrence took place in my life. I went to school as before, and heard the evening lectures of Mr. Rhomboid on astronomy as usual—of which, to say the least, they remain in my young remembrance as dissertations on mathematical instruments, interspersed with anecdotes of the planets. A little change was, however, made in the course of my studies; instead of geometry I was, on the advice of Mr. Macindoe, advised to learn book-keeping, as he could not see in what way geometry, or indeed any kind of mathematics, could ever serve a merchant, as I was destined to be, especially too as

land-surveying was, in his opinion, but a poor trade, and my fortune justified me to look for something better. This was the first inroad on my favourite study of the stars and those hidden influences that move between the seasons of the earth and the orbs of time.

Dr. Leach did not quite agree with him that education should be directed exclusively, as he expressed it, to the departments of practical knowledge, and strenuously urged, till overborne by his colleague's resolute will, that I should persevere a little longer in my classical studies; but towards them my mind never lay. I got my lessons, it is very true, about as well as the other schoolboys, but I never understood them. Grammar was to me the most inexplicable mystery; like Jack Cade of old, I held a verb to be an abomination, and the parts of speech as trammels on the human understanding.

When I had gone through my first course of book-keeping, I waited with the proofs of my proficiency, first on Dr. Leach, who, when he had looked at the writing and commended its fairness, apprised me that in the course of a few days he and Mr. Macindoe were

to have some serious conversation respecting my future destinies, and among other things he informed me that a new light of exceeding splendour had burst upon France; which intelligence set me much a wondering if the comet, which Mr. Rhomboid had told his class was then expected, had appeared there.

I then proceeded with the books under my arm to Weebfield, where my other doer dwelt, and whom I found with both a letter and his weekly newspaper on a table before him. His lady sat opposite, with domestic cares intent, darning a stocking, a mean employment, pre-meditating poverty. He received me with his wonted blithe garrulity, and as he was turning over the books, not seemingly greatly satisfied with the penmanship, he talked of what he had just been reading, and occasionally, as it were by marginal notes or parenthesis, addressed himself to me, much in the following manner.

“ You don’t hold your pen firm enough,—very extraordinary !—Double the quantity of cotton come into Liverpool,—Yes, right enough ;—the French are really a flighty people.—Is not this

wrong? Sundries, debtor to cash; it should be Indigo to Bills Receiveable.—Only think of six looms in James Aird's back closs!—that beats print.—Talking of weaving, that's a good trade, 'twill just suit you, Bogle Corbet,—this Monsieur Necker,"—and so forth.

Having thus spoken at some length, he closed the books, and subjoined.

“'Tis full time you were looking about you, Bogle Corbet; I have appointed Monday next for Dr. Leach to take a bit of beef with me, you will come, and we shall then settle what you are to be. My mind's made up that you should be a manufacturer;—bairns must creep before they walk,—you'll begin with being a weaver—Dr. Leach thinks it not genteel enough, but I say there was no such trade in my younger years. Cotton's another word for blessing. No, no—I'm determined you shall be a weaver first, and then elevate yourself into a muslin manufacturer—a fine thing that, nothing like it in former days. Only think of John Aird, that lived in the thatched-house behind my spirit cellars, has bigget a shop for six looms, and will give me an heritable bond over the whole,

for two hundred pounds to buy cotton ; such is the thriving and the thrift of this new trade. Odds ! I almost wish I had not left business. Bogle Corbet, my man, ye'll be a weaver — Phoo ! about gentility ; I'll insist on't ; King David himself, was at first but a herd laddie. And does not the Scriptures talk of a weaver's beam. No, no, Bogle Corbet, ye'll be a weaver, as the song sings,

“ ‘ If it was not for the weavers what should we do,
We would lie in our beds and go naked too,
If it was not for the honourable weavers.’ ”

“ No, no, Bogle Corbet, though I wonder how we should get blankets more than clothes, but for the honourable weavers.”

After he had spoken some time in this his customary rattling, I at last understood that Dr. Leach was inclined to make me genteel and professional, but that Mr. Macindoe, with a sharper eye, looked into the state of the world, and seeing the evident progress of the cotton-trade, had resolved to make a weaver of me, as a preliminary to establishing me as a partner in some respectable manufacturing house in Glasgow.

“ Paisley,” said he, “ I’ll never think of, for its but an operational place ; Glasgow is the town of the trade. They were clever at silk gauze in Paisley, I own that, and by it they are wonderful at the fine muslin ; but Glasgow’s the place for you. So ye see, prepare yourself : ye’ll wear a green apron, and may be in course of time, grow lank and lantern-jawed ;—but its all in the way of business, Bogle Corbet. By and by, ye’ll strut on the plain stones, cheek by jowl with King William, and I hope in time to see you with as big a belly and as heavy a purse as the best of them ;—my word, Bogle Corbet, ye’ll be my Lord Provost !”

It was thus manifest that the meeting on Monday next was only pro forma, for my doom was already decided by the firmness of Mr. Macindoe. Whether, however, it was altogether judicious to determine a point of so much importance, without consulting the tastes or bias of the pupil himself, may admit of some doubt ; mine certainly never were, nor indeed had I any predilection on the subject. I was the most docile of wards ; labour, I perceived, of some kind or other, was the doom of man,

and that I must take my portion ; it therefore little disturbed me of what kind it was, provided only it was not wet or dirty, for these two qualities, inherent in the nature of some things necessary to the comfort of man, I loathingly disliked ; neither do I think was weaving in much estimation with me ; but there was a sort of plausibility in the manner in which it was recommended to me, that my slight repugnance was subdued.

The choice of business was certainly the second event in my life by which I was to any influential degree affected ; and the courteous reader will see that the line proposed by the more worldly of my two curators was just exactly the one which might have been expected from his character. Had Mr. Rhomboid and Captain Gorget been chosen, the probability is, that instead of a manufacturer, I should have been made a military engineer. But in what would it have been better for me ? During the war I might have been a little more gay and insolent, and at the peace become as humble as soldier-officers in general, when Birmingham blades are seen in pawnbroker's

windows. However, let my tale tell its own moral. I was ductile in the hands of my guardians, and although Mrs. Busby, when sometimes she was not quite pleased with me, used to say that I was as odd and obstinate as a philosopher, I am certain it was a calumnious ebullition of passion. That I may have had something of the oddity of humour ascribed to the lovers of truth, perhaps was not altogether matter of suspicion. When flourishing in my May of trade, it was called wit, and curious shrewdness; but now, in my sear and yellow leaf, the October of my days, the old phraseology has come up again, and more than once I have overheard it said of myself, he had always something odd about him. This, however, is unmerited disparagement, for, in my own opinion, I have been as wise as my neighbours; and perhaps now and then saw as far into a millstone as the sharpest sighted of them all.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DELIBERATION.

THE courteous reader cannot expect, after the lapse of so many years, that I should be able to recollect exactly the conversation which took place between my curators on the ever-memorable Monday. The substance, however, can never fade from my mind: it was prospective to an event that was to bias and colour all my future life, and it made an indelible impression. I do not, therefore, hesitate in giving the dialogue in its original form; soothing any reluctance which may happen to arise in my conscience for doing so, by recalling to mind that it will not be erroneous in the most important particulars. Indeed, on this occasion I have no alternative, for without the dramatic

style, I should fail to convey a just and fair idea of the two gentlemen—now long departed and “remembered only for their virtues,”—as an amiable clergyman, who here shall be nameless—says as often as any, even the least correct in conduct of his parishioners, passes the Rubicon of eternity.

The affair was dignified to the household of Mr. Macindoe, with what in common talk is called, a company. Besides the Doctor and Mrs. Leach, Mrs. Busby and myself, the aforesaid Mr. Aird with his spouse from Glasgow were invited to dinner, and judiciously too, for it was with him that I was destined to be placed, if the Doctor should be consenting, and of his consent Mr. Macindoe made no bones, but with the habitual indulgence ever vouchsafed to his own intentions, he had previously determined it should come to pass.

Of the feast I shall not describe the particulars; it no doubt consisted of all the delicacies of the season within the compass of our host's means, and the extent of the village. I only recollect that we had an exquisite Florentine

pic, from which I deduce that it was holden sometime about the end of the year; I have not, however, a clear remembrance of any other circumstance. The Florentine alone still lingers sweet in my memory.

As soon as the cloth was removed, according to the custom of those days, the wine decanters were placed on the table, and with them a punch bowl of the size commonly called a cobble, with a square bottle of old rum, an article for which Glasgow has been always famous, and which has procured for it the almost poetical epithet of the rum antique city, ever since. Walter Scott called Edinburgh his own romantic town. Beside the bottle was placed a sugar-basin, and a plate with a knife on it.

“Shusy,” said Mr. Macindoe to the girl, winking at the same time to the Doctor, “if thou’lt look in the cupboard, I must give the gentlemen—and the ladies will be none the worse of another of the same, according to the Psalms of David appointed by the General Assembly and so forth—thou’lt see a few testimonials, six yellow bonny things, that it is not

always for nothing I pay my devoirs to King William—wilt thou bring them hither, and set the granny jug at my foot.”

Shusy did as she was desired, and produced six limes in a tea-saucer, and placed at the same time near her master's feet a pitcher of the purest from the coolest corner of the well.

I should here mention, to account for the almost English tongue of Mr. Macindoe, that he had in his youthful years been some time in the West Indies, where he had learned to speak in a manner intelligible to Christians, for it was not then the fashion to consider Scotch as a classical language and worthy of acquiring, to enable all the world to understand the works of the Border Minstrel. I may as well add, that Docter Leach, having passed his early life in the Army, spoke in the emphatic language of the service, a brief decisive and energetic vernacular, more like English than is the American dialect, but something of a broader sound, with less of cadency, than may be uniformly heard in London. As for Mr. Aird, his speech was genuine Trongate.

Whilst the bowl was brewing, two glasses

of the wine circulated, but before a third was filled, it was discerned by the whole party that the punch was ready. Accordingly they all drained their glasses, and sent them in to receive the new beverage, for in those frugal times it was not the usage in such houses as Mr. Macindoe's to furnish the guests with more than a single glass each. However, that was no obstacle to convivial munificence in other respects.

The punch being ready and the glasses charged,—the King and Constitution were previously drank in the wine,—Mr. Macindoe turned himself to me, then about seventeen years of age, and said,

“ Bogle Corbet, my lad, this is an occasion made on purpose for you, and may you never get a worse diinner, though certainly the broth might have been better boiled,—ahem! gude wife, do ye hear that!—well, Bogle Corbet, we are here met, and I have duly considered what the Doctor has often said to me—ahem!—or ought to have said,—That there is nothing now-a-days like the manufacturing line.”

“ Mr. Macindoe,” interposed the Doctor, “ I

do not recollect that I ever emitted an opinion on the subject."

"Well, well, Doctor, we'll not cast out about that; but if ye did not, no man could better than yourself prove all its advantages. However, we can defer the consideration of that particularity till another time, and keep to the matter in hand, which, Bogle Corbet, as I was saying, is a lucky thing for you; ye have only to put your heel in your neck and whirl yourself into Mr. Aird's loom-shop;—I hope, James, ye'll not object to take him; but how is the punch? don't you think it would stand a leetle squeeze of the lime?"

"I am of opinion," replied the Doctor, "that we should consult the predilections of our ward himself. It has not been the custom for many years—"

"You are quite right," interrupted my other curator, "and I think it smacks too much of the souring; a small nob of sugar will mend all. Ladies, this is real prime; take off your heel-tops and send me your glasses. No doubt, Mr. Aird, ye'll have some notion where Bogle Corbet, poor fellow, should be boarded. Don't you

think, Doctor, that Mrs. Wadset, if she could be persuaded to take him, would make a capital Landlady? Oh! such an alteration it is, to even her, to taking lodgers. There was not a more topping merchant than her husband in all the Virginia trade, before the war. Bogle Corbet, would not you like to bide with Mrs. Wadset?"

"He never heard of her before," said my most worthy Mrs. Busby. "If ye had riddled with a riddle, the whole tot of the widows of Glasgow, ye could na hae chosen from the leavings a more discreet woman."

"But," said Dr. Leach, "are we not proceeding too fast? I beg to observe——"

"Ay, ay," cried Mr. Macindoe, "I should have given the toast first; this is Bogle Corbet's health, and good luck to him, both as a weaver, and as a manufacturer!—I'm thinking, gude wife, your teakettle's boiling;—Bogle Corbet, here's your health, my lad."

"Really, Mr. Macindoe," interposed the Doctor, "we ought not to be in such haste; I was not aware that the matter had been decided before I came here."

"Doctor, Doctor, if ye had been a man of

business, ye would have known that matters of trade are best managed by settling them at once, and consulting about them after. However, it is a great satisfaction to me, to find your opinion so conjunct with mine. Take off your glass, Doctor ; and, Mr. Aird, ye're no' feared for the road. It's no' the length but the breadth of it that should trouble you when ye go from my house."

"Deed, Mr. Macindoe, I'll ne'er deny that your drink 's worth the taking away wi' us. It's no' the first time that I hae stagger'd aneath the burden ; but I'll gie you a sentiment : 'Let Glasgow flourish by the weaving of cotton.' Bogle Corbet, ye canna but cock your wee finger aboon your neb to that."

At this crisis the ladies rose and went away. An end was removed from the table, which was wheeled towards the fire, and after some other adjustments the deliberation was resumed.

"Well," said Mr. Macindoe, after he had again filled the gentlemen's glasses, "this has been a highly satisfactory conversation, and I must here before my colleague frankly declare, that in all the three years we have acted toge-

ther as Bogle Corbet's doers, we have never once differed. Is not that true, Doctor? Indeed, considering your experience, I have had but to bow my head to the suggestions of your practical understanding, and to follow in the right course."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Macindoe," said Dr. Leach, "but in this matter—"

"There could indeed be no difference of opinion. The cotton trade presents a great opening, and we could not shut our eyes to the manifest advantage it is to Bogle Corbet. Don't you think we would be the better of a biscuit, a slice of tongue, or a capling? Bogle Corbet, touch the bell; we'll have it to the next bowl. A cobble is but a small boat; I wish the gude wife had thought better of the occasion, and given me the bigger bowl; but women will have their own way sometimes, though I must allow Mrs. Macindoe is one of the best of her kind; but, Mr. Aird, will ye see to Mrs. Wadset? It was a happy thought to think on her."

"And are ye really resolved, Mr. Macindoe?" inquired the Doctor, in a tone that betokened compliance.

“Not if there is any thing to be alleged against the fitness of the lady ; and it will help her—she’s cousin to my wife—and you know the old saying ‘a friend in need, is a friend indeed ;’ we’ll make it our sentiment.”

Thus was it decided, that I was to be a manufacturer. The courteous reader will discern how ably and fully all points of the question were discussed, and with what hilarity it was so unanimously arranged.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORKSHOP.

AFTER some necessary preparations had been made, a day was appointed when I should leave my rural haunts, and take up my abode as an operative in the workshop of Mr. Aird. This was to enter life; an event, the first which makes youth thoughtful, and is equally important to young men, as marriage to the gentler sex; I felt it to be of great importance to me.

The few remaining lessons which I received from Mr. Rhomboid went in at the one ear, and out at the other. They were like the flight of migratory birds, and left no trace behind. All around the village became more and more interesting, but there was an apathy, as I thought, in the aspect of every scene which

made me feel as if sullenness had touched Nature, and she was ungrateful for the adoration with which, in my simplicity, I had worshipped at her shrines. The stars too, that had ever been my darling study, lost much of their influence, and my whole imagination was filled with shuttles and looms.

It could not, however, be justly said, although the workshop did supply my mind with the furniture of many images, that they were selected with much solicitude; quite the reverse. I had submitted to the proposition of Mr. Macindoe as I learned the lessons of the school at the request of Mr. Rhomboid, merely from a habit of acquiescence, a little elevated by a vague conception that I might find a use for them hereafter. Thus it happened, that the event of sending me into Glasgow, while the contemplation of it eclipsed all previous records in my memory, and gave rise to strange and even fantastical trains of reflection, was in itself far from being the most alluring that might at the time have come to pass. It was not, however, disagreeable, for it presented a change of scene and of occupation, and that to a boy of

seventeen is, if not always a pleasure, something in which there is much enjoyment.

But if my head was plenished with the apparatus of my trade, I had formed no very correct idea of many other things which make the weaver's shop initiate to the world. Looms, yarn, and pirns, a whirring noise, and men with pale lank faces, made up the sum of all I thought of. The cares and anxieties that many suffered, the light-hearted gaiety which prompted others to sing, the murmurings of spirits uneasy with their fortunes, the carkings of discontent, and the arrogance of ambition, which were all there, I had not imagined, and they burst upon me as if I had been plunged into a new element.

At first, from the village notions of the condition of a weaver, and the ribaldry of my school companions, I did not much expect to meet with beings altogether equal in degree to myself, but I was mistaken; the majority of Mr. Aird's men consisted of young gentlemen, the younger sons of neighbouring lairds, destined like myself to be settled in due time in warehouses, and to have workshops of their

own. There was in consequence, perhaps, more of decorum amongst us than in the common factories, and, undoubtedly, we regarded our tasks more as lessons than as real business. Still there was a necessary proportion of men who followed weaving as a trade, sedate and considerate, who looked to no higher station in the world, and were habitually reconciled to their lot. The contrast between these and the novices, if I may so call those who were like myself, was, soon after my initiation, very obvious. Day after day the true operatives worked in an even tenour—they were punctual in their attendance, industrious and uniform in their manners; but the young gentlemen were in almost every respect different. They seldom observed punctuality as to time; often yawned over their looms; and some grew irritated in tying broken threads. I remember an irascible lad who in a passion flung himself headlong through his web, and hurrying from the shop, enlisted for a soldier; his friends obtained his discharge with difficulty, but were ultimately obliged to buy him a commission. These, however, were rather exceptions to the general rule amongst

us; without question, however, the distinction between the weavers by profession, and those destined for another and a higher sphere, was very obvious.

Mr. Aird in the mean time continued to thrive; the trade became every day more and more prosperous, and he repaired other premises for the reception of additional looms. I could not boast of any extraordinary proficiency neither with him nor when I had been at school; nor was I always the steadiest among my fellows; but it so happened that when the new workshop was ready, I was, on the peremptory advice of Mr. Macindoe, given in a jocosé style, placed in it, chiefly on account of the tainting example of the irregularities in which my other companions indulged.

In this new shop a different scene presented itself. The men were all equals and companions in humble life; I was the only one there that could in any measure aspire to the rank of a gentleman, and a certain constitutional pensiveness restrained me from mixing in their familiarities. My disposition, however, to observe was now awakened; at least it was in

that shop I first became conscious of receiving pleasure by remarking the harmony between conduct and character.

Among the men, a great diversity in their predilections was obvious. They were generally young, dependant solely on their own earnings, and in consequence were much freer in their humour and actions than even the more irregular youths from whom I had been removed. The gentlemen were self-controlled by some regard to their connexions and stations, and the mature and steady workmen, among whom they were placed, had families to provide for, and were brought up in quieter times, and lived as if their lot admitted of no considerable vicissitude. My companions were a race of another kind ; they consisted chiefly of those sort of reckless young men by whom the ranks of the army are filled ; clever, industrious, though in the latter quality not equal, and, like others entering the world, prone to speculation, and often discussing questions that but little pertained to their condition.

At this time the doctrines of the early French Revolution were making rapid progress, and

Mr. Aird's weavers caught the epidemic. Some of the gentlemen, not however many, became tainted, and, to a man, every one of the ordinary weavers was infected. The shop was actually a jacobine club. A subscription by a small sum was raised to buy a democratical newspaper for the use of the members; seditious pamphlets were eagerly bought and borrowed; a man was actually hired to read to those who were either not good at the art themselves, or were solicitous to work and be instructed at the same time.

Still, though the French example, and the crude and ill-digested philosophy of the pamphlets ministered to the dissatisfaction of the men, and intoxicated their sanguine fancies with unattainable hopes, there was nothing like a combination among them. A few wild and intemperate spirits no doubt entertained insane projects of reform in the Government and the state of man; but undoubtedly the far greater part were actuated in their schemes for the improvement of society, as it was deemed among them, by motives of good-will and fair dealing, undeserving, in many instances, of the

contumely with which they were regarded by the higher ranks and those attached to the existing order of things. This is but justice, and without the truth of it be admitted and borne in mind, it will be difficult to account for many of the phenomena that I saw in the morning horizon of my life.

CHAPTER VI.

A PROPOSITION.

DURING the winter of —, I was one day warming myself at the workshop fire, in the interval when the men were all absent at breakfast, except one Eric Pullicate, with whom I happened to fall into conversation concerning the French affairs. Something extraordinary had occurred in them, and formed a prominent feature in the London Newspapers, received that morning. The accident of his being there alone, I am unable to explain, but it excited my attention; it seemed as if it had been intentional, and a slight air of studied carelessness visibly perplexed the freedom of his accustomed manner. I made, however, no remark on his appearance; I was indeed but slightly

acquainted with him, knowing him only as one belonging to the establishment, and possessed of considerable influence over the other men.

Eric Pullicate was about thirty, but a gravity of demeanour made him look older. He was of very humble origin, and yet his education was much above his station ; for he had been the poor scholar of a grammar-school, in which all the ordinary branches of instruction were taught, with mathematics and geography. In stature, he might be rather under the middle size ; he was sturdily built, and though his complexion was pale, the effect of his sedentary vocation, his countenance indicated vigour, and possessed a singular cast of expression, which I cannot better describe than by saying it was the dawn of an inward intelligence. He stooped ; and although his dark eyes were at once bright and inquisitive, he had a sinister way of looking from under his brows occasionally, which materially impaired the general fortitude of his features. This peculiarity, with a high forehead approaching to baldness, and oily black hair, gave him a puritanical austerity of appearance, which often caused him to be observed,

and even to prompt the spectator to inquire who he was. In a word, without being at all prepossessing, he was undoubtedly an interesting person; and yet I must confess that he inspired me with something like the antipathy entertained for Doctor Fell,

I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,
The reason why, I cannot tell;
But 'tis a thing I know full well,
I do not like thee, Doctor Fell.

However, as we were standing together in a cold morning at the fire, it would have been sullenness not to have spoken with him, and accordingly, as I have said, we entered into a kind of political conversation; for all sedentary tradesmen are curiously disposed to be politicians.

“I'm thinking, Mr. Bogle Corbet,” said he, “that ye'll soon be quitting the shop? It's well for the like of you that have friends to do for you. I have been now, since I left the tailor's board, five years a weaver, and I see no better opening than I did at first.”

There was so much of biography and of discontent in this address, that it surprised me,

and I wist not very well what to say, so I only answered to his preliminary interrogation.

“ I believe it is intended that I shall be removed in the course of the summer.”

“ Have you any notion where they mean to place you ?” was his reply, looking at me with one of those shrewd sidelong knavish glances which I have noticed as one of his remarkable peculiarities ; without hesitation, I at once said,

“ To Mr. Thrums’ warehouse ; or to Pirns, Treadle’s, and Co.”

“ Two very different sort of places,” replied Eric ; “ Thrums is a natural high-flyer, and Treadles is a real equitable man. If I were you, I would put in a word myself for his warehouse.”

This might not have been the first occasion in which I heard political partialities spoken of as qualities which enhanced the good or bad of character ; but it is the earliest instance I now recollect, and it was imprinted on me by what followed and engrained by after rumination.

“ Thrums,” said I, “ has always been considered a true gentleman ; and Treadles, I have

heard, carries his black nebbit-notions beyond good manners.”

“ Gentleman !” replied my companion, with a soft sneer ; “ that ’s fast becoming a poor trade. Thrums looks as he were made of pipeclay, and all his men of common mud. He has not a heart for a fellow-creature’s rights ; the like o’ me,—he may be easier to you—he regards with widened nostrils. But the day’s dawning—we’ll be upsides soon with him and his.”

Whether there was any alteration in the accent with which this was said from Pullicate’s usual manner, and that it implied a threat, it is impossible at this distant period to say, but the words are still all clear in my memory, and I well remember that I inquired with so much force what harm Thrums had done to him, that he surveyed me with a glance from head to foot, and then eyed me suspiciously for a moment.

“ Harm ! the man has done no harm to me,” was the reply ; “ but he ’s one of the crew that thinks the world was made for them, and all of a lower degree for toil and servitude. But the time ’s coming when justice will evenly rule

the earth, and Thrums be taught that he's no better than Eric Pullicate. It's the duty of us all to help it forward. Will ye no' lend a hand in the good work?"

"What work?" was the simple question with which I replied.

At that time the republican spirit of the French revolution was wide abroad, and I had, in common with the whole nation, heard of the secret machinations of the democrats, who were then shaking the very foundations of society. I had therefore no doubt from the preceding strictures on Mr. Thrums, that the good work was to assist in some evil design on him and his party; my answer, in consequence, ought more properly to be considered as an interjection of wonder than as an inquiry: Eric Pullicate did not, however, so receive it; but coming nearer to me, and lowering his voice, he said in a whispering tone:—

"It's a shame, Mr. Bogle Corbet, to keep you longer in the dark—all of us in the shop are of the same mind, and when you go from us at night, though others seem to leave the house also, they come back, and debate con-

cerning the rights of man. We have twice considered about letting you into the secret, and last night I was authorized to break the ice. There's no harm in it, only the time's not ripe in this country for us to come forward as we will do."

It had not then been acknowledged by any measure of the Government, at least it was not thought so by the weavers, that there could be much danger in discussing points of politics; the exposition of Pullicate did not therefore greatly surprise me; on the contrary, my self-love inhaled flattery from what he said, conceiving that, as I was the only individual of the gentle class in the shop, the other workmen had been backward merely from bashfulness in asking me to join in their deliberations. Accordingly I expressed my thanks to Pullicate for inviting me to their nocturnal sittings, and that same evening I was regularly admitted as a member, for they had constituted themselves into a club, and held a correspondence with several others of the same kind.

In this manner I was drawn into the democratic connexion. It could not be said that

I was naturally inclined to the doctrines of the sect—my inclinations lay the other way—and my curiosity, always strong, had perhaps more to do in the business than my judgment. The wary observations on the respective politics of Thrums and Treadles had struck me as singular, and the plausible insinuation to the prejudice of the former; above all, the secret sittings of a debating society, combined to interest me. But I was not fit to be a distinguished orator among them; my nature was, if not modest, nervous and shy; I was too easily agitated ever to deliver myself with the equanimity so essential to a speaker, and had imbibed in the course of my juvenile reading and the traditions of our village, an enterprising predilection for the olden and adventurous. It was one of my boyish fancies to dream of making myself famous.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLUB.

WITHOUT doubt the deliberations of the club assisted to enlarge my understanding, for we discussed all subjects, never deterred by ignorance from investigating the most abstruse. At last, however, the progress of events in Paris began to affect our deliberations in Glasgow ; general philosophy, religion, morality, and metaphysics, gradually declined amongst us, and the rights of the human race became more and more our most impressive topic.

Out of doors, Alarm began to shake himself, and to rouse the kingdom with his baying. A wall of partition was erected, and every day strengthened, between the defenders of social order, and the friends of the human race. The

Aristocrats mounted their pedestals, and their adversaries shouldered the pickaxes of destruction; Government girded its loins for war, and my curators somehow heard of our nightly meetings, and deemed it their duty to interpose for my salvation, as it was called in the strong language of the time. There was, however, but little reason, had they correctly estimated my character, to apprehend that my principles would suffer any taint; for I had been always, from constitutional bias, though in manners soft and pliant, one who indulged his own imagination, and was not greatly susceptible of impressions from others.

When I look back at our nightly meetings through the haze of many years, diminished in their importance by the later knowledge of greater things, I can scarcely imagine by what enchantment they should have ever appeared otherwise than ludicrous; and yet they were managed with a degree of decorum that seemed to want but the illumination of a brass chandelier, and a wig on the president, to have been as dignified as those of the noblest senate on the whole earth.

The fire was lighted up anew. Two cross sticks, suspended by a string from a rafter, presented four lights; Eric Pullicate, the chairman, with his hat on, sat at a lame table, one foot of which was supported by a brick; on this table stood a halfpenny glass inkstand, and a boy's copy-book for the minutes of the proceedings, with several pens and sheets of paper, lay before him, and a candle in a bottle served to reveal the holes under his arms, and other emblems or realities of democracy at his elbows. Still, though at the recollection of these circumstances a smile will rise, I cannot disguise that I have tasted there the pith and marrow of sweet eloquence, and listened to occasional exclamations of natural energy that will ever ring in my remembrance.

One evening, as we were thus assembled in conclave, a smart rapping on one of the windows disturbed the session. It happened that I was nearest the door, and in consequence went to open it. No sooner had I done so, than a rude hand roughly drew me out, while the authoritative voice of Mr. Macindoe commanded me to leave that den of sedition, and

come with him. A slight rustle within followed this boisterous order, but no attempt at hindrance was made, and I submissively did as I was desired. Mr. Macindoe, as he walked in the moonlight before me, appeared expanded to a magisterial magnitude, and flourished his whip like one in indignation.

He passed on with stately strides to the Black-bull Inn, looking every now and then behind to see that I was coming, giving as often an emphatic swing with his whip-arm, but never condescending to speak. On our arrival, he walked straight up-stairs, desiring me to follow ; and, without questioning the Highland waiter, who was then standing on the landing-place, proceeded to a parlour at the west end of a long passage. On entering it, there was Dr. Leach, seated with another gentleman, whom I soon learned was Mr. Thrums, who had, during the American war, been a member of the Town Council, and cherished some expectation of being soon so again.

“ I caught them in the fact ! ” were the first words that Mr. Macindoe uttered ; “ a fine story ; such a set of state cobblers ! but I did not

stop to ask any question, for this great Mirabeau of the convention came himself to the door, and I snatched him forth, a brand plucked from the burning: my word! but yon is a gunpowder-plot."

"Hey, hey!" said Mr. Thrums, "then it is a' true, and we're on the eve of a' French work."

"True! I never thought that things had come to such a pitch; they had all on bloody caps of liberty."

This happened to be the fact, but only in one instance; for an elderly man, who was a visitor, being troubled with the rheumatism in his head, had brought his red kilmarnock in his pocket, and actually had it on, but the intelligence was astounding. Dr. Leach declared it was monstrous! adding—

"Things were bad enough in the American war, but the Yankees never were so bad as to wear red night-caps; though on the night when the King's statue was destroyed at New York"—

"Don't talk of Yankee-doodle doings. They never had a Bastille to take"—and turning to me, he added, shaking his head, "No more of

yon, — no, no, neither Dr. Leach nor I would be answerable for the consequence. The morn's morning you shall go to the warehouse of Mr. Thrums and eschew the evil one. I could see him as I looked in at the window, sitting yonder like Lord Braxfield in the Court of Session,—‘ A tousy tyke, black grim and large,’ as Robin Burns has said of auld Nick.”

“ I thought,” said I meekly, “ that it was meant to send me to the warehouse of Mr. Treadles ?”

“ What you thought, and what your mother thought when you were born, are two different things, young man ;” replied Mr. Macindoe. “ But that freewill doctrine comes of your concoctions yonder.”

“ I must say,” interposed Dr. Leach, “ that I also did think we had spoken of Mr. Treadles—no offence, Mr. Thrums—men of more credit than you and—”

“ I should be sorry if put to the necessity of differing in opinion with you,” replied Mr. Macindoe ; “ but this is a case of speed. Mr. Treadles is full-handed at present ; trade has been slackening, and, no other of my

friends will have an opening in his warehouse before Midsummer ; that comes of the lower orders growing political. I'm sure both of us are much obliged to Mr. Thrums here for his readiness to oblige us. I would not wish my worst enemy a heavier judgment than the cares of a doer, especially a democratic genius like this scoundrel here. How durst you, Sir, to meddle with liberty and equality without the leave of me and Dr. Leach ?—However, this is dry work, gentlemen—we're no' without the need of a solacium ; touch the bell and order the where-with-all ;—well, well, but yon was a jobicine club ; I saw a blackaviced one, with an eagle's neb, and a wide mouth, was he your Robin Spiers ?—Such *parley voo* doings were never seen in Glasgow."

Thus my transit from the workshop to the warehouse was as sudden as from the school-desk to the loom ; for Mr. Macindoe was one of those men who pride themselves on the rapidity and decision of their actions. He affected in every movement as my guardian to consult his colleague, and I am inclined to think that he really believed he did so, but the result

was uniformly according as he had himself alone predetermined. And thus it happened, even when he had calmed from the agitation occasioned by the haste with which he acted in his duties, that the Doctor's endeavours to slip in a word of tendency to expostulation, as he did on that evening, were always without effect. The business was then settled, and happily too, and so completely in accordance with what the Doctor had advised on the subject, that he was never able to offer an opinion at all. He would in fact have been quite safe in conceiving himself to have really directed the whole course of my wardship, though he never once suggested or could take a part in any proceeding; all was the work and plan of his coadjutor, and yet I remain to this hour verily of opinion that Mr. Macindoe persuaded himself, in whatever he did, that he was swayed by the advice of Doctor Leach.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WAREHOUSE.

I HAD not been long placed in the warehouse when I perceived that the agitations of the world were increasing: perhaps being then more in the public than when at the loom I only saw more of them. We often deceive ourselves, by imagining an augmentation of affairs, when we but sink deeper among the narrower and more rapid circles of the vortex. Of one fact, however, I certainly soon became sensible, a fast-widening breach between the higher and the lower classes. This produced a vague apprehension that the latter would in the end prevail; and as I had, during my attendance in the warehouse, rather too much solitary leisure, it filled me with many odd and

strange speculations respecting society and the destinies of mankind. It would have been wiser had my reflections been directed to the craft and mysteries of trade ; but I have never yet been wise.

I could sell cotton cloths and muslins adroitly at the prices fixed upon them ; no clerk could make neater bills ; but it never happened in all the time I was with Mr. Thrums, that I was required to purchase a single article—and it is in buying that the whole craft of trade consists—yet my steadiness, assiduity, and neat penmanship begat for me a reputation of some distinction, as a promising young man of business. I was thought to enjoy the light of the full orb of fortune, while only the half of its disk was revealed. It is necessary to request a special remembrance of this, for without doubt my one-eyed knowledge had an important influence on my subsequent career.

I had not, however, been long in the warehouse, when the different interests which I had observed arising in the world, received a sudden shock. The French had rushed to such

extremities in their haste to mend the state of things, that it was deemed necessary, for the security of the old institutions of the neighbouring nations, to make war. Commerce, in consequence, was suddenly driven back—much mercantile distress ensued—the orators and philosophers of the workshop were thrown into idleness—their meetings were disturbed and broken up—many looms stood still, and the weavers in hundreds enlisted. Mr. Thrums was among the sufferers, and was in the course of the year obliged to declare himself a bankrupt.

In that crisis, Mr. Macindoe again interposed. Naturally shrewd in matters of business, and wary to a degree, almost seemingly inconsistent with the garrulity which formed the most remarkable of his peculiarities, he pointed out to me the dislocation of the times, and advised me to see a little of the world, before thinking of forming any new connexion. I did so; I went to the neighbouring mart of muslins, Paisley, and prolonged my journey to Greenock, savory with shipping, herrings, and tar. Edinburgh was my next excursion, and I

returned home by the way of Fife, passing through Dundee, Perth, and Sterling.

When I had thus improved my understanding, and acquired, as Mr. Macindoe said, a correct knowledge of the world—some idea of the value of which may be conjectured by the two several journeys having occupied thirteen days,—I felt myself in the enjoyment of great advantages. Few then of the young men of Glasgow had in so short a space of time seen so many strange places: travelling for information was indeed, at that period, not much accounted among them; I was therefore fully justified in holding my travelled head considerably above those of my neighbours. Dr. Leach, whom I first visited—for at the time Mr. Macindoe was with his wife at Gourrock, dabbling in the salt water—did not, I freely acknowledge, very highly appreciate my attainments during the tour; and there was perhaps some degree of justice in the coolness with which he seemed to listen to the marvels I had witnessed: but this was to be pardoned in a man who had been at New York, and seen so much of the world among soldiers in

a transport. When Mr. Macindoe returned home the case was far different. He received me as one considerably augmented in importance; treated me with the respectfulness due to a man and a traveller: he even condescended to joke with me as an equal, and made me sensible that the epoch of my boyhood was passed.

To him I was most minute in my descriptions, which he enjoyed as a feast of fat things. I had kept a journal, I lent it to him, and he declared, when he returned it, that he did not think there was such another entertaining book out of print—it might be so. He was, however, much delighted, above all, with one word. In speaking of undulatorated Edinburgh, I described it as a city, in which the inhabitants were distinguished over those of many capitals by the variety of their genuflections. These he chose to make a bad pun upon, and whenever he became a little tosy after dinner and over the punch-bowl, he used to tell his cronies when I happened to be there, how much I had been jocose with the Edinburgh Jenny Flections.

The autumn after my summer tour was undoubtedly the first sabbath of my life. School I always have thought was one of the most drudging of workshops; and as for Sunday with Mrs. Busby, who was a sincerely pious lady, and had a sister married to a minister of the Gospel, it was remarkable as the heaviest day of labour in the whole week—what with getting the Catechism and the Mother's Courages by heart, Psalms of David, and reading chapters; sometimes the Pilgrim's Progress, and Visions of Heaven and Hell, but, above all, Woderow's Church History, Fox's Book of Martyrs, and such other legends of Scottish Presbytery—Jesu Maria! it was to me truly a serious and a solemn day!

But as I was saying, that idle autumn was the first time of rest I had ever enjoyed, and I made the most of it. I doubt, however, if the reader will greatly approve of my manner of doing so, especially if he be a sober, pains-taking man, and prudently considers that his chief end is to make money and to feast neighbours a little more topping than himself.

Mr. Macindoe had, after my return, held with me, in the presence of Dr. Leach, a very satisfactory deliberation on my affairs, in which of course he carried every thing his own way. At that deliberation it was determined I should have the interval at my own disposal till the spring, by which time the ravelled skein of trade and manufactures, it was expected, would be disentangled and cast into clues again, when he would look out for a sedate young man of business, with a little money, to begin the world with me as a manufacturer; for in the ensuing January I was to become of age, after which, as he very sagaciously observed, I would be of a legal capacity to do for myself. Well do I remember his speech on the occasion when at last it did come to pass.

He was naturally a jolly-hearted man, free of the best he had in cupboard and larder, and fond of holding high days and festivals, when he could stir his biggest bowl and tell his queerest stories. Accordingly, on the anniversary of my birth-day, there was a gathering at his house to dinner of all my kith and kin within what he called the bounds of invitation. The fatted

calf was killed. It was indeed a plum-pudding day, and he acknowledged to Dr. Leach before dinner that he had himself taken a salutary pill that morning to coax his digestive organs and to palliate the interlocutors of his inside.

Having filled all the glasses after dinner, he rapped the brim of the bowl with the punch-ladle, and silence being obtained, addressed himself to me.

“Mr. Bogle Corbet,” said he, “the day is at last come that we have long looked forward to with the anxiety of parents for the welfare of a son—Have we not, Dr. Leach?—and our——: I cannot recollect the law term here, but he is in every particular there where he sits a purpose-like young man, able to do for himself, to marry a wife, beget sons and daughters, to make a will and testament when he chooses, and to do all the other *et ceteras* that belong to the ordinances of the realm, as it was called in the time of the olden kings, the king-rik of Scotland. For this, gentlemen and ladies, I have drawn you together, to drink, as it were, the dirgie of the young man’s minority, in a

bumper of no bad stuff, made of the best auld Jamaica, flavoured with pine-apple Antigua, and an infusion of the grace of a lemon, for I could get no limes.—But to speak more to the purpose: this day our ward, Mr. Bogle Corbet, has come of age—Is he not, Dr. Leach?—therefore let us be merry; it is my lady's holyday, and so forth,—and ye see both Dr. Leach and myself,—for I must bring in that, unworthy as I am, it being a conjunct trust jointly and severally with heirs assigns, &c.—We have done our best for the young man's behoof—for your advantage, Bogle Corbet—and, though I say it myself that have no right to say any such ostentatious thing in the presence of the Doctor there, where will ye hear of a better behaved young man? He's a credit to you, Doctor, and for that we'll by-and-by have a bumper; but, in the mean time, I'll no' say in the lad's face what I might, but I hope he is not ordained to be a flower to blush unseen—nay, nay, hold up your head, Bogle Corbet, ye have no cause to think shame, and I'll put my thumb on the Jenny Flections

of the closses about the Luchenbooths of auld reeky. However, from this day ye are your own master, and it's my duty to give, in our old Scotch custom, by way of a propine, 'Success and understanding in life and trade to Mr. Bogle Corbet !'"

CHAPTER IX.

THE INTERIM.

BUT I have been digressing a little too far and fast, for I ought, before giving such a full, true, and particular account of the obsequies of my minority—to have told the benign reader of the manner in which I spent the interval between my summer tour, for the benefit of my hopes in trade, and that event. It was a most felicitous period; the season was propitious; more sunny days than usual blessed the holms and fields, and if the blight that had fallen on the industry of the city, in some measure thinned the canopy of smoke that overhung its spires and chimney-tops, the spirit of those who could afford to have nothing to do revelled lighter; and that of those who could find no

work, undoubtedly breathed a freer air, which, under a great variety of circumstances, is the best sort of medicine.

I generally rose betimes, and having been bred amidst rural scenery, and inheriting from Nature a taste for her fields and flowers, and other imagery of country freedom and calm, I solaced myself with a walk, sometimes on the Green, but oftener on the banks of the Molindinar and the environs of the cathedral, where, in the dewy stillness of the morning, and the ancient aspect of the building, I always found an innocent inexplicable delight. After breakfast I visited, sometimes the muslin warehouses of my acquaintances, examined new patterns, and was sedulous about prices. Occasionally, however, I forgot business, talked of fields of battle, the last news from France, and other topics, which, compared with the sacred themes of the manufacturing line, may well deserve the epithet of secular.

In the course of the forenoon, I invariably, by some strange instinct or reminiscence attracted, went to Mr. Aird's workshop, and as Eric Pullicate still languished there, I as re-

gularly had some conversation with him. His democratic propensities were none abated, on the contrary, it may be justly said, that the temporary interruption which had made so many flying shuttles halt in the web, had exasperated his enmity against those who considered the comforts of the world their birthright, and labour as his. In these conversations, I was much interested by the wild and bold fancies which they never failed, on reflection, to afterwards suggest; but, now and then, our talk was of looms, for, notwithstanding his mangled philosophy, he was a shrewd man, and endowed with a zealous and penetrating spirit which he managed with uncommon equanimity.

From the workshop I went to the Tontine coffee-room, where I read the newspapers till the hour when the Sample-room was opened, to which I regularly adjourned, and heard the West India merchants, then the gorgeous and grand of the town, talking of sugars, the London market, and the merits of coffee-beans. When the time of sale was over, I frequently strolled by myself to the Green, where I might have been often discovered in a ruminating

mood, and with brows as firmly knotted as if I had many rich argosies in peril on the ocean.

The regularity of this life, my daily visits to warehouses and workshops, together with the constancy of my attendance in the focus of business, and the unbroken uniformity of my solitary walks, with the reputation I had acquired by my neatness and punctuality during the noviciate with Mr. Thrums, established for me a character, that I would some day make a figure among the merchants. There were, however, a few meddling and intrusive persons, who, in mere contradiction to this opinion, mentioned that I had something about me that they thought was not just the right thing for a merchant, and though I seemed to be a most discreet lad, an example to the young men of the age, I did not just think as I ought to do, which made them doubt if I would ever properly adorn the plain stones; in short, they did me at once honour and disparagement, in saying that I was better fitted for the College than the Exchange.

The opinion of these invidious observers did not much affect me, indeed I had some suspi-

cion myself that their notions were not erroneous, for I must honestly declare, that although I was ever at the proper time in the thoroughfare of trade, and daily at the places where the knowledge of business could be best acquired, I made no proficiency. When I heard the merchants talk of their West Indian articles, I used to speculate, not in them, but on what, in time, would become of the islands when the Negroes got understanding; and when I heard the proud things in the coffee-room which the king's men talked in their newspaper politics, about heroes and glory, I could never help thinking that soldiering was only a trade, and that the man who was paid for carrying a musket, was but little different from the pale weaver that earned his living by driving a shuttle. Whether this feeling arose from any taint imbibed from the doctrines of Eric Pullicate, or was the effect of some moral secretion of my own mind, I have never been studious to ascertain; but reflections of that kind were neither favourable to the making of money, nor to the attainment of eminence in Glasgow; yet still my character was estimable in the mouths of many,

and the wariness, as it was considered, of my not entering too hastily in those times into business, redounded greatly to my respectability.

In the mean time Mr. Macindoe was not negligent of his charge, nor of my interests, but he found more difficulty in discovering a partner suitable for me than he had at first supposed. Young men, of quiet business habits, with a little money, the most important qualification of all, were not so plentiful as blackberries. On the contrary, they were very scarce; for although there was undoubtedly a relaxation in the ancient habits of the country, and Lairds began here and there to stoop from their dignity to pick up commercial money, still the practice had not yet become common. Their eldest sons were still the inheritors of their estates, and the younger espoused their own fortunes as adventurers, either by becoming lawyers in Edinburgh, who need but little capital beyond their brains, and even of them they generally somehow contrive to do with a small amount; or by going into the army as subalterns, or as cadets to India. At last he

alighted on what he deemed a prize,—the cock when he found the diamond on the dunghill was not so elated. This was in a Mr. Possy, the only relation of an old officer, who had bequeathed to him his gathering, a pinching and paring of some six or seven thousand pounds.

The old gentleman had died when his heir was young, and the boy had been brought up as a godsend by a country clergyman, who endeavoured to save all he was allowed for keeping him, and to live on his stipend, which was one of the smallest in the whole Synod of Glasgow and Air.

Possy was but slenderly furnished with mental talent; he was soft, gawky, and credulous, and his education, by the tuition he received, evolved all these qualities to their utmost. But he had the money,—even something more than I possessed, and Mr. Macindoe discerned that he would do well enough for a partner.

“He is not bright,” said he; “and he has not been brought up at the foot of Gamaliel; for yon minister’s but a stot, like many more of the black cattle; but ye must look out for a

clever, sober, well-doing, and well-spoken foreman, and with his help, you and Mr. Possy need not seek to call the King your cousin."

As he said these words, my whole frame gave a tingle, and I thought of Eric Pullicate. The situation was one which he of all men, I had then known, was the best qualified to fill well; and though there might have been some objection to him, on account of what were called his jacobine principles, still he was in conduct and intelligence an honest man.

I spoke of him, and mentioned what I had seen of his sagacity and address; Mr. Macindoe clapped his hands, and taking up his hat and stick which he had placed in a corner of the room, bade me follow him, and instantly posted off to Mr. Aird's workshop, flourishing his stick as he went along with rapid strides, evidently animated with some important project.

CHAPTER X.

THE CO-PARTNERY.

THE first sentence Mr. Macindoe addressed to Eric Pullicate, showed that in the course of his vehement journey to the workshop, he had convinced himself that Eric was the most eligible person who could be chosen. People are not sensible how often this sort of election prevails, even when they persuade themselves that they are marvellously circumspect. It is true, that Pullicate was a man of far superior natural endowment to my curator, and that after all the discernment the latter could exercise, there must still have remained much of his character which Mr. Macindoe was unable to penetrate, while he considered himself, by the difference of condition, so much above him; at least I am in-

clined to adopt this opinion, in consequence of the result subsequent to our connexion. But to let the matter speak for itself, Mr. Macindoe applauded the choice I had suggested, and by his clever handling a partnership was soon in due form arranged between Mr. Possy and me, to which Eric Pullicate was engaged at a liberal salary to be foreman and factotum.

Though much could not be said for the brilliancy of Mr. Possy's parts, yet my reputation for talent in business was generally applauded, especially when it came to be known that we had made so judicious a choice for an assistant as Eric Pullicate, for he had not been long in our warehouse till his ability made itself conspicuous; his intelligence, assiduity, and above all a sedate tenour of respectful manners, served to ingratiate him not only with our customers, but with the friends of the partners.

At the period when our co-partnery was formed, the shock which the commerce of the country had suffered by the declaration of war had, in a great measure, subsided, so that it may be said we commenced auspiciously. Our capital enabled us to go with ready money into the market,

and as the purchases were to be made by me, who was really ignorant of that branch of trade, my unskilfulness was not much observed. Our opening was therefore in all respects prosperous, and Mr. Possy, considering himself as settled in the world, resolved to take a wife, to which I certainly had no objections, for it was chiefly on account of his money that he was made my partner, and as he had neither head nor hands for business, I thought but little of what he did for his amusement.

Soon after his marriage, however, as I was indulging myself in one of those reflective perambulations which have already been described, I fell into a reverie, or rather a mood of reminiscence, during which I recalled to mind several items in the conduct of Eric Pullicate that collectively at the moment were not satisfactory, although separately considered they were each of a trivial character, so much indeed so that it would be difficult to specify one of them deserving alone of the slightest consideration. How they had become classed together unconsciously in my memory, a better metaphysician than I can pretend to be might per-

haps, after due study, be able to explain. I only know the fact that they were so, and that the occasion on which they occurred to me, may, without exaggeration, be regarded as a new æra in my life.

I remember the time well ; it was a calm afternoon in September, and the place was the banks of the Clyde, below the Broomilaw, and a cargo of cotton was landing from a gaubart on the quay as I passed. The incident was no otherwise remarkable than that I have no doubt it was shrewdly supposed by the wiseacres who watched my plodding steps, that the visit to that part of the river was to take a sly peep at the quality of the cotton. Heaven knows that cottons of all kinds, and all that make warehouses rich, and shops as well as ladies gay, had no place in my ruminations ; I was thinking only of improbabilities as I passed along, glancing backward, as I have said, with my mind's eye, and neither cogitating wisely nor deeply, when suddenly, like a ray of creative light, it flashed on my understanding that Eric Pullicate, without being in any obvious degree remiss in his duties to me, was beginning

to pay more than usual deference to Mr. Possy.

It would be extremely difficult to describe the feelings with which this suggestion at the moment affected me—I had no precise cause—few thoughts could be more justly described as the progeny of fancy, but with it came a suspicion that Eric was secretly playing a game for his own advancement. I do not know if he was under any awe of me, but if he were, he had dexterity enough to conceal his cards. However, not to reason either too finely or philosophically, I could not from that moment hide from myself that he apprehended he could not make an instrument of me for his purposes, and in consequence was directing his ingenuity to gain the ascendancy over my partner, whom, I may venture to say without boasting, was a more ductile subject. My attention being thus awakened, I watched the progress of the plot, more from curiosity to see how it would end, than with the solicitude due to my own interest.

When he had fairly entangled his bird in the snare an accident finished the work.

One day I had occasion to leave the ware-

house while he was in attendance, but some cause or another, which I have now forgotten, obliged me unexpectedly to return, and I found the door open; a momentary business having called him to the flat above. By this occurrence, wholly unsought, I entered unknown to him.

The place we had for writing was inclosed by a railing and screen off one end of one of the rooms where our goods principally lay, so that strangers coming on business could not see the person at the desk. I went straight into this place, and immediately began to employ myself, as my wonted custom was when not busy, by drawing houses and landscapes with my pen on the blotting paper. While thus employed Eric came in, followed by Mrs. Possy, who had called in expectation of finding her husband. By the nature of her question perceiving she was not likely to remain long, and having a fine vision in my imagination, I did not disclose myself, but remained quiet.

Just as she was on the point of leaving the room, she happened to cast her eyes on a piece of tamboured muslin of a tasteful pattern, and

which had only that morning been sent home. For the same reason that Eve was attracted to the rose bush in Paradise, Mrs. Possy went to the muslin, and, after a few interjections about its beauty, she remarked to Pullicate, that she thought, for all the business she saw us doing, Mr. Possy might manage it very well himself without me, and that he had money enough, she was sure, to do so. Eric, with considerable delicacy, fostered this notion; and as listeners, according to the proverb, seldom hear much good of themselves, I heard, before the lady took her leave, that it was a pity the contract of co-partnership was for seven years, for undoubtedly Mr. Possy would lose during that time the half of the profit he might himself make but for me. Friend Eric was decidedly of the same opinion.

My ears tingled while this conversation lasted; but fortunately Pullicate went out at the same time with the notable young madam, and locked the door. This afforded me an opportunity to escape unnoticed by my own key, but such was my perturbation at the moment, that although it was the wonted hour at which I

daily went to read the newspaper, I turned my steps towards the Green. It is not easy to say what else I ought to have done, but it so happened that in going down the Salt-market, I met three successive bands of my acquaintance, who observed my troubled countenance, and whom I had reason afterwards to know, thought they could perceive in it symptoms of the most judicious resolution to rupture my connexion with Mr. Possy, who was commonly known among them by the nickname of "dressing," his brains being esteemed by them as equally intellectual with the substance employed in preparing the warp for the shuttle.

CHAPTER XI.

EXTENDED PROSPECTS.

THE suspicion so miraculously engendered of the drift and aim of Eric Pullicate's nameless courtesies to Mr. Possy, with the auricular confirmation received from his plausible remarks to the lady, had, I may safely say, a painful effect on me. I felt for the first time that I stood in the way of the welfare of others; and had I consulted my own feelings, I would have instantly proposed a dissolution of our co-partnery: but a man does not live long in the world, till he discovers that there is something more like chance in the fortunes of men than is quite consistent with philosophy.

On going to the Green, I encountered Mr.

Rapier, a friend of Macindoe, who was esteemed a person of no ordinary capacity. He had but one fault, in the eyes of the merchants who knew him—an early disappointment in love, made him determine, without taking any ill-will at the world, to lead a retired life, and to remain free from trade, contented with his paternal patrimony. This was his fault, and for this they condemned him. Often had I heard their animadversions on his alleged apathy, and I was among the number who thought, with respect to him, that it is of no use to possess sharp tools, if we will not or cannot use them. From his reservedness, and the prejudice which I had been led to entertain against him, there had not been much intercourse between us, but we were known to each other; he knew me from my childhood, and from an early period I had always thought him a morose man—still, wherever we met, he appeared glad to see me—and occasionally, when we dined together with Mr. Macindoe, he seemed desirous of cultivating my regard by the civility of his attentions.

Whether on that day he had noticed any

symptoms of mental infelicity about me, or that the atmosphere, which was calm and balmy, had softened him to a congenial temperament, profounder sages may determine; but when he saw me enter the Green, he came towards me, and with unusual cordiality, he requested leave to join me in my walk. At the moment I would have been pleased had he asked almost any other thing, but I consented, and we went up along the river's bank together, chatting of indifferent subjects—the state of trade, the prospects of the country, and many other of those topics which are still dear, and long may they continue so, to the generous community of Glasgow.

This desultory talk led him to make some observations on the rapidly-increasing manufactures of the kingdom, and to point out to me the signs of inevitable progress arising from the wars and rumours of wars on the Continent; he added:—

“ I am surprised you should not think of extending your concerns. Here you wait for customers, or merchants that deal in distant markets; why do not you think of trying

London? Mr. Possy, with that clever foreman of yours, could very well manage here, and, if I am not mistaken, from what I have heard of yourself, the metropolis is your proper sphere—the business is growing—it is the only trade that will thrive in these troublesome times, and you should reflect that you are still an unincumbered young man.”

This speech produced a deep impression on me at the time. It banished the hasty intention I had almost formed of dissolving my co-partnery with Mr. Possy; it tended to mitigate my resentment towards Eric Pullicate, and it opened to myself an avenue, which led to a greater eminence than I had ever before contemplated. I disclosed, however, to him nothing of what agitated me, but simply remarked that his hint came most opportunely, for I had myself thought that by dividing the business with Mr. Possy, adding other mercantile-looking ideas, that a bright chance was started to us which we might advantageously pursue.

This was the first time that the thought of removing myself to London entered my

head ; I perceived all the benefits that might accrue from it, and that it was easily practicable and honourable to all concerned to make such a separation of our affairs. Accordingly, next day, after having reflected well on it in the night, I spoke to Mr. Possy of it as a scheme which had occurred to myself, and asked his advice, though I knew very well he had none to give, until he had consulted his wife or Eric Pullicate.

In the course of the forenoon he had no opportunity of conversing with his right hand, for so may our foreman be justly called. He was at the time busy making up goods for America ; I still recollect very well, it was a shipment for the house of Sham and Co. to be sent by the *Fanny Daniel*, H. Braine, Master ; the only trader then between Greenock and New-York. But he went home to his wife, and by what took place in the evening, there can be no doubt that the project received her most hearty approbation, for much to my surprise, but which from the altered frame of my mind, was not greatly impressive, Pullicate was invited to take tea with them—

no doubt to talk over the affair. This I heard next morning from Mr. Possy himself, with many commendations to the honour of Eric's sense and sagacity. But not to lose time, I must cram space with a multitude of small matters; it was speedily arranged that I should proceed to London to manage an establishment there, and that the business in Glasgow should be placed under the joint care of Mr. Possy and now Mister Pullicate.

The only thing not perfectly agreeable in this arrangement, was the reluctance of Pullicate to accept a share in the business, but he received a handsome addition to his salary in so much that he was well satisfied, and his friends accounted him a lucky fellow: Mr. Possy was delighted with the whole scheme, for he was a little averse to receive a servant on the footing and equality of a partner, such things among the Glasgow manufacturers of those days not being common. And as Mrs. Possy said to myself, "though Mrs. Pullicate was a genteel and well-behaved young woman, yet she was not just of a degree to be her coeval, except in the way of a dish of tea."

I certainly agreed so far with Mrs. Possy ; but I was not quite so sure, that the diffidence which Eric had, or pretended to have of himself as a partner, was the offspring of true modesty. It was evident that he saw through and through Mr. Possy, and, that when I was out of the way, he thought means might be found for better feathering his own nest than by being in partnership. But when I say this let it be taken with reservation ; I do not impute any thing derogatory to his integrity, for he was without question an honest man, although some think it is the very nature of the democratical to consider the rich and great as usurpers and the enjoyers of usurpations, and to feel less compunction in plucking their plumage, than if mankind were all on an equality. But while I say this to his prejudice, I would go no farther ; he was ambitious it is true, and if he had a concealed reason for preferring a salary to a share, still in no trust was he ever found wanting ; and so long as he continued with Mr. Possy, he constantly maintained the rectitude and prudence of his early character. I am, however, proceeding a little

too fast, and anticipating events long afterwards accomplished, but which flowed naturally from the premises. When they did come to pass, they were to me of great importance, but their consequences were foreseen, and in the occurrence they were regarded as things expected. It is weak now to repine that I had not been better prepared for them.

CHAPTER XII.

A DEPARTURE.

AMONG other judicious habits and Scottish maxims, which my early and excellent friend Mrs. Busby took great pains to teach me, were, to observe the utmost orderliness in my apparel, and to keep my wardrobe at the lowest possible minimum. By these means she assured me I would be ever neat in my appearance, and always in fashion at the least cost ; nor was her opinion so much the result of theory as of practice, for she had been throughout life accustomed to a genteel economy, and had in the course of long administering a narrow jointure, acquired all the respectable methods of frugality without meanness ; a study of no easy application, and which is generally huddled over

in an alternate feast and famine way, by those who have the misfortune to be pressed by straitened circumstances. It thus came to pass that the preparations for removing myself to London were soon and easily accomplished, for I had learned to appreciate the benefits of her prudent instruction, and was at all times ready, on a short notice, to undertake the longest journeys; not that travelling had been much in my business, but her lessons remain with me still; and I am in mentioning my departure for the metropolis, speaking rather of what I have always been, than of my conduct on that occasion.

I am the more induced to record it, particularly because among my acquaintances, notwithstanding saving is so much of an old Scottish custom, I have observed many weak deviations from the rule. Among the industrious classes the outfitting of a young adventurer for the world is matter of vast importance. The utmost stretch of endeavour is employed to provide becoming clothes, and to pack the attendant trunk with many articles, of which, though the use may not be obvious, are sup-

plied to meet unforeseen casualties. This in their circumstances is perhaps wise, and doubtless the fruit of reported experience, but among those who enjoy affluence, the practice of Mrs. Busby is more applicable, especially when the transit is to such an emporium as London.

About two or three months before the idea of an establishment in the capital had been suggested to me, I remember an acquaintance, whom his relations had resolved to send to a counting-house in Liverpool preparatory to his being fixed in business. His absence from Glasgow was limited to twelve months, and he was going to a larger town. But his mother, one of the most bustling and notable matrons within the barony, and all its contiguous parishes, thought she could not do enough, or get sufficient for this extraordinary Exodus; shirts of more than common delicacy of texture, fit in number for an East Indian voyage, were got ready, and a daily forenoon visit to the seamstress, to see how she proceeded, was indispensable; neck-cloths, coats, waistcoats, the nameless, and stockings, with all those other manifold et ceteras of habiliment which could have been pur-

chased much cheaper and better in Liverpool, were provided in huge quantities, together with such rare articles as bundles of tape, balls of thread, and the no less unattainable appurtenances, papers of needles and pins. This I had witnessed, and in consequence, was instructed: so that when the period was determined for my departure, what with the knowledge and wiser economy of Mrs. Busby, I went lightly to the mail coach, with only a small leathern portmantua dangling at the finger of our warehouse porter; nor was it altogether filled with linen cravats and stockings, for in the one end a plentiful packet of introductory letters was stowed, to say nothing of those that were to pave the way to the credit and consequence of the concern to be formed.

Of my business letters I shall say nothing, farther than that they were like all of the kind, concise and to the point effective. The others were more miscellaneous; some were from the dominies of the college to learned men; others from mercantile gentlemen to pleasant persons of whom they knew something; and I was assured by an old lady who favoured

me with one to her nephew, that I might be proud of it. Few and far between were those she thought deserving of the honour. For he was no ordinary personage, being a Deputy of the Common Council. I had many others, big ones too, from ladies of different degrees, who advised me, if I could not deliver them myself, to put them into the twopenny post-office, and no doubt their friends would find me out, as I would naturally be found at the coffee-house.— Oh, innocent daughters of Glasgow! novice as I even then was, I could not repress a smile at such Trongate simplicity!

But in that mail of recommendations, there was a note from a respectable old woman who lived in the garret above our warehouse, and with whom I had made some acquaintance, by speaking to her on the stairs, and paying her a few slight civilities. She was of the venerable maiden gender, and had a small income payable half-yearly by drawing on London, and I was of some occasional use in passing her bills. She had been the daughter of a country minister, and being educated with uncommon care, spent her time chiefly in reading, for she was too old

to stoop over the tambouring frame, and her little stipend was adequate to her moderate wants. I have said she was respectable, but I speak more of her manners and conduct, than of her condition in a mercantile community. Naturally mild and recluse, she had but few visitors; I am not sure that I ever saw one, save on the sacramental occasions, when now and then an elderly country clergyman knocked with his knuckle at our warehouse door, inquiring if Miss Leezy Eglesham was within.

There was an air of sober meekness in her demeanour that I have never seen equalled, a resignation to her lot which greatly interested me, for it seemed less the effect of habit than of resolution. Had she been a carl in a cave, she would have merited the praise of being a pious hermit; and yet there was no austerity about her, but in all her ways a gentle contentedness, that even while it pleased, engendered compassion. From all I could learn before I left Glasgow, she had never suffered adversity, but her pale cheek and calm pathetic eyes were unaccountably subduing. She looked like one of those lowly spirits who are pre-

destined to become the companions of thoughtfulness and sorrow.

Her note was addressed to Sir Neil Eccles, Bart. on whom she drew for her income. She said nothing even of the degree of relationship in which I had supposed he stood to her, but in giving me the letter, she requested with an emphatic earnestness, that I would deliver it myself, or send it to him under a cover, telling him where I should be found.

“You must do that,” said she, “for I think he’ll maybe like to speak to you about me. You may tell him what you have observed of me, and that I have no wishes,”—at these words she sighed deeply, and her eye glistened for a moment; and then she added, with a smile, “They say he lives in a grand way, and has many servants, but he’ll be greatly altered, if for my sake he does not treat you well. Be sure and tell him how I live, and how I am wearing away.”

This little scene took place on the morning of my departure, and served to lend a pensive grace to the event; without it, I might have bade adieu to my early friends, and

the haunts of my youth, without experiencing the slightest sentiment of that sadness which, at such a time, should wait upon farewell. I had the preceding afternoon gone out to see Mrs. Busby for the last time; Dr. Leach had bade God bless me with much kindness; Mr. Rhomboid, the schoolmaster, with parental affection, exhorted me to resume the study of the stars in London, to which I had once been so addicted, as soon as I found leisure;—leisure! it is as far off as ever;—and Mr. Macindoe, with his wonted heartiness, joked, advised, and talked a thousand things, besides making a cobble bowl of punch; for knowing his humour, I had carried to him half a dozen limes. Still all affected me not like the patient sadness of the solitary spinster, and as the coach drove along the street, I felt that my thoughts were melancholy concerning her. It was a melancholy, however, not accompanied with any pain, but a remembrance like the fragrancy that scents the vase where the gathered rose has been.

CHAPTER XIII.

A JOURNEY.

IT would afford but small pleasure to the reader were I to describe the journey by the mail-coach to London, and yet it was not without incidents which I still recollect with cheerfulness. The company consisted of three others besides myself; two of them were seated, before I reached the coach-office, on the back seat. One, an elderly, corpulently-inclined drysalter, Mr. Fustick, bent on some occasion of business to Carlisle. When he saw me at the door he made an apology for not resigning the back seat, by saying that when he was driven with his back to the horses he was always troubled with sea-sickness. His neighbour was a Greenock skipper, hastening to Liverpool to look

after a vessel which had been cast away on the Calf of Man, the remains of which he was authorized to sell, as he informed us, for the benefit of the underwriters. The third had not yet come, but I was scarcely seated when he appeared at the door, attended by Mr. Spreul, an old Tontine acquaintance of mine, with half boots, the ears hanging out, and cotton stockings of "heavenly blue," a staff under his arm, and in his best snuff-coloured coat and swandown waistcoat. He was attended by his handmaid Girzie, with a portmanteau under her arm, and a paper with comfits in her hand. The passenger, however, was his English relation, the afterwards justly renowned Mr. Cyril Thornton, then a smartly well-dressed young man, of a calm, engaging physiognomy, with a sly, or, what is a better term, a pawky devil lurking in the corner of his eye. After many hearty shakings of the hand, and injunctions to "be sure and write," Mr. Spreul bade him adieu; he took his seat, and Girzie, giving the portmanteau to the guard, bent into the coach and said,

"Mr. Seerl, ye hae forgotten something

ye'll be none the waur of—there's twa three peppermint draps to raise the wind under cloud o' night."

I could discern by the smile with which he good-naturedly accepted her little present, that he was above the ordinary Trongate;—not that there is any want of true feeling there, but it is not always that the homages of lowly affection are so delicately received by those whose business is so much in the retail line.

This little incident a good deal prepossessed me in favour of my fellow-traveller, and soon after the coach got underweigh the impression was deepened by an observation he made as we drove along the Gallowgate. It happened just as we were passing up towards the barracks, a sudden shower burst in at the near-side window, and on the face of the worthy Mr. Fustick; it, perhaps, also smote the visage of Captain Breezes, but he being Greenock, and habituated to such things, winced nothing at the assault, while his companion drew up the glass with great vehemence.

"We're in luck," said Mr. Thornton, whispering to me: "our friends here have not

been much used to night travelling, or they would not have taken the back seat."

This led on to farther conversation, and the time passed as swiftly as if it were like Cuchullin's car, borne on wheels as rapid as those of the vehicle that carried us. Our opposite neighbours had also their conversational amusement, but it did not exactly fit the calibre either of Mr. Thornton or myself. An inquiry, however, of the Drysalter's, certainly amused us both, and was a fair specimen of the intelligence which pervaded the minor Glasgow merchants of that time. "Captain," said he, "it canna' be possible that logwood grows with its roots in the sea?"

"Oh no," replied his companion, none surprised at the question, "it only grows on the water's edge, and that 's the cause of its dyeing yellow."

"Nay, hooly hooly Captain," said Mr. Fustick, "you sea-faring folk are no' just in the way of knowing much. Logwood does not do for yellow at all, but it 's one of the condiments of black."

Whether this was correct chymistry or not

I shall not undertake to say; for any thing that I knew to the contrary it might, but Mr. Thornton gave me a nefarious wink at the knowledge displayed by both.

Nothing more particular occurred to interest my attention till we reached Carlisle, about the dawn of day, when we were treated with the coarseness, haste, and hurry so animating in an English inn to stage-coach passengers.

At Carlisle we changed coaches; the Drysalter left us, the Greenock Skipper proceeded to Liverpool, and Mr. Thornton took his seat only to Penrith, whence he intended to cross the country; but their places were supplied by three others, one of whom, notwithstanding that the weather was chill and raw, accommodated himself, under the pretext of being obliging to the other two passengers, by riding outside till he could get Mr. Thornton's seat. He was a young Edinburgh advocate going to London for the first time, with a single brief in his bag, on the celebrated appeal case concerning the firkin of butter; which was pleaded with so much ability before the Lords of Session, sounding the depths of the whole Scottish bar—a

tribunal before which plaintiffs go not in quest of justice, but for the mere patriotic purpose of settling points of law.

The two insides which Mr. Gledde, the advocate, so amiably insinuated he so obliged, only because he saw they were not used to travelling, was an old Highland gentleman, the Laird of Glengowl, and a Mrs. Peerie, who had a sister in some great way about Nightingale-lane, near Wapping, who was thought to have made, as she said, "a bit gathering," and had written to her, that being in a bad state of health, she was thinking of leaving a mortification of the best part of it to the parish of St. George in the East—which, as Mrs. Peerie most cogently observed, would be a thing, "horridible in a Christian land, where she had her own blood relations!"

What motive drew the Glengowl from his misty hills and heaths was not rendered to us at all; but Mr. Thornton wormed out of him, that at the recent Falkirk cattle fair, in consequence of the rising demands of the war, black cattle had sold well, and that the mountains, which in ancient times rung with the warlike

notes of the pibroach, were, as the *ci-devant* sans-culotte said—"Al' quaijing with the goot prices."

Our conversation, consisting of these interesting topics, continued without any material pause till we reached Penrith, where Mr. Thornton took his leave, and I was rather agreeably surprised at the cordiality with which he shook me by the hand, and expressed his hope that chance would afterwards make us better acquainted.

I much regretted his departure, for his many agreeable qualities, his easy politeness, and gentlemanly frankness, together with his general appearance and unstudied manners—for I am one of those who think that virtue is not deteriorated in combination with the blandishments of a winning nature. It was not so, however, with the venerable chief of Glengowl, between whom and Mrs. Peerie, before the advocate had taken his place, a zealous controversy had arisen concerning him. The lady extolled him as one of the most capturing young gentlemen that ever she had set eyes on; and the Celt, with equal ardency, affirming that he was

nothing but an astronom, or something else no less intelligible. The horses being harnessed, their dispute was abruptly concluded ; and Mr. Gledde, the Athenian, took his place alongside of the chieftain, who evinced a kind of selvatic joy at seeing him again ; for they had come from Edinburgh to Carlisle in the same coach, and during the journey Mr. Gledde had explained to him, in the most accomplished manner, how a defunct is precognition to an heir, or some other legal preliminary.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAIL TRAVELLING.

AFTER leaving Penrith, the remainder of the journey was performed much in the same state of discomfort as travelling in those distant days was usually accomplished. The hedges and trees flew past us as fast as the coach went forward, and the Advocate's tongue was not slower. The chief was more taciturn, speaking in a voice hoarse and constipated; and the old lady, Mrs. Peerie, was only occasionally loquacious.

From Glengowl's inquiries and Mr. Gledde's interlocutors, I could gather that there was some secret understanding between them, relative to a cousin of the former, who had died in England, leaving him a considerable legacy;

which, with the good prices of black cattle, was one of the causes of his journey to London, as for some time their discourse was of stirks and inheritances. It did not, however, appear that the old gentleman knew much of the matter; and I am not sure, as he lived in the misty Morven, that law had in those days reached farther than Inverary.

Mrs. Peerie distinguished herself, much to my amusement, by some of her observations, and occasional touches of shrewd humour. Once, for example, when we happened to halt for a moment, a peasant spoke something to the guard, which was not the best of English, being in the broad dialect of the district: as soon as we were again underweigh, giving a wink to me, she said to Glengowl in her most mellifluous and merriest manner, "No doubt the young man was speaking Gaelic." In reply to which the old gentleman gave an emphatic grumph, at the same time also winking to me in marvel at her ignorance.

The weather was raw and humid, and the remainder of the day was spent with drawn-up

windows and silent mouths. When we stopped to dine, only Mr. Gledde and myself partook of the refreshment; Glengowl cheered himself with a gill of brandy and a biscuit, but Mrs. Peerie did not alight. She had a paper of biscuits and sandwiches in her basket, and recruited in the coach, so that neither of the two were in any degree incommoded by the haste and hurry of the mail-coach.

In the evening, the dull haze of the day lowered in clouds; the wind rose, and the glass of the windows was uncomfortably gemmed with large drops of rain. The aspect of the country was gloomy, and every object betokened a dreary night, but the spirits of Mrs. Peerie were lively; she spoke of the anticipated felicity of a nice cup of tea and a fine fire; nor was the chieftain less animated on the enjoyments to come, and which we were rapidly approaching.

At last we reached the house, one of those small, pert-looking inns, which had originally been constructed for a roadside alehouse, but which, by the improvements of society and

the progress of stage-coaches, had been elevated into a baiting stoppage for the mail. Here we all alighted.

Glengowl was gruffly pleased with what he called the heclarity of the house; and Mrs. Peerie also acknowledged that it was like a place where they were used to the civility of boiling a tea-kettle. Mr. Gledde looked at them both with blended humour and pathos.

As the outside and newly-whitened walls and fresh painted sign and windows led us to expect, we were shown into a neat parlour with a roaring fire, a tea-tray and table before it plentifully garnished. A smart maiden, with the height of discretion, as Mrs. Peerie judiciously observed at the time, spared her from the trouble of making tea, so she placed herself at the one side of the fire, and Glengowl, quite as cosily inclined, seated himself at the other.

The old lady, who had two or three times in the course of the journey complained of cold feet, took off her shoes and placed them snugly on the grate against the wall to toast; and Glengowl, equally erudite in the mysteries of travelling, untied a shawl which he wore over his

neckcloth. Never did a couple appear to set themselves in more happily for a snug hour or two, than these worthy passengers; for myself and Mr. Gledde we were irreverently voracious, for we at once began to devour, and before the tea was half ready to drink. Mrs. Peerie saw, as she delicately remarked, that the cold weather had given us an appetite; she would, however, wait till the tea was better masket. But many things happen between the cup and the lip; even with all our speed, before the gentleman learned in the law and myself had poured out our second cup, the guard winded his horn, to the inexpressible astonishment and indignation of the lady and gentleman so snugly enjoying the fire. Then there was anarchy and confusion, like as among the French nobles, when the Revolution, with the wild ringing of the tocsin, disturbed that state of things which was so calculated for their particular solace. The wrathful Glengowl threatened, if the coach ran away before he was ready, that he would pursue it in a post-chaise at the expense of the proprietors. The lady was no less disconcerted; however, without wasting time in idle talk,

she gathered up her gear, and was speedily in the coach. The maid followed her in rather a flurry, and said,

“ Mem, you have left nothing for the waiter.”

“ All is left for the waiter,” was the alert reply; “ and I’ll thank you, my leddy, to shut the door.”

This perilous adventure afforded various animated topics for much of the rest of the journey. Glengowl was not altogether in the sweetest contentment; but Mrs. Peerie, having still both biscuits and sandwiches remaining, could talk of the fright with considerable jocularity. The chieftain, however, vowed that he would have revenge; and accordingly, with true Celtic resolution, when we again halted to take supper, where the hurry was equally alert, Glengowl, on being again “ put to the horn,” as Mr. Gledde described it, seized a leg of mutton by the shank, and carried it along with a piece of bread into the coach. This outrage was, however, as the lawyer justly remarked to him, not altogether legitimate, though it might be Highland, the inn from which the mutton had been taken, belonging to another man.

“ It’s al’ one for the benefit of a reformation,” said Glengowl; “ they’ll have a remembrance for the good of their posterity, how I lifted the black mail in the shape of this leg of sheep.”

Unfortunately, however, we live in an age when even Highland chieftains are used to knives and forks, and Glengowl, after being properly seated, and about to eat, found himself much at a loss to begin, having come abroad without his dirk or these implements. It was dark, and we could not see, but we heard him growl in soliloquy at this embarrassment, and wondering what he should do. His condition was exceedingly diverting; the Edinburgh advocatè in vain essayed to suggest an expedient, and descanted on the force of habit, and how much a man, by the influence of society, was now rendered unfit for a state of nature.

“ Ne’er trouble your head, Sir,” said Mrs. Peerie, “ naebody sees you in the dark; just take a bite from the bone, like a dog, and make yourself comfortable.”

Next day we had indisputable evidence that man is perfectible in travelling as well as in

intellectual and moral knowledge. There was no longer any attempt at such a barbarous practice as toasting shoes, or untying shawl cravats, but the utmost celerity in every action, and the most strenuous endeavours to masticate and swallow the greatest quantity of food in the least possible time, so that we reached the Bull and Mouth Inn, so renowned among the visitors to the metropolis, without meeting with any other occurrence. Mrs. Peerie was, however, greatly disappointed at the appearance of the house, as it showed itself at break of day, in a windy and wet morning. She had even doubts if such a disjacket looking inn was na' one of the abominations of London, "into which her innocence was sinfully betrayed."

As it happened that the whole of that morning's immigration by the mail were entire strangers to each other, and to London, we were not quite so clever in getting ourselves ready to proceed to our respective places of intended abode. The Edinburgh limb of the law was the first ready; he came well instructed, called a coach, leaped in with his portman-

teau, bade us good morning, and was driven off to some hotel in Parliament Street. Glengowl was the next, for, although he was encumbered with a most untravelling-like hairy box trunk, he also at last got himself hoisted into a hackney coach, and was conveyed to No. 120, King-street. The rogue of a coachman never inquired which King-street, but with knavery in his eyes, drove him away in the civilest and slowest style possible. Mrs. Peerie being frugal and methodical, did not choose to be at the expense of a coach to take her to Nightingale-lane, Wapping, but engaged a porter to carry her trunk to her cousin's there, she following through the dirt, glad of being so near her journey's end. I was as green as herself, and not knowing the latitude and longitude of Nightingale-lane, saw her depart in the rain, without offering any advice. For myself, being advised to that effect, I went to bed at the Bull and Mouth, until the day was far enough advanced to enable me to deliver one of my most particular letters, preparatory to fixing my domicile.

CHAPTER XV.

LONDON.

THE metropolis to a stranger is most uncomfortable. The crowd that fills the streets is more friendless than the sands of the Arabian desert, or the trees of the American woods. I felt this the moment that I left the inn, for I went unattended. The map with which I had provided myself, showed that as my destination was Cheapside, I had not far to walk ; but in the course of that short journey, the unrecognising earnest looks of the passengers, smote me with that peculiar destitute feeling, which is alone experienced by the stranger when he first enters London. However, this was soon dissipated when I entered the counting-house of our correspondent Mr. Patterns, who, in consequence

of my previous letters, was well aware of my intention, and expressed himself pleased to make my personal acquaintance with more warmth than I expected; for our business was, as we thought in Glasgow, no bad spoke in his wheel, and I could hardly persuade myself that he could be sincere in the cordiality he expressed at seeing me.

Among his earliest questions was, where I lodged? my answer was, "at the Bull and Mouth."

"That will not do," said he, frankly; "the first thing a man should do who comes to town, is to provide himself with proper lodgings, that he may be able to give his address to his friends. If you call on any one before that, you will have to pay two visits—come, I'll spare a few minutes, and see you properly suited somewhere in this neighbourhood."

In saying this, he took his hat from a peg, and locking his desk, went out with me. This brevity considerably surprised me, for, although in Glasgow we do not waste much time in useless conversation, we are not quite so alert. In the course of a short walk down a lane near

his house, we found convenient but dark lodgings in Budge Row."

"Now," said he, "you will, I doubt not, find yourself comfortable here. Fetch your luggage at once from the inn, and then look out in this neighbourhood for suitable premises, and at four o'clock I shall expect you to go with me to dinner. It is only those who are connected with the shipping and foreign trade that go to 'Change; I have no occasion to be ever there."

With these words he left me, and I proceeded for my portmanteau to the Bull and Mouth, marvelling and pleased at the decision of Mr. Patterns. I thought it then only characteristic of himself, but I soon discovered it was a customary effect of the just estimate which the Londoners have formed of time.

When I had deposited my luggage, which I brought from the inn in a coach, agreeably to his advice, I went immediately in search of a domicile for my business, and in the course of a few minutes, found a very eligible warehouse in Cannon-street, which I immediately rented, so that before twelve o'clock I was fairly set-

tled in London, much to my own amazement, and no less to the astonishment of Mr. Possy my partner, whom I advised of what was done by the post of that evening.

The celerity of my proceedings on the day of my arrival, has always been recollected with pleasure. It awoke in myself energies unfelt before, and the report of what I had so soon accomplished, obtained for Mr. Possy, as he wrote by return of post, the congratulations of his friends, that I had settled in London, the best sphere for so active a person. His fortune was considered as made.

Not calculating on being able to accommodate myself so speedily, some time elapsed before our goods came to hand, and I had leisure to amuse myself with the lions of the metropolis. In this business, having the anxiety of my commercial prospects constantly before me, I was not less assiduous than in seeking for the warehouse. I soon saw every thing deemed curious by the stranger, and I was treated with many invitations to dinner in the mean while, by those to whom I had brought letters: but I know not from what cause arising, a continual

feeling of loneliness took possession of me; my leisure was dead time, for I was too deeply affected by the novelty of the scenes around to adapt my mind to reading, and was too much in a flurry, by the anxieties inseparable from my situation, to be able to indulge my wonted habit of observation. The first three months were in consequence the most irksome, and yet the most rapid of my life.

When, however, that epoch, as I may justly call it, had elapsed, I became gradually more composed; I grew as insensible to all as the rest of the multitude, and even when some of my old acquaintance from the North visited the metropolis, I amused myself with pretending sometimes more indifference than I really experienced, merely to enjoy their wonder.

I have always been an eager amateur of fires and other public sights and pageants. One day, when walking with two Glasgow friends, we happened to pass a lane in which several houses were delightfully burning. It would have been at night a spectacle equivalent to King Crispianus, or a real coronation. I had in my heart a longing to stop and look at it.

My friends were petrified at the roaring devastation ; “What are you gazing at ?” said I, “it is only a fire ;” and walked forward without evincing the slightest emotion. They looked at me, and reciprocally communed with their eyes concerning my apathy ; nor could they conceive how, in so short a time, I should have been so hardened to metropolitan indifference. I was, however, but altered in my outward seeming, for even to this day, a conflagration, especially if women and children are seen screaming at the windows in the utmost jeopardy, is to me much more interesting than the tragedy of Macbeth.

This little anecdote is important in several ways, but my object in introducing it here is, not so much to explain the effect which the local genius of London had on me, as to show how readily, and with what little effort, I could adapt myself to situation, at least appear as if I did so—for, in truth, I was never much changed at heart—my spirit delighted in the country. The wild, the beautiful, and the grand of Nature, have ever been the objects of its homage, and I never was less myself than

when engaged in the turmoils of trade, and most applauded for discernment and dexterity as a merchant. My case, however, is not extraordinary; few men, if they would venture to confess the fact, ever have any real enjoyment in the diplomacies of commerce—and the judicious practice which so much prevails in England, of retiring from business as soon as a competency is earned, confirms this opinion.

I have already mentioned how the great art of the merchant, purchasing, happened never to be learned by me. My situation in London was as little favourable to acquire it as when I was in Glasgow; but the increasing commerce of the country made me nevertheless an expert salesman, and that was all I had to do. Every season was more prosperous than the foregoing. The war raged upon the Continent, but trade flourished in England. Our connections increased; the house in Glasgow, under the shrewd management of Eric Pullicate, was an example to every other; it was the earliest in every new fashion, and my warehouse in Cannon-street had the best assortment of goods in our line. But still, I was not altogether satisfied

that our wonderful success was sound. I had often strange doubts, and never could reconcile my mind to believe that the reasons which induced Eric Pullicate to decline a partnership with us, were his true motives.

I had not been much more than twelve months settled, when I wrote to himself, proposing to him a handsome share of our profits; urging how much more respectable it would make him in the world, than to be dependant on a salary; but he was as steady to his purpose as ever, and Mr. Possy informed me, that my proposal had only served to animate his diligence in our service. Less therefore could not be done to reward his uncommon assiduity, than to augment his income, and we did it liberally. But still, his moderation as to rank in society was perplexing; for, I had observed, that the democrats were ever the most ambitious, and the republicans the most arbitrary. The conduct of Eric Pullicate was an exception to the rule, and to human nature an anomaly. From what can it proceed? was a question I so often put to myself, that it at last infected me with an aimless suspicion, I knew

not wherefore, for in no one transaction could the slightest blemish be imputed to his integrity; on the contrary, as Mr. Possy assured me, in reply to some inquiries dictated by my uneasy fancy, his assiduity for the interests of his employers was the theme of general admiration.

CHAPTER XVI.

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.

BUT before I proceed to the regular current of my narrative, I should mention an incident of some importance, which occurred soon after my arrival in London; indeed, it cannot be said that I very strictly confine myself to any regular story. The course of my biography is like the character of my life, somewhat desultory, and the events seem to arise from causes apparently inadequate to their consequences. I ever felt that I was out of my road; not in peril, but the events when they came to pass were somehow uniformly untoward. The course was like those wild American streams, sometimes dividing their force into different channels, occasionally on the one side

of the island that sends the flow in different directions, passing onward in a sober current, while on the other they are hurried into turbulent rapids.

On the day immediately following my arrival, I took out my letters and arranged them in different classes to be in that order delivered. Those that I expected would facilitate my business arrangements were placed in the first class, and received priority of attention. Those of the second, that were to bespeak for me the friendship of private gentlemen, constituted the second. The third were more miscellaneous, consisting of introductions to persons of public note, but I had only one that was not specific,—the one from Leezy Eglesham to Sir Neil Eccles: it seemed to me the least particular, and ought in consequence to be made an object of curiosity deserving no ordinary attention. I laid it therefore aside by itself, with the design of being made of more consideration than most of the others. It thus happened that the proverb, out of sight out of mind, was verified with respect to it; it lay in the drawer of my Pembroke table unheeded several months, and it was only on

accidentally pulling out the drawer, that I was rebuked by its presence in beholding it there.

I have ever regarded letters of general introduction merely as dinner tickets, and the longer I have lived the more have I been convinced, that in that early opinion I did not underrate their value: mine were numerous, and in general obtained for me both hospitality and civility; but about a guinea was the worth of most of them. They showed me handsome dinners, enabled me to partake of elegant fare, and that was all. By some of them I flattered myself that I was an object of solicitude, I could not tell why; but I soon discovered that there was a secret in this; I was only so for a decent time, until I had probably written home how well I had been received, and then there was an end of all farther kindness. This, however, was a discovery in the way of the world that it was some time before I made; it was only after hearing how much others in similar circumstances had been by the same parties so flattered, that I acquired a judicious notion of the worth of letters of introduction to persons famed for their attention to young strangers

But to return to the original intention of this chapter.

By the simple casualty described, it so happened that Sir Neil Eccles' letter fell aside, and months having elapsed after it ought to have been delivered, I was on the point of throwing it into the fire, with some chagrin at my own negligence. Fortunately I arrested my hand, and the time being a Saturday evening, I preserved it, and resolved that the next forenoon I would take it home, and apologize for the delay, by recounting the simple fact.

The Sunday morning opened with unusual sunshine; London was blessed by the appearance of the weather, and her streets quickened with rejoicing myriads, hastening to and fro to partake of the holiday. It was a day when no one grudges to dress himself in his gayest, and when an exulting sympathy makes the human breast share in the brightness of Nature.

Soon after breakfast I sallied out. Sir Neil Eccles, by the address on the letter, lived in Harley-street, and I went there by the New-road, knowing scarcely more than the direction in which it lay. But on approaching the num-

ber, I was astonished to see that the house was one of the most considerable in that torrid zone of commercial fashion. However, I knocked with a rap that would have been most impudent in Glasgow, and a smart, but respectable elderly footman answered the summons. His master was from home, he was in the country; but he civilly requested me to leave the letter with my card, and I might rely that it should be regularly delivered.

The appearance of the man, his becoming manner, and the respectfulness of his assurances, interested me. The letter with the card was left, and I went away wondering by what strange accident Miss Leezy Eglesham conceived herself to be on a footing to introduce a stranger to one so far beyond her condition of life, and evidently in the possession of great opulence. In walking along, I repeated the old proverb—like master like man—and concluded from what I had seen, that Sir Neil Eccles was no ordinary character: nor was he; for, besides being an India Director, he was a Member of Parliament, and, as Dr. Johnson said to Mr. Perkins, in taking an inventory of the stock

of old Thrale, it was no inventory, but a potentiality to become rich beyond the dreams of Avarice.

Some days passed away, in each of which, as they passed consecutively, I heard nothing of my letter, and began to account it as nothing; when one morning Sir Neil Eccles was announced—an old ruddy-faced gentleman, whose white colourless hair announced that he had spent years in a warmer climate. I received him in my counting-house, and after a few general observations respecting the delay in delivering the letter, for I told him frankly how it happened, he invited me to dinner; an invitation which I accepted with unaffected pleasure; for there was something exceedingly prepossessing in his address, and a warmth in the manner of his invitation that was no less interesting.

The invitation was for a Saturday, and on my arrival at his town-residence, the general style of his establishment, and the composed splendour of the house, without being strikingly uncommon, struck me as even above the opulence which he evidently enjoyed. An intel-

lectual charm was diffused over all, and I could not sufficiently admire the sober harmony which at once pervaded the domestics, the furniture, and the elegance of the mansion.

He received me politely—perhaps, I should say, with something like distinction—at least I felt it as such, and I could see when he thought himself unobserved, that he glanced his eye towards me, as if I were his study.

The dinner was served in the best style. The company consisted of elderly persons, who were seemingly but little interested in the events of Europe. Their talk was of Bengal, and the politics of the Peishwa, but neither distinguished by any brilliancy of wit, nor the substance of much wisdom. The entertainment, if not the feast of reason nor the flow of soul, was becoming to the ample fortune of the giver. I do not recollect, however, that in leaving the house, I had any wish to be re-invited; I was in no way interested in what I had witnessed. There was evidently more wealth than talent in the company; and undoubtedly, although it was impossible for a king to provide a table better furnished, for

the same number of guests, a pristine vulgarity showed that some of them had not been long used to such refinement. Yet I had enjoyed an excellent dinner, with delicious wines; and in walking home, I reckoned that Sir Neil Eccles' ticket was worth a trifle more than a guinea. I counted, however, that I had received all it was destined to procure for me, and the incident was soon forgotten. Still, I could not refrain from wondering how the letter from Miss Leezy Eglesham had obtained for me such an invitation, nor the cause of those occasional glances which Sir Niel Eccles often threw at me, in which there was evidently as much of sorrow as of curiosity, with now and then the gathered brow of cogitation.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHARACTERS.

ABOUT a month or five weeks after my first visit to Sir Neil Eccles, I received a second invitation. The party was greatly different: it consisted principally of young men of my own age, lively scions of rank and fortune; some of them possessed of more various ability than I had ever before met with in company: but I remarked that our host seemed to regard his entertainment with the constraint that marks the performance of a duty. I looked, however, in vain around, to discover, if I could, for whom the banquet was made. The entertainment was not at all inferior in elegance and propriety to that I had previously enjoyed; and from the more juvenile character of the company, I relished it more; still, I could clearly see

that more was meant by it than met either the eye or the ear. What can it be? was a question repeated to myself an hundred times as I walked homeward.

One day, it might be rather more than a week after, Sir Neil called at my counting-house—I was not at the time within, but he left his compliments, and begged that I would take a part of his Sunday dinner. The invitation was alike unexpected and surprising; for by this time I had been informed that he was, notwithstanding the general respect in which he was held, considered a pompous Oriental, and prided himself on the excellence of his table. The invitation was, however, flattering to me; it was indeed the kind of thing which I most wished for; of show dinners I had enough, and those promiscuous assemblages of guests, which have not been inaptly compared to meetings of creditors, being chiefly composed of personages to whom dinners are due for value received. These I never could abide, because, somehow, such was the number of good things commonly at them, that there was no need of any intellect.

The party on this occasion consisted of only four persons, two guests besides the landlord and myself, and I have rarely spent a pleasanter day. Sir Neil appeared altogether a different man. Instead of the staid and regulated method of his ordinary manners, he was simple, facetious, and amusing. I thought his conversation more highly flavoured with literary allusions than usual, though it was always rich in that respect, far beyond the common talk of most men, and it had the effect of deepening the interest which I began to take in his character. There was evidently an enigma and a mystery about him; he was visibly actuated by other motives than those which influenced the conduct of mankind in general; for in the midst of a remarkable air of natural candour, I could discern an abyss in his bosom, in which some secret of sorrow or of passion lay as in a hiding place.

Dr. Lembeck, one of the guests, seemed to be on a footing of more familiarity with Sir Neil than any other person I had seen in his company; it was not, however, the familiarity which begins in youthful life, and mellows into

the friendship of riper age, but that easy habit which springs from the intimacy of a mutual good understanding cemented by reciprocal favours. It required no superior perspicacity to perceive that they had been useful to one another, and had encountered difficulties together. The Doctor had been a physician in India, and had not walked the world with his eyes unemployed. What may have been his professional talent I had never the means of knowing, but his mind was of the best and shrewdest quality, without any of that peculiar garnish which contributes to individual distinction. He was what is known in society as the most valuable of its members, a sensible and judicious man. All he uttered bore the mintage of prudence, and was ever so discreetly applied, that it passed for its just value. Like his friend, he could boast of no striking accomplishment, but he had been so long alone at his station in India, that he had made many curious observations on the inhabitants and the country, by which his conversation, without being brilliant in phraseology, was often highly interesting. His facts and anecdotes were better

than wit, inasmuch as they often added to the knowledge of his auditors. I am speaking of him after an acquaintance of many years, for I have no distinct recollection of the impression he made on me when we first met at dinner.

The other gentleman, Mr. Woodrife, was a being of a different element. He was emphatically a man of genius, but the force of his mind was expended on intentions. To hear him speak, no doubt could be entertained that he was either already, or destined to be of great note in the world; and yet the bud never blossomed. He seemed capable of effecting whatever he would undertake; his mind was truly a winged spirit, all sight and activity, but it only ever prepared to fly. At the period of which I am speaking he was well advanced in life, turned of fifty, and he had literally done nothing. He was the only man I ever met with of whom it could be justly said, that he

For all things was able, for nothing was fit.

Like the herb his name resembled, which yields no fragrance until dried, his wonderful endowments were not fully appreciated by his

friends until after his death; it was only when that event made it no longer possible to enjoy the affluence and glory of his conversation, that all those who knew him in life were sensible he had left a vacuum in the world. He had inherited a small fortune, was thoroughly educated, but he spent his time and income in projecting plans which, had he sought the means of carrying into effect, would have raised him to the pinnacle of renown and fortune. He could only, however, be compared to a torch, illuminating [all around, but consuming itself.

This gentleman and Dr. Lembeck were the two earliest acquaintances I made in London, out of the circle of my commercial associates: it is unnecessary to inform the reader that I could not but account myself fortunate in them. They were neither, it is true, exactly congenial to my taste, but the freshness of the knowledge possessed by the one, and the inexhaustible originality continually scintillating from the other, I have no doubt tended to stir the latent elements of my own character.

I dwell on the event of my introduction to

these gentlemen the more particularly, because, while I performed my duties in business with exemplary carefulness, I experienced the influence of their respective peculiarities gradually affecting my reflections, not, however, to the prejudice of the mercantile responsibility I had incurred to my partner, but in teaching me to consider mankind with a jealous and inquisitive eye. In truth, all kinds of business are much the same; the details of dealing furnish no adventures, whatever the line may be, if fortune be favourable. One day after another came and went in my affairs for several years so much alike, that my life, but for the additions which, through the means of Sir Neil, I was enabled from time to time to make to my society, would have been the most monotonous possible; the sameness was unalleviated by a single incident that I can recall to mind. But I must check my desultory pen, and return back to the immediate results of the dinner.

In leaving the house, Dr. Lembeck's course lay in a different direction from mine, but Mr. Woodrife had occasion to come part of the way with me. Our conversation, like that which

commonly takes place when guests leave the hospitable board together, was at first of our host ; we both agreed in thinking highly of him, and were equally convinced that he was one of those men who have two characters—one for the world and another for his friends.

“He is,” said Mr. Woodrife, “not in his place ; he may be prosperous, but he pays dear for it.”

I requested him to explain what he meant ; but his reply was perplexing.

“I have no reason to know that Sir Neil is not happy in his thriving circumstances, but still, as often as I have the gratification to be with him, he seems as if he had on a new suit of clothes :” he then added briskly, “the feeling he excites, I apprehend, can only be experienced after some study of mankind ; or rather, the rule of judging of others must be a result of experience. The principle on which it is founded is, however, very simple. I formed it young, and it has never misled me ; it is nothing more than to observe attentively the respective conditions of men, and to ask

myself if the individual, with whom at the time I happen to be interested, is in circumstances above or below the rank of his mind; when I find a disparity, I then say, if I think him higher than his fortune seems to befit—his progress in life will be advancement, but if otherwise, he will sink in the scale of society. There may be exceptions to this rule, for it cannot be denied, that good and bad luck sometimes occur in human affairs, but generally speaking, I rely upon the rule; for even in instances of good and bad luck, it will be found that the sagacity of the individual, who is the subject of either, has a material influence in producing it.”

I thought the observation curious at the time, and was on the point of saying so, when he subjoined. “But perhaps you will say, the power of accurately discerning in what the discord and harmony between character and circumstances consist, is itself an endowment. It may be so, but I am not sensible that it is original in me.”

“Then,” said I, a little puzzled by his

metaphysics, "you imagine that there is something not well assorted between Sir Neil Eccles and his opulence."

"There is," was the reply; "but it does not regard the progress of his fortune. He is in unison with his circumstances—he has acquired riches, and knows the wise use of them, but he has paid dearly for them; for, as often as I dine with him, I observe that he uniformly sighs, as he surveys his splendid table, and his physiognomy is overcast for a moment with a shade of regret. Do you know, that I suspect you are somehow connected with the cause, for I noticed him this evening once or twice looking at you with the same expression of countenance."

By this time we had come to the street where we were obliged to part, and he bade me good night, but the remark with which he left me, occasioned many a long rumination.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TROUBLES.

THE success which attended my commercial establishment in London was gratifying; in fact, I had every prospect of realizing a large and rapid fortune, when one morning, without any previous intimation, I received a letter from my partner Mr. Possy, informing me that Eric Pullicate had given him notice to provide a substitute, as he intended to go into business for himself. His savings in our service were considerable, and to do him only justice, his conduct quite deserved our liberality. But the information puzzled me. Had we not offered to advance him, there could have been no surprise at his determination; we had, however, pressed him to accept a share with us,

and his refusal had never ceased to excite my wonder.

My partner, in communicating the news, made light of it. He even considered Eric's desertion,—the wary and far-forecasting Eric—as an effect of self-will, and only the common ingratitude of man for the sincerity of the respect we entertained for him, at the same time assuring me, that although indeed he had been a praiseworthy servant, yet he was not so rare as such that his place could not be easily supplied.

Mr. Possy expressed himself in the customary language of the world, but his letter contained not one reflection from his own mind. It was all made up of the opinions of others, and filled with the commonplaces of vulgar confidence. On me, however, it had a great effect; I felt as if an amputation had been performed, and one of my limbs lopped off. I had no faith in the judgment or sagacity of my partner: in a word, I suffered an internal fear; a kind of prophetic conviction, that the secret canker of decay had attacked the roots of our prosperity. Another such as Pullicate might

no doubt be obtained, but why did he quit our service? Did he see any thing amiss in our foundations? He could scarcely hope to attain, with his small capital, in many years, profit equivalent to the share we would willingly have given him? It was an event that surprised and grieved me, but like other griefs incidental to the [lot of man, it wore away into a mere recollection of the fact, and our business still continued to thrive, and chiefly from an event which, a short time before, had taken place.

Our profits had enabled us to accumulate the means of extending our dealings, and agency was added to our own business. We received goods similar to those we sold for ourselves, and made advances of money to the manufacturers. It was just when we had adopted this change in the nature of our establishment, that Eric Pullicate suddenly withdrew; but he became among the earliest of our constituents. He did not, however, adhere very long to us; and, in the increase of our business, in consequence of the agency, I soon lost sight of him.

It is not my intention to relate all the his-

tory of our mercantile transactions; I shall only, therefore, occasionally allude to them when they happen to influence the colour or the current of my life. Singular, however, as it may seem, the retreat of Eric Pullicate from our employment, was perhaps the most important incident that befell my commercial pursuits, and I may as well explain here at once how it was so, although I write from conjecture, and from subsequent long and intricate rumination.

I am persuaded, from the natural talent of the man, that he soon perceived the inherent commercial defects, not only obvious in my partner, but in myself. This is a humiliating acknowledgment, but unless it be frankly confessed, and freely explained, this work will neither produce the effect intended, nor be easily understood. I shall therefore first speak of those things which he could not but observe in me, and secondly of his probable motives.

I have already said enough of my partner, to convey a fair idea of the danger of my connection with him; we were both but the creatures of that amazing internal prosperity which

resulted to the country from the French revolution and the war; and although it was impossible to trace any degree of our success to me, yet such was the consistency of my conduct, that much of it was ascribed, among our acquaintance, to my skill and sedate habits of business. Eric Pullicate could not, however, avoid observing that all the inclinations of my character were averse to trade. His necessary constant attendance in the warehouse must have disclosed to him, before I left for London, that I was, to a most unfitting degree, prone to the indulgence of a meditative disposition, fantastical notions, and other follies of thought which, though they resemble philosophy, are in reality but the froth of the mind. While money enough for our own concerns was among my hands,—while my task was but to superintend sales, and while all those modifications of address and expediency which constitute the *vis* of trade, were not required, I was competent to perform well the part assigned to me; but when the case was otherwise, as it soon became by the growth of our agency, no uncommon sagacity was necessary to per-

ceive that I should be found wanting, and this, I have no doubt, Eric Pullicate was wide awake to.

It may, however, be supposed that he was chiefly guided in his decision by the character of Mr. Possy, and doubtless he was; for our agency, which I regard as the main cause of it, placed the very vitals of our commercial existence in that weak person's incapable hands. The process was this:—

In consigning the goods of our constituents to me, he became the judge alike of their suitability to the market and of their value, and made his advances by drawing on me, according to the invoices rendered with them. In this, as I afterwards too late discovered, he exercised no discretion, which was indeed all that he ever possessed; and, in consequence, made advances far above what prudence could approve, and often on articles unfit for their destination. The inevitable consequences could not escape the shrewd Eric; but the catastrophe, partly owing to the stability of our credit, and to the public events which from time to time opened new markets, was post-

poned for several years. It was not until I happened now and then to find myself perplexed for funds to meet the draughts of my partner, that I apprehended any hazard; even then I could not but be pleased with the nominal increase of our gains, and it was natural that I should become so far infected with the vapour of the time, as to ascribe my occasional difficulties to the irregularities of winds and convoys, which so often deceived the merchants of that period.

From the temporary loans, the earliest indications of my jeopardy, I was obliged at last, in order to provide for impending payments, to buy cotton at first, and gradually afterwards other merchandise, apparently on speculation, but in truth to sell again—to raise the wind; and in this practice I almost always suffered loss. One year the losses amounted to more than our commissions. In the methods I pursued, my wonted character sustained no injury; my life was steady, my personal expenditure moderate, and my company agreeable to my acquaintance; but I had no distinct perception of what I was doing. I knew not how to buy, and

suffered more from my ignorance, both as respected the quality of the goods I bought, and my prospective estimates of the seasons when they would come into demand, than from the haste in which the necessities of my business obliged me to sell again. I never look back on this epoch of my life, without marveling at many things which need irresistibly impelled me to do, and in which my native integrity was drawn aside by some inscrutable attraction; an infatuation which hurried me on to the ruin I was so struggling to avert, and which day after day I represented to myself as but a passing cloud.

Having thus described the causes which were undermining my prosperity, I may be pardoned for seeking to fly from the recollection of many an anxious incident, but it was not among the speculations to which the imprudent bills of Mr. Possy so often obliged me to have recourse, that I married.

CHAPTER XIX.

LOVE.

SOME ten or twelve days after I had partaken with Sir Neil Eccles of one of his familiar Sunday dinners, at which Dr. Lembeck and Mr. Woodrife were commonly present, he came to my counting-house, and inquired if I happened to be engaged for that afternoon, for if not, as he would be detained late in the India-house, he would dine with me.

The frank style of this self-invitation was flattering, and I gladly acceded to the proposal; but although by that time I was familiar with him, there was ever something about his manner, as often as I chanced to see him in any new circumstance, that more or less

mysteriously interested my curiosity. On this occasion I felt it particularly.

During the few minutes he remained with me, nothing in any degree could justly be said to have attracted my attention, saving only that unaccountable sidelong-look which I had so often before noticed; but when he went away, one of my fits of reverie came on, in which I began to think on that look and his remarkable visit.

“It is evident,” said I, in soliloquy, “that there is some strange method in the civilities of Sir Neil. He has some purpose to promote by the manner in which he uniformly treats me. What can it be? And how has it arisen? All he knows of me is by the introduction of Miss Leezy, and yet he regards me with more than common distinction:—It must have some personal motive, for he never speaks of my business—he may not even know its nature—his attention is to myself alone!”

The afternoon became damp and humid, the streets were, what the Cockneys call, greasy, and a lowering of the atmosphere, a dullness, between a fog and clouds, a muddiness of the

air, rendered the evening uncomfortable. As Sir Neil expected to be late, I ordered my bachelor's dinner half an hour after the usual time, and a fire to be lighted that would be social when it broke out; but to my own surprise and the cook's displeasure, he made his appearance considerably before the anticipated hour, while the parlour was chilly, and the fire still ineffectually kindled. This incident sharpened my curiosity.

We talked lightly of the topics of the day; nevertheless the preceding frame of my thoughts led me, from the pauses into which his discourse often suddenly fell, to conjecture that he had some communication to make. Nothing, however, of the kind took place; but in the course of conversation he said, in an apparently negligent manner, that he had never been at Canterbury, where some business obliged him to go in the course of a few days, and asked me, as if he did not care much whether I consented or not, to take a corner of his carriage on the following Sunday to Rochester, where he would dine and stop for the night.

I have always been fond of marking my reverence for the institution of the Sabbath, by spending the day in some short excursion. His proposal was in unison with this habit, and, accordingly, soon after breakfast I was seated by his side, and on the Kent-road: nothing out of very commonplace observation took place between us till the carriage arrived at Rochester, where, having ordered dinner at the Crown, we walked out together.

Going in the direction of the Cathedral, as he passed along he recollected, as it were accidentally, that the daughter of an old Calcutta acquaintance was then staying with a widow lady in that neighbourhood, and, by way of consuming the time, he proposed that we should visit her.

On entering the room where Anella was sitting alone, I was struck with the cordiality of their meeting, but chiefly with the affectionate earnestness with which he embraced her. Their conversation then principally turned on the manner in which she passed her time; and his inquiries had a parental gentleness which evinced more softness of heart than any thing

I, had ever seen about him. Anella herself was, indeed, worthy of that care; with eminent mildness, the aspect of her character, she was calmly beautiful. There was, if I may use the expression, a benignity in her manner that in itself was an indescribable charm, in addition to the exquisite sweetness of her nature, which was as the hue on the plumb, or the down on the peach.

I felt myself smitten with this delightful vision. The rich full tones of her musical voice thrilled through me, and her unequalled taste in the choice of her words, and the intelligence which glowed in all she uttered, awoke in me feelings of homage and admiration before unknown; and yet, saving in the extraordinary influence of the spell in her conversation, when examined fastidiously, she could only be described as invested with elegance, but it was of that fascinating kind which is more enchanting than beauty.

Sir Neil saw that I was deeply interested by the appearance of his ward,—for so he spoke of her in adverting to some bills of expense which he authorized Mrs. Evelyn, the lady

with whom she lived, to discharge ; but I was at the time so much engaged that I paid no attention to what they were saying. In returning to the inn, he, however, jocularly insinuated that I seemed to be caught.

“ Who is she ? ” I exclaimed : “ rarely have I seen so much of that inexpressible charm about any other which is her peculiar beauty.”

He did not immediately reply, but looked for a moment suspiciously, as I thought, and then said, while a faint and momentary blush gleamed over his features,

“ She is the daughter of Major Tuffins’ widow, an old Indian friend of mine.”

“ Her mother, is she—”

He hastily interrupted me, saying with precipitancy, “ She is no more.”

“ I thought that her mother was still alive, by what you said.”

He made no reply in words, but again threw at me one of those sudden javelin glances, which never failed to rouse my most vivid wonder. He then, as if unexpectedly struck with some beauty in the landscape of the Medway, which he had not previously observed, abruptly

changed the discourse, and, with visible carefulness, during the remainder of the day, never once alluded to Anella.

Perhaps I had before noticed the extreme anxiety, if it may be so called, with which he regulated himself in every thing. His most simple and seemingly accidental actions, yea, the very inadvertencies of his conversations, were all the progeny of method. I do not now, however, remember that I had previously even desired to search, but only to wonder at the cause by which he was actuated; but the change that came upon him in the way described, flashed upon me a wish to discover whence it proceeded. Our reciprocal behaviour at dinner would in consequence have probably amused a stranger. I was all eye and ear, and he, perhaps observing my solicitude, was as carefully on his guard. In the midst of this embarrassment, for it deserves no lighter name, we each forgot the object which had brought us to Rochester: he, that he had business at Canterbury, or the pretence that was couched in it, and I, that I had accompanied him only so far for a Sunday excursion, intending to return by one

of the coaches in the course of the night ; but still, although there was undoubtedly too much ingenious thinking between us, at least on my part, the recollection of the evening will always be bright and pleasant.

As we sat over our wine, he explained some details of his early life, and although they were perhaps not uncommon, they were to me greatly romantic. His father had been a country schoolmaster, and had bestowed his best care on his education. A youthful attachment had, prior to his departure for India, been fostered between him and Leezy Eglesham, and, with the young simplicity of fond and early passion, they betrothed themselves to each other. The tale, however, should be told as he related it, and I cannot do more for the reader's amusement than to give it as nearly as possible in his own words. It is one of worldliness and love, in which the word of promise was truly kept to the ear, but sadly broken to the hope.

CHAPTER XX.

AFFECTION WITHOUT INTEREST.

“THE story,” said he, “is in its incidents not remarkable. My father was the parish schoolmaster of Kilravoch, of which Mr. Eglesham was the minister. We were the only two children in the village nearly on a footing with each other, for, although the difference in degree between the domine and the clergyman was, if I may say so, naturally wide, yet a legacy which my mother had received made the income of their respective families almost equal; for Kilravoch, as you probably know, was then one of the poorest stipends in the west of Scotland; indeed, perhaps, of the two, my father’s means were the freest.

“Between Leezy and myself an early affec-

tion grew into passion, and when I received my Indian appointment, we agreed that as soon as I found myself justified by my circumstances to return, I should come back and marry her. In the sincerity of inexperienced youth, we pledged ourselves to each other, and we have faithfully kept our vow. But you will be surprised that it should never have been consummated, and that poor Leezy should be living in so humble a manner in obscurity at Glasgow, while I am in the enjoyment of so many more comforts; but you shall hear, for in that lies the romance of our lives.

“Soon after my arrival in India, a gradual prospect of wealth was suddenly opened to me, and, with sanguine hopes and unabated love, I wrote with delight of my situation to Leezy; but in that chance of fortune there was an insensible bane to the happiness of both. It was part of the duty of my new situation to be often in attendance on the Governor-General, and frequent invitations to his table were the consequence, by which higher tastes and different habits and manners were induced; but still I thought my heart remained unharmed

by the change, and my correspondence with Leezy was continued with undiminished warmth, and the cement of our attachment on her seemed to be equally unalterable.

“ In the course of a very few years I had realized fully the amount prescribed as the sum with which I should return to redeem my pledge, and actually was about to carry my intention into effect ; but when I spoke of it to a friend, he remonstrated against my imprudence in so soon thinking, with untainted health, to quit an appointment, in which I had the happiest assurances of opulence and reputation. It happened at the same time, the self same day, that I received letters from Europe, and among them one from Leezy, in reply to an account I had given her of my hopes and condition, in which she advised me, not for her sake to mar the prospects too rashly which Providence had prepared for us both. In this advice I discovered for the first time a modest peering of latent ambition, and my own inclinations seconded her suggestions. To this cause I ascribe my long residence in Bengal : had I come away when I first intended, how

different, perhaps, had been our lots—perhaps, however, not much happier.

“ Year after year served to foster our early hopes, and the promise of returning ; but in the same time, unconscious to myself, I was becoming another man ; increase of fortune, and the society into which I was thrown, led to the acquisition of ideas beyond the frugal fancies of my youth, and an accident completed the moral metamorphosis.

● “ My friend Captain Tuffins had married a lady from England ; she had been sent to a relation, as one of those common consignments which supply the matrimonial markets of India, as that of Constantinople is supplied with Circassian slaves. The connexion was not very fortunate ; he was naturally a grave, and, perhaps, except in his marriage, the most prudent of men. His lady was the reverse : possessed of singular beauty, animated with the liveliest gaiety, and devoted to company, she was in every point a contrast to his sober character. The accident to which I alluded was his death : we were then at war with Hyder Ali, and he died of a wound received in a skirmish with a detachment of

that intrepid tyrant's army. Mrs. Tuffins, still in the bloom and grace of youth, was committed to my care, with many requests to afford her my friendship and protection."

Sir Neil reddened a little at this part of his story, but after a momentary pause he resumed.

"Notwithstanding that her beauty and gaiety interested my admiration, I remained still faithful to the promise I had contracted with the confiding, patient, and gentle Leezy Eglesham.

"But I need not enter into the particulars of what followed: you behold me still a bachelor, and in all things truly attached to my first love; our mutual passion was never impetuous; it was an even quiet flow, and she knows that she may command my fortune as freely as if she were my wedded wife.

"About twelve months after the death of her husband, Mrs. Tuffins found it convenient to return to England, when, in little more than a month after her arrival, she died."

It seemed to me, as he thus spoke of her, that a visible embarrassment clouded his countenance, but he speedily passed on to his own story.

“ In the mean time,” said he, “ I continued in India, until I had accumulated a fortune equal even to my enlarged wishes. But when I came back to England, and hastened to Kilravoch with ardour to fulfil my youthful engagement, I soon found that, although only a slight tinge of years had mingled with the complexion of Leezy, I was no longer the same youth to whom her affections had been pledged: well do I remember our meeting, and the pang of disappointment which both suffered.

“ It was early in the forenoon that I drove in a post-chaise to the manse-door. The adjacent hedges were covered with newly-washed linen, and cords drawn across the little path, which led from the highway to the house, were so hung with other articles of household thrift, that I was obliged to stoop as I approached the door. This scene of domestic housewifery was not at variance with my reminiscences; but there was a meanness, I thought, in it, not agreeable to my feelings; and all about the Minister’s residence seemed much deteriorated in neatness and propriety from what I thought it had once been.

“ I was readily admitted by the old gentleman himself, and kindly received. Leezy was up-stairs, but the moment she was informed who had come, she came rushing down, all heart and gladness, and in no disturbing degree changed. But as I eagerly approached her, some strange impulse obliged me to retire backwards; she paused abruptly, looked at me—and suddenly bursting into tears, without the expression of any welcome, quitted the room followed by her father.

“ In vain did I attempt, in the painful interval which ensued before we again met, to soothe my own feelings, and to palliate the inadvertency of my action; but the die was cast; and yet I was not greatly to blame; for, instead of being dressed with her former neatness, the drudgery of the washing-day had dishevelled her appearance, and in the hurry of her joy she had flown towards me in the ungarnished garments of the bed-chamber. Her hair, which I remembered so affluent and so neatly braided, was covered with a coarse and common bed-cap. She wore a calico short gown, and her petticoat, of scanty longitude, showed her limbs with

stockings, it is true, but her slippers, according to the economy of her father's narrow income, were made of cast-off shoes. She was in all things scarcely one degree more respectable in her appearance than a common maid-of-all-work. It was this sight that occasioned my involuntary revolt as she entered.

“ I was myself very different ; throughout life I have been always particular in my dress : I had, on my arrival in London, equipped myself in the best style, and I had that morning, before leaving Glasgow, apprehensive that the Indian climate had made some unfavourable impression on me, taken more than my usual care in dressing myself. I stood before her a gayer man than her fancy had formed, and with a worldly air, as she afterwards told me, which, as a stroke of lightning, smote her heart, that I could not be the one for whom she had so long nourished her faithful patience.

“ A considerable time elapsed before her father returned, and when he did his face was saddened, I may almost say darkened. But he came kindly to me, and said :—

“ ‘ Mr. Eccles, I am sorry for what has hap-

pened. Your meeting with Leezy has not been such as I believe both anticipated, and she is a good deal afflicted by the disappointment ; but perfect bliss in nothing of this world should be looked for. By and by, however, she will be calmer, and she bids me say, although she has fled from you, that I must detain you until she is able to come again.'

“ I made the best answer I could to this speech, which, though expressed with tones of kindness, was accompanied with looks of sorrow : but how wayward is the heart of man ! It gave me, yes—I must say all—pleasure ; I felt as if a burden had fallen from my shoulders, and chains of bondage from my hands.—What was there in the scene to give me such relief ?”

CHAPTER XXI.

A TURN IN LIFE.

I REMEMBER that at the time when Sir Neil Eccles expressed how much he was liberated by the intelligence of the grieved father, I was struck with a pang as if a sudden infection of some unpleasant fear had tainted my mind, and I observed by the look he cast at me, that he had noticed its effect on my countenance. He was faithful, but his love was gone: I must, however, continue the story.

“The old man, when Miss Eglesham returned, immediately retired. In the interval, she had dressed herself with her wonted neatness, but there was a calm solemnity in her eyes that silently told of heartfelt resolution. She spoke first. ‘Let us not,’ she said, ‘waste words:

this is the most important hour in the lives of both, and perhaps calls for our utmost fortitude. You, Neil, were surprised at something different about me from what you had expected. Alas ! Neil, I was no less at the change which has taken place in you. We have long looked forward with anxiety for this meeting—at least I have—and your faithfulness to your promise with this early visit, is an assurance that you have done so too. But—’ and her lips quivered, and her eyes glistened with tears as she added, ‘it is a meeting to part—Yes, to part ! My retired way of life, a village recluse, I have undergone no variation, save that of time. But your active and grand pursuits have made you a different man : I can no longer be fit, under so great a change, to be what I once thought.’

“She wept as she said this, but I seized her hand, and, though I felt less then than I did afterwards and now, I assured her that my heart and affections were still faithful.

“‘True,’ she sadly exclaimed, ‘you may yourself think so, but your fortune and appearance witness how much you deceive yourself. No, Neil ; I am not insensible to the cause

which made you start at my homely garb and household drudgery. These hands, roughened as they are with our necessary thrift, are not such as you would like to see paddling on a spinnet.'

"I assured her that it was not for such trifling that I had so long cherished my constant affection.

"'Oh, Neil!' she replied, and I felt myself melted, as it were, with sorrow; 'Neil, you do not understand me. I complain not of you; the change has been worked upon you by far scenes and strange faces; but, as I cannot be your wife, I wished to prove to you the sincerity of my undecaying regard. I am no longer the woman that can add to your comforts: my lowly lot and inexperience have prevented me from acquiring those fashions and accomplishments which your wife ought to possess.'

"'Good Heavens!' I exclaimed, 'what do you mean?'

"'I am not one of those blind women who cannot discern how much of mutual feeling enters into the happiness of married life. Alas! I cannot bring a fit companion to your success.

Often and often, when in imagination looking forward to this day, have I said to myself, 'There is a guilty selfishness in the love of her that sees not the hazard she runs when she ventures to contend with habits and feelings not congenial to her own.' I love you still, and these many years of patient and humble endurance show how dearly ; but from this hour I am a widow.'

"There was a greatness of mind, and a sadness in the way she uttered this, that smote my very heart with a strange coldness, and rendered me unable to speak. She smiled, and, withdrawing her hand, added, 'I see you are affected ; but let us not play the hypocrite to each other. You make no remonstrance against my determination,—a proof that in the secret places of your bosom, unknown it may be even to yourself, it gratifies some lurking wish. Now, Mr. Eccles, I have told you my decision ; from this time we shall be only as ordinary friends—more we can never be ; but I will yet do justice to your generosity. My father's narrow stipend ends with himself ; the death of my mother cuts me off from any share of

that pension she might have enjoyed from the Widows' fund. If I survive my father, I shall be very poor; I therefore ask, as a token of what we once hoped to be together, that you will settle on me an income equal to what my mother would have received from the Fund.'

“ ‘ You shall have half my fortune; you deserve it all;’ and I again would have seized her hand, but she moved gently away.

“ ‘ No, Mr. Eccles,’ was her firm answer; ‘ give no more than what I ask; I am now a widow; and what would have been deemed sufficient for my father’s wife should satisfy his daughter. I will accept as my own what I have requested, but not one farthing more: no present, no gift more, must you ever offer—thirty pounds a year is enough, and you, from the day you fix it, must seek to know me no more.’

“ I sometimes,” added the old gentleman, much affected, “ think I hear her yet—but I hasten to conclude. The settlement was made, and, saving her bills, and the letter she wrote by you, soliciting me to pay you some attention for the civility you had shown to her, is all that I have since ever known of her

existence: but her example has not been barren—I am a solitary bachelor, and it somehow seems to me that I should be, on her account, more than a common friend to you.”

This disclosure of the early events of his life, partly explained the mystery I had observed about him, and at the same time the seeming art and wariness with which he had cultivated an intimacy with me, insomuch that from that time he treated me more as a son than a friend. I never, however, entirely possessed his confidence, as the sequel will serve to show; and perhaps owing to that circumstance, the current of my subsequent life became so often troubled.

This conversation, of which I have only been able to give an imperfect outline, became so interesting, that before it was finished, the coach for London was allowed to proceed without me, and in consequence, I was obliged to remain all night at Rochester, expecting that in the morning he would resume his journey to Canterbury. But I was agreeably disappointed; whether his business admitted of delay, or his disclosure had made him, as he said, unfit for it, will be seen hereafter; we,

however, came back to town in his carriage, and, to use the phrase befitting my condition, my heart was undoubtedly left behind with Anella. I was not, however, so much at that time sensible of the impression she had left on me, as I soon after experienced. I am not, indeed, sure, if in the course of the journey I thought much of her, and I perfectly recollect that her name was never once mentioned. But in the course of the week her image too often molested my thoughts, and I was endowed with a strange faculty of perceiving some surprising resemblance to her most remarkable features in the particular beauties of other females: sometimes I saw the soft blue of her eyes where the rest of the countenance was dissimilar—now and then, the fairness of her gentle complexion—and, curiously enough, I have thought that there was often more than one sound of her voice in the notes of a street-organ,—for lovers are as fanciful as poets;—before Sunday came, I had all the symptoms of an ardent passion.

Sir Neil invited me on the Sunday to dine with him, and indeed requested me to come every Sunday; but I rarely went, for it

so happened that the weather was each succeeding day seducingly beautiful, and my confinement all the week amidst the smoke of the city, made it highly proper, at least I thought so, that I should avail myself of such weather to inhale a little country air. The only thing I did not observe myself, was the direction my excursions took; for it happened that either the tide or the coaches were regularly convenient for going to Gravesend; and that I was always of opinion it was more suitable to my health to go down the river, than to Richmond or Hampton Court. This might be the case; and it was also the most natural thing in the world, that as often as I went to Rochester, I should always accidentally call to inquire if Anella had any commands for Sir Neil. But the most surprising thing in all those unaccountable journeys, was my never once mentioning to him where I had been, nor whom I had seen, even though once or twice he somewhat particularly threw out the question, and certainly I had no reason for evading it in the manner I did.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN EVENT.

WHEN those judicious anticipations of ill health had been several times repeated, and my excursions to Rochester had become as regular as the Sunday, I was surprised one day, the first in which Anella had accompanied me in a walk to the castle, by the apparition of Sir Neil Eccles' carriage coming over the bridge. I say apparition, for had it been the Flying Dutchman in full sail, it could not have disconcerted me more: to escape discovery was impossible, and my thoughts fell into utter confusion; while my fair companion was scarcely less moved. Before either had time to prepare an excuse for the accident which brought us so strangely together, the carriage drew near,

but to our immediate relief, although it passed within a yard of us, Sir Neil happened at the time to have his eyes directed towards some object in the view up the river, and he did not, in consequence, as we feared, observe us.

In the belief that we had been unnoticed, we hastened back to the house, and having taken a by-path, reached it before Sir Neil arrived. I would have gone in with Anella, but some unaccountable indecision induced me to hesitate, and I left her; but just as I chanced to turn round, there, awful before me, was Sir Neil; his smile was terrific. However, not to make more ado of the matter, I may sum up the whole in a few words,—I returned with him into the house, and from the date of that adventure, I was admitted as a thriving wooer to his ward, and learned, to my inexpressible astonishment, that he had been apprised of all my visits after the second, and exulted in the feigned indifference which he had maintained towards me concerning them. •

Anella having no relations nor friends, but only Sir Neil to consult, a day was in due time fixed for our marriage. Farther than her sur-

name I never inquired, it was the common one of Smith, and it was only by hearing her always spoken of by her baptismal, that I was under the necessity of asking even that. Sir Neil, indeed, superseded all inquiry respecting her family and connexions, by early informing me, that her relations were very remote, and that she was entirely dependant on him, as her father's friend.

“The regard,” said he, “that I must ever cherish for the memory of her beautiful mother, gives her, besides the rights founded on her own merit, a strong claim upon me; I intend that her children shall inherit the best half of my fortune.”

“I thought her father had also been your particular friend: was it not he that persuaded you to remain in India?”

This interrogation was said in the innocence of a lover's simplicity; but I observed that a momentary shadow passed over his face, like the overcoming of a summer cloud on the sunny fields, and he immediately smiled, adding, “Her father has, I believe, been, if not my best, undoubtedly my best beloved associate.”

“ I thought,” was my eager reply, “ that he had been long dead of his wounds.”

“ But,” said he,—“ but let us not now talk of him. Anella’s children shall come to a good fortune, nor shall you and she be forgotten.”

I believe this is all that ever passed between us concerning my bride. I was too happy on any terms to receive the hand of Anella, and although the extent of my commercial transactions were, as I have already described, often the cause of much annoyance, still my income was liberal, and not a shade of blemish or imprudence could be imputed to the marriage. Sir Neil gave her away at the ceremony, with the interest of an affectionate father, and immediately after presented her with a casket of jewels that would have gratified a duchess. They were indeed too splendid for a merchant’s wife of my station, and I said so to himself; but he repressed my remarks, by saying it was the only occasion on which he had ever indulged his fancy in things of that kind. “ I bought them,” he added, “ in India, and they were intended for her mother. Let her

wear them as an earnest of what shall be done hereafter."

The liberality, or, more properly speaking, the magnificent generosity of Sir Neil to my wife on her wedding-day, astonished us both, and he continued ever after to treat us as his children. In his own establishment he made no change, but his home was with us, and his attention devoted to promote the felicity which we enjoyed in no unenviable degree.

The first five or six months subsequent to the marriage were indescribably blessed; doubtless, during the time, I had, like other merchants, my anxieties, but there was more of pure and unmingled pleasure in my cup, than is often enjoyed in the uncertain fortunes of men.

Somewhere about the seventh month, several severe disasters happened among our correspondents, and my partner, sanguine that although they molested our arrangements, the effect would soon pass off, suggested that I should raise a permanent loan, to render, as he said, our hands easy. He spoke of the proposal as of easy accomplishment, and dwelt

much more on the prospects of our business increasing, than on this fatal suggestion, for fatal it proved. It was like a shot in my heart. I know not why it so overwhelmed me; why the sober image of Eric Pullicate flashed upon my recollection; why I suffered, as it were, an inward sense of ruin; but the proposal touched my spirit with suspicion and dread. An awful vision of Anella in penury rose before me, and I actually was so far shaken from my habitual equanimity, that I read the letter again, and, being alone, gave way to tears of apprehension.

I was alone, and still deeply distressed by the prophetic effect of the letter, when Sir Neil Eccles came in. He saw that some misfortune had befallen me, and, with the wonted art and delicacy so finely blended in his character, inquired what had happened. I could make him no answer, but, lifting the letter, which lay on the table, presented it open, and requested him to give me his advice.

He received it with agitation; I saw his hand tremble as he took his spectacles from his pocket, but he said nothing. Having finished

the perusal, he replaced it on the table, removed his glasses, and restored them to his waistcoat-pocket without uttering a word.

After a pause of several minutes he said calmly, "This certainly does not look like sound prosperity, but your credit is still in a healthy state. I am amazed, however, to see how, in the same breath, Mr. Possy talks of increasing advantages, and yet suggests the expediency of raising a loan—a loan for some time. I will readily assist yourself with a few thousands, if that will be enough, but you must previously go to Scotland and ascertain the real state of your affairs there, and if you find them in the condition you fear they are, separate at once from Mr. Possy, and form another connexion with some more judicious man."

As he uttered these words, which have ever remained engraven on my memory, the image of Eric Pullicate, his sedate aspect and bright shrewd eye, peering sidelong, again came across my mind, and in the same instant I resolved to set off by that evening's mail to investigate the circumstances of our transactions in Glasgow. Sir Neil, who was himself an alert and decisive

character, applauded the promptness of my determination, which, however, was not formed without a pang; for Anella was several months advanced in that interesting state in which all good ladies wish to be who love their Lords, and it was with an exquisitely painful reluctance that I left her. I wish not, however, to indulge my feelings here. The consequences that ensued supply materials for a sad tale, but I shall try to speak with cheerfulness, and to tell my story as the events came to pass.—Vain attempt! it is not in my power; my paper is blistered with the tears of remembrance, and I must pause.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GLASGOW.

MY journey to Glasgow was probably not much different in its incidents from that to London, but my mind was so engrossed with cares, that I retain no recollection of them. An oblivion like this, is the surest proof that a man in subsequent life can possess of the anxiety he has suffered at a former time. I have remarked the same thing on other occasions, and as often as memory is at fault, when it seeks to recover a remembrance, I am persuaded that the circumstance had occurred in some crisis of intense solicitude or passion.

My partner, Mr. Possy, was greatly surprised when I came suddenly upon him, and still more

when I described how much his letter had alarmed me. He assured me that I had conceived a false notion of the condition of our affairs, for that every thing was flourishing to which he had put his hand, and that in advising the loan, he was only actuated by a wish to keep me easy in our pecuniary transactions, and that we might be the better able to meet our increasing business. Still this assurance did not satisfy me; my fears were awakened, and I could not reason myself out of an apprehension that the business which obliged me to have recourse to such expedients to raise money as I had been subjected to, could not be in a sound state. It even struck me, as we were in conversation, that he seemed to be under a spell of infatuation in what he said, for during my residence in the metropolis, the impression which I had originally received of the natural defects of his understanding, had in a considerable degree been worn away, and his letters, filled with plausibilities, absorbed from others, apparently indicated both thought and observation. However, as the purpose of my journey was

to investigate, I did not rest satisfied with his hopes and convictions, but immediately applied myself to ascertain the facts of the case.

Nothing could be more flattering than the first results. We had received vast consignments, and sold prodigious quantities to merchants trading to different parts of the globe, especially to North and South America, and the West India Islands, neutral as well as British; and although our advances were heavy, yet, when the returns would come in, our profits would indemnify us richly. I had every reason therefore to be pleased, and became vexed at my own want of confidence. I wrote in this spirit to Sir Neil Eccles, and alluded to the assistance which he had given me cause to expect; but I was astonished at his reply, and felt inexpressibly chagrined at the haste I had been in to give a premature opinion.

He expressed the warmest satisfaction at the statement I had made, but he reminded me how much our prosperity was dependant on that of others, and that the universal opinion of his most sagacious friends was, that the trade in which I was deepest interested was overdone;

urging me rather to contract than to think of extending our dealings. I could not resist the force of his counsel, seconded as it was by my own latent fears; I saw at once, that instead of consulting the arithmetical figures in our books, I should turn my attention principally to ascertain the true state of our correspondents; and this secret inquiry, known only to myself, the more it was prosecuted proved the less encouraging.

It is necessary to explain so much, to account for my stay in Glasgow having been prolonged far beyond what was required by the examination of our own books, and at a time too, when my wife was in the most interesting situation. I heard that something like wonder was now and then expressed at my apparent apathy, and I was also two or three times troubled with questions by old gentlemen whom I respected, uttered in a kind of condoling tone, expressive of their hope, that I found all things in the best state with Mr. Possy. These friendly interrogatories had something oracular in them; and I use not language too strong, when I say they exasperated my hidden anxieties.

I speak of my commercial concerns thus seriously, both because at the time they greatly affected me, and led to the vicissitudes which have since overcast my prospects ; for in other respects my visit to Glasgow was one of much enjoyment. All my early friendships were renewed : Dr. Leach still continued as commonplace and erudite as ever ; Mr. Macindoe, according to his own intimations, had more affairs on hand than a first minister of state. But little change had indeed taken place in the village, and the only person in Glasgow, of all those I formerly numbered as my intimates, to whom any very eminent change could be imputed, was Eric Pullicate ; and upon him a metamorphosis both moral and commercial had taken place to an extraordinary degree.

From the period when he quitted the employment of our house, the world had gone well with him. He was become distinguished, had made a great deal of money, and was cautiously and constantly thriving. He still, however, wore the same plain shrewd appearance as formerly ; but from a democrat of the very jacobine order he had evolved into a temperate

Whig. Had he acquired an estate, he would undoubtedly have been a Tory. Just before my arrival he had purchased an elegant house, and aspired, much in the usual way of the topping citizens, to give costly dinners; but his wife, with a competent share of good sense, could never cast off her early habits; nor himself, with increasing fortune, acquire the demeanour of a gentleman—and yet it would be far from truth to insinuate that he was either a coarse or a vulgar man. The husband and wife, on the contrary, were judiciously paired, if the expression may be allowed, and it was only when they imagined that they should emulate the weak splendour of their neighbours, whom they conceived were not richer than themselves, that they did not both merit the praise of carrying their full cup with a steady hand. Nothing could be better suited to their circumstances than their domestic habitudes. Their attempts at style and fashion were, however, extremely absurd and ridiculous. Of course there were a few whom the rank prosperity of the early cotton trade occasionally so inflated—but it serves to alleviate the uniform

simplicity of my narrative, to introduce an exception now and then to the general burgess sobriety which has always been so sedulously cultivated by the Glasgow manufacturers!

During the period that I remained in the Royal city, listening with open ears to all the intelligence I could possibly have access to, concerning the circumstances, the character, and the prospects of those with whom our affairs were ravelled, I had many opportunities of seeing Eric Pullicate when he was seen best, in a quiet chat with himself by his own hearth. I also was regularly invited to his show-banquets, and though I never felt myself comfortable at them, they were still scenes from which a species of exquisite pleasure was derived—enjoyment, mingled with regret, at seeing a man in all respects so superior to the commonalty in discernment, prudence, and information, making an exhibition of himself, and to no advantage—merely because his purse enabled him, now and then, to set out a gorgeous table. One occasion of this sort ought really to be described; it was remarkable, not only as the greatest banquet he had ever

given, but was distinguished by an incident, of which no probable augury could have been discovered in his previous life. The democrat entertained a Lord! The details, however, furnish materials for another chapter, and I must beseech the indulgence of the reader while I try to recollect them, for it took place while I was suffering from anxiety, and I have already explained, that in such a time, passing events make but little impression upon me: indeed, I cannot account to myself how it has happened that I retain any remembrance of the affair at all; for, independently of the cares with which I was then environed, an event came to pass, that, in the energy of the anguish, which still bursts out afresh when it is recalled, I feel as if all lighter things should have been washed out with tears from the tablet of my brain.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A NEW MAN'S FEAST.

MY friend Cyril Thornton has lately, in his very admirable autobiography, told us of a dinner with which he was entertained by one of the Magistrates of Glasgow, but it seems to have been an ordinary genteel affair, what in common Trongate parlance is called a beeper, or pot-luck, compared with the high and solemn banquet to which I was invited with the Lord.

English peers, as it is well known, beyond the Tweed, are not at all so respectable as those of Scottish growth ; but the Earl of Moorheather was of the best blood in the Highlands, and, commanding the regiment then quartered in the city, was justly entitled to all manner of ceremony. Accordingly, Mr. Pullicate being re-

cently chosen into the town council, could do no less, as his lady told me, than be civil to him, like the rest of the magistrates.

“ ‘Deed,” said she, “ Mr. Bogle Corbet, it ’s far from our line o’ life to think of making any occasion of the sort ; the gude man, however, cannot weel be off testifying his respect for my Lord, but the thought o’ t takes away my night’s rest.”

I sympathized with her sincerely, and subjoined, “ That gentlemen in public trusts are obliged to do many things exceedingly disagreeable to themselves.”

“ That ’s very true,” was the reply, “ and so I said to Eric,—I have not got my tongue yet used to call him Mr. Pullicate,—when he was obligated, by course of dignity, to see the man hanged : but this is a real great han’ling. Howsomever, if I can get through ’t with credit to the gude man, pains shall not be wanting. I have ordered every thing o’ the best ; for on an occasion like this we must put our hand in our pouch.”

I cordially assented to the propriety of her opinion. This conversation took place during a

morning visit which I happened to make, much to her inconvenience. May I add the motive? —to see how her preparations were proceeding, for I, too, was interested in the event.

In the afternoon, when I went a little before the exact time, to be the first of the party, all had gone on prosperously. The drawing-room chimney, however, not being often in use, smoked a little, and the air of the apartment was still cold and raw, one of the windows being opened until the fire properly kindled.

“ I’m glad to see you,” said Mrs. Pullicate, dressed inordinately in her gayest. “ The gude man will be down-stairs presently ; ye’ll sit next to him at dinner, for he’ll need the help and council of a friend.”

At this juncture he came into the room, and almost immediately after the guests began to arrive, respectable elderly gentlemen with white waistcoats and big bellies. Then the parish minister, a venerable person, habitually more grave than naturally so. One of the other guests, at the moment, looking out at the window, said,

“ There’s the Principal, in his cocket hat, a

sign that he expects a long cork will be drawn the day."

To the Principal succeeded the Lord Provost, two of the Bailies, Mr. Aird, as an old friend, and anon came the Earl, a douce, bald-headed carl in regimentals, which, not having been put on till late in life, did not seem to sit easily upon him. He was received of course, with great elaboration of homages, and Mr. Aird, as well as our host, appeared to be much incommoded with their hands. Mrs. Pullicate, having bare arms, which were tinged into a deeper red by her household visits to the kitchen fire, placed them a-kimbo, and taking hold of each elbow made a lowly curtsy, like a miss of old at a minuet, as his Lordship approached towards her. Saving the profoundness of her sinking, nothing remarkable took place before dinner.

On the feast neither pains nor cost had been spared. Plate and china were gorgeously intermingled, and lamps to warm the dishes, lighted with oil of cinnamon, would have breathed all Arabia—but for the fragrance of the meat. I remarked, however, that the use of

the lamps had not been disclosed, no one, either from ignorance or bashfulness, ventured to touch them.

“ He ’s very plain,” whispered Mr. Pullicate to me ; “ he ’s only eating the salmon with common vinegar just like an ordinary man.”

I looked towards the Earl, and it was so.

“ Lord, will I help you ?” said Mrs. Pullicate to his Lordship, as if she had some difficulty in uttering the freedom of such an inquiry.—I must not, however, relate, if I could, all the particular details.

Just at this juncture a servant filled a goblet to one of the guests near me with champagne ; I saw him drink it, and wring his lips deliciously after, but he made no immediate remark ; he then drained the dregs, and turning to me, said, “ That ’s no an ill brewst ;” and extending his voice, he added, “ Mr. Pullicate, is Strothers or Carruthers your brewer ?”

This suggested me to challenge my old friend, our host, to champagne.

“ It ’s the first time,” said he, “ ever such costly drink has been in my house, and there-

fore I'll no' make an objection for a ploy to taste it."

Accordingly the wine was poured out, and he added,

"Well, let it bide a wee till the bizzing's o'er."

"Very proper.—Well, Eric, how do you like it?"

He held up his glass and looked through it, adding wisely,

"It's surely a fine wine for a flam; but, in my opinion, port's a better liquor—as a liquor."

"Lord, will ye be served," said Mrs. Pullicate, "with one of yon round bonny-things, forenent Mr. Bogle Corbet? They call them French patties: they're made o' oysters, and are real fine."

My attention was thus drawn to his Lordship, but he preferred the mutton, and every guest whispered to his neighbour, with a face of admiring piety, "It was indeed wonderful that a Lord should eat mutton!"

However, dinner was at last concluded; and

making due allowance for a few little inadvertences, it was a sumptuous feast, and did credit to the opulence and liberality of the entertainer and his indefatigable lady; but, just as the cloth was removed, I was summoned from the table. "Mr. Possy wished to see me particularly," said the messenger.

He was during the day at Paisley on some matter of business, and although I had opened the letters by the post in the morning, there had been one for him untouched when I left the counting-house. I doubted not, therefore, that although this letter was addressed to himself, it had some relation to our common affairs. The urgency with which he had sent for me I ascribed to his wonted folly, and on hearing the message, was on the point of returning back into the dining-room. But the person who had come for me, arrested eagerly my arm, saying—

"Sir, ye had better go home."

"I'll go to the warehouse," was my answer, observing something more serious than common in the looks of the messenger.

“ Mr. Possy is at your lodgings, waiting for you.”

“ In the name of Heaven ! what has happened ?”

“ Nothing very uncommon, but ye'll hear the worst of it from himself.”

“ The worst !—has there been any failure ?”

“ He's in sore affliction ; I could not have thought Mr. Possy would have felt so much, had it concerned himself.”

“ Does it not then concern him ?” and in the same moment I put on my hat to accompany the man.

“ Sir,” he added respectfully, “ would you not be the better of the assistance of Dr. Porteous, the minister ?”

“ Why ?” cried I, halting.

The man looked at me compassionately, and said, “ Mr. Possy has had a sad letter anent your leddy—It's all over.”

I heard no more ; for a moment the whole house appeared as if it had been crushed in around me, and I fainted.

CHAPTER XXV.

A RESOLUTION.

FEW men reach fifty without having experienced that there are accidents in life which, as it were, transmute the very nature of the mind. I have felt this change more than once, but never to so great a degree as when I was recovered to the full sense of my loss. Under any circumstances, the calamity would have been unspeakable; my first love was no more, and all the expectations I had cherished of becoming a father, utterly quenched. It seemed to me as if a mort-cloth had been thrown upon the future, and that I was doomed, for the remainder of my days, to mourn by the bier of departed happiness, forlorn beside the coffin of

my hopes. But the indulgent reader will spare me from describing the agony of grief with which I felt the blow; I only recollect the tidings, and that I awoke in my bed-chamber from a hideous dream, which left no image on the memory, but a dark and formless omen of woe, and the long black shadow of something that had passed never to come again.

Fortunately, in the dreadful interval, the troubles of our mercantile affairs began to show themselves;—yes, fortunately, for had it not so come to pass, such was the consternation which had fallen upon me, that the faculties of my mind must have withered. I could think only of the void made by Providence in my lot, and ponder why it had been so suddenly permitted. But after ten days of vacuity and sorrow, I was roused by an early visit from my partner, entreating me to think of our affairs, which were in great jeopardy, in consequence of the capture of a ship with a consignment of dollars uninsured, belonging to one of our correspondents; a disappointment which rendered it necessary

that the loan he had spoken of should be raised without delay.

During my abstraction, several letters had come to me from Sir Neil Eccles, condoling with the most touching kindness on the loss I had suffered, and filled with such grief for the virtue and beauty extinguished in Anella, that many of his pathetic expressions surprised me even then by their tenderness. In the alarm which the news of the capture inspired, it naturally occurred to me, to represent what had taken place, and to entreat his temporary aid until I should feel myself in a better condition to attend to business. His answer was characteristic; he lamented that such an untoward event, at such a time, should have come to me; reminded me that he had advised me to abridge our transactions, and in a remote manner, but in language which could not be misunderstood, compassionately apprised me that Heaven had been pleased to sever the tie which united our mutual interests.

The letter from Sir Neil left me no hope of obtaining the aid which our concern so suddenly

required; and the thickening disasters of the time clearly pointed out, that in order to do justice to our creditors and to ourselves, we ought to suspend payments, and seek permission to wind up our affairs. Never shall I forget the weak amazement with which Mr. Possy heard me when I proposed that measure. He had never looked beyond the arithmetical signs in our books for any other proof of our prosperity. These certainly showed that great profits were due to us, and that in our ruin were still riches, but they lay afar off. His lady, at the mere idea of the suspension, became wild; she upbraided me for having led him to destruction, and gave vent to every expression of accusation and distraction, for the poverty I had brought upon them. But neither his infatuated astonishment, nor her frenzy, could supply a remedy. We had no alternative; I resolved to make my unavoidable determination public; but, before doing so, I consulted several gentlemen in whose judgment I had great confidence, and among others, Mr. Pullicate, whom I was desirous to engage in superintend-

ing the settlement of our business. It was due also to the sincerity with which Mr. Macindoe had ever interested himself in my affairs, that I should early disclose my situation to him; accordingly, when I had spoken with my other friends, I rode out to Weebeild for that purpose.

For some weeks previously he had been slightly unwell; his wonted active exercise was too much for his strength, and he had in consequence been obliged to confine his rambles to the garden. As I approached the house he was sitting on the lawn in front, in an arm-chair brought from the parlour; beside his right shoulder stood a claw-footed table; a daily paper, which had long supplanted the weekly journal, lay on it, carelessly thrown from him, and over the paper lay several letters, and a number of the Edinburgh Review, then in all the plenitude of its original acumen and acrimony, with his spectacles in it, marking the page where he had been reading.

At the time he was engaged in discussing some horticultural topic with his gardener, an

old man with a fustian coat and a blue shalloon apron, who, as he listened to what his master said, leaned with his elbow on the top of his spade-handle, while his right foot was placed on the blade, as if in the act of shoving it into the ground.

Whether it was an effect of what had befallen myself, or that there really was something in the appearance of the group which set the current of my fancies in a gloomy direction, is of no consequence to ascertain; but when I opened the gate I felt myself sensibly touched with dejection at the sight.

Mr. Macindoe, without being very seriously indisposed, had about him many ensigns of ill health; among others, he wore a white cotton night-cap, and a staff stood between his legs: his complexion was also pale, and at the moment he seemed as if old age had made greater inroads upon him than I had anticipated; while the rustic simplicity of the ancient gardener with his spade, reminded me of the attitude and action of a village sexton opening a grave.

Mr. Macindoe himself was not, however,

aware of the associations which his appearance had awakened. On seeing me at the gate, he called in a languid, an affected hollow voice, and, without rising from his seat, desired the gardener to fetch another chair from the house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A CONSULTATION.

WHEN James Sybo, the gardener, had brought out the chair and placed it on the opposite side of the table, I sat down to recount the particulars of my case. In the mean time, while the old servant was fetching it, I had inquired into the indisposition of his master, whom I found depressed in spirit, and who, unable to give any other name to his disease, described it as a sort of "alloverishness."

As I related to him the crisis which had overcome the affairs of Corbet and Possy, he patiently listened. Contrary to his wonted impetuosity, he heard me to the conclusion, and when I had made an end, he was apparently seized with a violent fit of coughing, and not

ready with any reply. He was evidently perplexed, but in this taciturnity I could discern a gathering of thought, and I waited quietly till it grew to words.

From the time of my becoming a partner with Mr. Possy, he had uniformly styled me Mister, or Mister Bogle Corbet, but on this occasion, stretching his hand to me across the table, he said kindly,

“Bogle, my lad, this cannot be called glad tidings; it’s no’ the song of the shepherds of Bethlem watching by night. Man! I’m concerned for you. Well, I never thought that simple Possy was a golden guinea—I had ay a suspicion that he was worth no more than twenty shillings,—made of paper, to the bargain. However, what is ordained will be; and ye are neither to be a Provost nor a Lord Mayor, but only a broken merchant. Have ye seen Dr. Leach anent it? ponder well as ye take the loup—poor man, he will be a grieved commodity. To think after all his care and pains, how I plucked you by his counselling from the miry clay of Mr. Aird’s democratic shop, and how we placed you in poor Archibald Thrum’s warehouse, and finally set you up as a manu-

facturer, establishing your way. Really, Bogle Corbet, you have brought me bad news, and a gazette of your own for the same. What is to be done?—no advice can I give—demented I am—no, none, Bogle Corbet.”

He appeared so seriously affected, that, considering his indisposition, I was sorry to have grieved him so much, and in order to lighten his depression a little, I directed his attention to the large balance, the fortune that would remain to the partners when the business was finally closed.

“Heh, man Bogle! ye’re speaking of a shelled peas-cod,” was his doubtful reply; “I see nothing in what ye say, but a galravitching Christmas dinner to the Jamaica cockroaches. They’ll eat up a’ ye call your balance of assets; stoop and roop, will they eat it before Christmas comes—and it comes but once a year.”

I did not apprehend, certainly, the danger which he did from the cockroaches, and I could not refrain from smiling at the vivacity of his fear. Without, however, noticing that glimpse which brightened for a moment my features, he continued—

“And the fashions of your goods will soon

become auld, when they lie in a dark damp cellar at Kingston, in the way of Niggers rolling sugar hogsheads, and piling up fustic and log-wood. Many a ‘Dam e tings of Massa Bogle what-em-call,’ will be their baptism by the black fellows, and then the remainder to be sold at Vendee! My heart aches at the enormity of your balance; it will sink you to—I must not say where, being a sick man, and troubled with desperate cramps in my legs; but—but—you know if I had the heart what I could say.”

I endeavoured to persuade him that his ill health darkened his mind, and caused him to see our prospects too gloomily.

“Not a jot, not a jot,” as John Cummel the play-actor says, in the Blackamoor’s part. But it’s a feedum, an omen, that in such a jeopardy I can give no advice. It bodes ill for my recovery. Heh, heh! Bogle Corbet—I thought ye were a green bay-tree,

Near planted by a river,
Which in its season yields his fruit,
And his leaf fadeth never.

What a blessing it is to have the consolation

in the dark hour and season of despair; read, Bogle Corbet, and meditate upon the statutes in the watches of the night."

I expressed my extreme grief at being the cause to him of such affliction, and assured him, that although it was exceedingly humiliating to be obliged to stop payment, yet I considered it but temporary.

"My man, my man," he rejoined, "it's a period—it's a full stop—and what says that pawkie get of Belzeebub, Eric Pullicate, to all this? I have had my fears that he has long seen what was coming to pass. He is a supple serpent, and they tell me, as he waxes rich, he grows loyal. Shall I live to see him, your foreman! the Lord Provost after all? How little do we know what is ordained! Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly into their eyes—I mean upwards. This, Bogle Corbet, is a sore calamity—woe, woe, that I can give no advice!"

Surely there must be a great mass of ingratitude somewhere about my heart, for the more Mr. Macindoe continued to utter his jeremiad the less did I feel myself obliged by his com-

passion, and, strangely enough, the less too did my misfortune seem deserving of such excessive condolence.

“Then, Sir,” said I, after a brief pause, “you are of opinion that I do wisely in resolving to stop payment.” At these words he started from his chair, and flourishing his night-cap round his head, exclaimed—

“And have ye not yet done that?—thanks be and praise; now I can advise. Richard’s himself again! Keep your thumb on all you have been telling me, and never let wot to Robin Carrick, and the likes of him, of your straits as being more than a pinch by the lazy packets. Life in a muscle! carry on, carry on! you know not how the sails will fill, nor what nor how a day may bring forth; and if at last ye must fail, and I misdoubt ye must, what does it signify whether ye pay a crown or a pound,—is it not all in the way of trade?”

Teasing and even vexatious as his absurd lamentation had been, this suggestion was still more disagreeable. It had been part of my self-instruction to cherish high sentiments, and the advice troubled my very hearing. But

some restraint at the very moment checked my resentment, and I only remarked that once in difficulties, there was no knowing to what they might lead; adding, that I thought that such was the condition of Corbet and Possy's concern, that they could not go one step farther without——

“Snuffs of tobacco!” cried he; “faint heart never won fair leddy. Ye have only just to slip out from the corner of your mouth into Robin Carrick's long lug a wee bit innocent white lee anent the packets, and so forth, and he'll make your bills bank notes by the way of squint.”

“But where are the bills?” said I, dryly.

“Make them—just go among your friends, tell them that ye have been a thought disappointed, and I warrant they'll come to you like flakes in a snow-shower.”

This proposal absolutely passed like a barbed arrow through me, but I was enabled to say sarcastically,

“Will you assist me?”

“Me!” was his exclamation, “that has been out of trade these two-and-twenty years, and

never raised the wind in my life ! It would be going far afield to try that now. But ye're in good credit and rich in many friends."

I could suffer no more, but snatching up my hat, I wished him good morning, and leaving him in astonishment, hastened to the home of my childhood—the dwelling of Mrs. Busby.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN OLD FRIEND.

IT is not the circumstances in which the incidents of life take place, but the feeling they excite, that makes one occurrence more than another, important. The crisis of fortune at which I had now arrived was destined to influence all my subsequent days, but there appeared no augury in the time to make me sensible that it was fraught with such consequences.

The distance from Weebeeld to the house of Mrs. Busby in the village, was little more than a mile. It was a road I had often travelled—I will not say with a lighter heart, for the school-boy-cares of lessons to learn, and the anxieties attendant on fishing or nesting excursions, were

not less heavy than the burthen which then weighed upon my spirits.

During the major part of the walk I was irritated and resentful. I thought, however, less of the impending ruin than of the manner in which Mr. Macindoe had discussed it; and grieved an immeasurably deal more at the nature of the advice he gave me how to meet my difficulties, than with apprehension of the desolation I must soon encounter; saying, as I thoughtfully plodded along, "Can such be the way, indeed, of the world?"

When the flutter had subsided into a gentler vexation, and my thoughts grew calmer, perhaps from some unconscious sympathy with the peacefulness of the day and the repose of the landscape around, I began to reflect more in detail on my conversation with Mr. Macindoe. His composed attention to my recital was surely at variance with the habits of his character. From what cause could it proceed? The strange abruptness too, with which he leaped at once from inability to advise me, into an alacrity to recommend what I thought a dishonest course, was also perplexing. Agitated

with these unsettled and veering reflections, I reached the door; but so much had I been absorbed in meditation, that notwithstanding the distance, as I have said, was not above a mile, I had taken nearly an hour to walk it. It could not have been owing to any slowness in my steps, for, several times, so rapid were my paces, that I was obliged to halt with breathless haste; at others, however, I found myself standing on the road-side, as if suddenly transported thither in a dream.

On entering the parlour, I found Mrs. Busby dressed for the afternoon, with a black lace cap over her snow-white cambric hood, in which, after having finished her household cares for the day, she always appeared before dinner. With the delicacy of her economy, she then usually knitted the net of a purse, or occupied herself in some light labour of the needle or the wires, and laid aside the coarser thrift on which she had been engaged in the morning; but on that occasion she was differently employed, having on the floor at her feet a piece of muslin, which she was dividing into neckcloths.

She saw on my entrance that I was disturbed, but she made no remark on it until I had rested myself some time, when laying down the muslin, and taking off her spectacles, she inquired with more than her wonted kindness how I was, and encouraged me not to be dejected.

“ Misfortune and disappointment,” said she, “ are the followers of all the children of men. But this blight has suddenly overtaken you, and I ought not to be surprised that you feel it severely.”

“ What blight do you speak of?” cried I, astonished at her remark, yet sensible of its justness; for although I had disclosed only that morning in confidence the brink on which Corbet and Possy stood, I was conscious that their danger had some outward sign upon myself; but how she should so aptly conjecture from what particular cause it arose, seemed discernment beyond the reach of ordinary sagacity.

Instead, however, of immediately answering my question, she looked at me anxiously for a short time, and said,

“Is it possible, then, that things are not so bad with you? I was told that you and Mr. Possy had stopped payment, and that the creditors intended to send you to Jamaica, to look after the stock of goods on hand there.”

I was thunderstruck. It had never once occurred to me that our situation could be so publicly known. I ought, however, to have been aware how much the necessity of prying into the circumstances of their neighbours is a mercantile duty, and that to obtain information, as to the credit and character of their friends, is so often the true object of social feasts among merchants. However, I soon learned from her that our bankruptcy, in consequence of our disappointment in remittances, was so well known, that the stoppage was told to Mrs. Busby as an event which had already happened.

The news, when communicated, rather allayed than excited me, and saved me from the unhappy task of relating them to her: but my amazement may be imagined, when I heard that Mr. Macindoe had been her informant—

he whom I had conceived to be so utterly ignorant of my unavoidable fate.

The patience with which he had listened to me was explained, and also the secret motive of his inability to assist me with advice. Why the knowledge of this should have moved in me any feeling of resentment, the reader can best determine; but it came over me, as if unhappiness were wafted as an infected air, and I was seized with a momentary loathing of misanthropy.

Mrs. Busby perceiving how much I was disposed to resent the ludicrous cunning, as it seems now, of my quondam curator, but which at the time was felt to be insulting, insisted on my spending the afternoon with her, and partaking once more of her frugal dinner.

“From all that I can discern, Bogle Corbet,” said she, “an afternoon can now be neither here nor there to your affairs; nor in the condition in which ye stand, can the advice of a weak old widow-woman, that needs counsel so much herself, be of any effectual service. But ye have a public duty to perform on the

morrow, and a little quiet will not mar you in the difficulty; it's as useful as a sleep before a journey: and moreover, Bogle Corbet, my dear boy, if I may judge not uncharitably of Mr. Macindoe, maybe the principles I instilled when you were but a bairn, will not be the worse of being refreshed, after having been so many years sullied by the world. I cannot advise you as to your affairs more than he, but keep a fast hold of your integrity, and let no glimpse of hope lure you to forget, that, to attempt stepping a wide ditch, in a miry place, is seldom done with clean feet."

As she said this, I could perceive her suppress the sensibility which had brought tears into her eyes, for she suddenly smiled, adding,

"Guess what I am about with this muslin; you will see in the work a remnant of that old providence which you sometimes jeered me for, when there was then no cloud in the sky. I am making cravats for your Jamaica voyage; as you told me, when ye came to Glasgow, that you still observed my counsels concerning your clothes. It appears I have been a little too

ready in setting about the work, as Mr. Macindoe was not well-informed. But the event is to be, and readiness is not heinous."

After dinner, as I had resolved not to return to the city till the moon rose in the evening, I went into the garden alone. It would be wrong to say I was not sorrowful, but it was with a sorrow still and calm in its anguish. I wandered heedlessly, but now and then I noticed a shrub, which I had planted in my boyhood, carefully preserved by Mrs. Busby, and other silent green monuments of the affection she had so uniformly cherished for me. I have often since experienced, that in the æras of grief and care, the heart derives an unspeakable consolation from contemplating former scenes of ease and innocence. It is this which draws the unfortunate back to the haunts of their childhood, as the frightened and afflicted babe clings in fondness to its mother's bosom.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SCENE.

ON my return in the evening to Glasgow, I went straight to the house of Mr. Possy, to announce my final determination that we should stop payment. It might perhaps have been in some respects more prudent, had I postponed the execution of this resolution till the morning, but there was always so much of incalculable weakness disclosed by him when suddenly thrown into perplexity, that I considered it as well to have this trial over.

On reaching the door, I felt myself considerably disturbed; I was the bearer of evil tidings, and I had an unpleasant impression from the appearance of the house, that I was to be witness to some scene of extravagant distress. Un-

usual lights seemed to shine from the windows, and the curtains being down, they had each, as I thought at the moment, a cast of something that reminded me of a sick chamber. But I rallied my fortitude, and the door was immediately opened by one of the maids, a simple country girl, who, when she saw who was there, raised her hand in a tragedy attitude, and shaking, it said,

“ Wheest, wheest ! speak laigh.”

I stepped, in consequence of this mysterious admonition, softly forward, and paused as she gently closed the door : when she turned round she was in tears.

“ What has happened ?” said I ; “ who is ill ? Has Mr. Possy, or your mistress, or any of the children met with an accident ?”

“ Oh, oh, hoch hone !” was all the answer she could make, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron.

I was on the point of retiring, conceiving the family already afflicted by some severe disaster, and that my communication would only increase their distress, when the poor lass

turned round, and with an accent of great earnestness inquired,

“ Hae ye no heard the news ?”

“ News ! what news ? I have heard no news !”

“ Oh dear ! oh dear ! that it should be my lot to tell them !”

Seeing the vehemence of her grief, I began to imagine the most improbable horrors, and exclaimed,

“ Has Mr. Possy shot himself ?”

“ It ’s waur, it ’s far waur.”

“ In the name of all that is good, tell me !”

“ Well, if ye will ken, I may put you at once out of pain, Sir. Hoch hone, Sir, he ’s a broken merchant, and they say he ’s to be ’questered. My mistress is a woful woman.”

The news coming from such a quarter, surprised me almost as much as the information of Mrs. Busby. I said, however, nothing in reply, but walked into a dark parlour, the door of which was open, and desired her to tell her master that I was most anxious to see him.

Presently he came to me with a candle in

the one hand, and a pair of snuffers with the tray in the other. Without speaking, he placed them on the table, and in a ceremonious solemn voice requested me to be seated.

I accordingly sat down in a chair opposite, and, wondering what such unaccustomed dignity could portend, waited for his speech in silence. I did not wait long.

“Mr. Corbet,” said he in a suitable accent, “you see at last what your wild speculations have brought upon us; my family is ruined, and, saving her marriage articles, Mrs. Possy, who brought me a good fortune, has not a black bawbee left to rub the sides of another. But I’ll no upbraid,—I bow the head of resignation; and yet, when I think of Mrs. Possy and her helpless babies that your mad and wanton schemes have brought to a morsel, human nature will rise. Sir, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to put your foot within the door of this house of mourning that ye have desolated, and to look in the face of him ye have made no better than a beggar man.”

It is impossible to describe the emotion with which this address affected me. Sometimes I

was on the point of laughing outright at the absurdity of the reproaches ; at others I was inflamed with indignation, as if my veins had been filled with kindled gunpowder, and almost at the same time I was touched with inexpressible pity and contempt to hear the unhappy man give vent to such nonsense. Under these conflicting feelings, I said dryly,

“ Explain yourself, Mr. Possy ; I am not come here to recriminate ; we have both a manlier part to perform : But what has happened since the morning ? ”

“ A pretty-like partner,” he replied, “ to be obliged to ask such a question when his house is in ruins. Sir, if you do not know that ought to know, I must tell you, that Corbet and Possy are the causeway talk as broken merchants ; ” and with these word she began to weep and sob—yes, desperately, I can find no other word to describe the ridiculous sorrow of his weakness.

I inquired how the state of our affairs had so unexpectedly been divulged, adding with vexation, that we ought ourselves to have been the first to publish the tale.

He could give no satisfactory explanation, but that Mrs. Possy had heard of it from several of her intimates, and that they had at first supposed me the author, believing I had shunned the warehouse and kept myself from them.

In this crisis Mrs. Possy came into the room, and seated herself in the obscurest corner; having composed her appearance, she searched first in one pocket and then in the other, and having at last pulled out her handkerchief, shook it with both her hands by two corners, and began an audible tune of weeping—roaring and greeting I ought to call it, for the English language, affording no adequate phrase to describe it properly, obliges me to have recourse to the Scottish.

I had knit up my firmness for a scene of distress and natural grief, but I was not prepared for such an exhibition as this. The folly of Mr. Possy was in itself trying enough, and it affected me with mingled feelings; but the passion of his lady touched only one cord;—so formal, and yet so energetic was her extravagance, that I could not restrain myself from

giving way to the effect it had upon me, by bursting into an immoderate fit of mirthless laughter.

Mr. Possy gazed at me with alarm, and his lady taking the handkerchief from her eyes, looked not less amazed.

The fit continued with me; and, while he sat in increasing consternation, she bounced from her chair with ungovernable rage, and coming close to where I was sitting, lifted the candle, held it to my face, and stared at me curiously, as if she thought I was indeed delirious.

The eager astonishment of this inquisition arrested the convulsion—for that term better describes than laughter, the excess of titillation which seemed, and sounded so like it, that I started up in indignation, and my head accidentally knocking the light from her hand, produced instant darkness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A CRISIS.

I HAVE no distinct recollection of any thing that passed in the mean time between the absurd scene at Mr. Possy's, and the public meeting of our creditors. I fancy nothing, however, occurred much different from what generally takes place on such occasions. Novelists, and a few writers not ill at penning pretty sentences, say that their heroes and heroines sometimes live an age in a second; but I have never had any experience of such a condensation; on the contrary, I know full well, that in times of agitation, many seconds may be expanded into days, and that a striking fact will so engross the subsequent recollection, that a whole cycle of events will pass from the memory, and only that one fact be remembered

As far, however, as I may trust the testimony of my feelings, I was in the interval actuated by the most resolute determination to prove myself cool and collected ; and, if I may judge by the compliments of my friends, I was not altogether unsuccessful. But to talk of the lofty sentiments of heroism in any degree influencing the conduct of a mercantile man, even in the midst of disasters and ruin, is perhaps ridiculous : such magnanimity may be only safely practised by play-actors, and the dealers in life and limb. The knit-up nerve, and the riveted thought, are things that should never be mingled with the accidents of trade. They are of high concernment, and consecrated, forsooth, to the service of those who scorn to adventure with fortune, and batten upon the prodigality of their country !

I must, however, make a short tale of the incidents of that time. The conclusion came to pass much as Mrs. Busby had reported it to have taken place. A forerunning judgment had decided for Corbet and Possy what they ought to do. Their affairs were to be closed at once in Glasgow by Mr. Possy, under the

direction of Eric Pullicate, and two of the creditors, and I was appointed to proceed to Kingston, Jamaica, to investigate the state of things there—taking my way by London, to put matters in a train in that city also for conclusion. All this was judicious ; Mr. Possy, who had not a teaspoonful of brains, was generally regarded as an easy and unfortunate man, destroyed by a bold and too speculative partner. A liberal allowance was made for his family, and it was but my duty to do what I could for the interests of our common creditors.

To the amazement of all, I had not one word of objection to offer. I might, it is true, have told another tale as to the sources of our ruin, but of what use would it have served ? I had only in the core of my bosom an irksome thought at the idea of being probably pennyless, and grudged at being compelled to begin life again as a Bankrupt. However, I said nothing—the path of duty lay open before me, I resolved to walk no other, and to trace it to the end ; but I also resolved, when all was done that could be required of me, to cast myself upon a course of my own choosing. Nothing

of this intention, however, escaped my lips. I appeared throughout only as a young man possessed of some fortitude, and anxious to evince that the many wise advices he received from those friends who had never tasted adversity—for such are always the most free in giving counsel—did not enter at the one ear and fly out at the other. In one sentence, I felt myself destined to be an adventurer, thrown on my own resources, and that although I had imperative duties to perform before I could be at liberty, the time was not far off that would see me my own master.

Accordingly, when the necessary arrangements were made, I left Glasgow, bearing with me only the new cravats, and the regrets of Mrs. Busby. I paid, however, visits to all my former friends; they were leave-takings. But my adieus both to Dr. Leach and Mr. Macindoe might lack something of any other feeling than civility. I am even afraid, that, in parting with the Doctor, I yielded to some impulse of contempt. I recollected too minutely his easy compliance with the headstrong determinations of his colleague, and that if he had

possessed the courage to assert his own reflections, concerning the destination of my youth, the humiliation of the result of the connection with Possey might have been averted. But still, I went through the formal scene of homage to him with decency—I dare not call my behaviour by any other name, for at heart I despised him on reflection as a thing inadequate to his trusts.

Mr. Macindoe was a little out of countenance, when I called at his house: the sharp manner in which I had parted from him when I rejected his counsel, had left a rankling wound. He felt that he had made an error in his calculations respecting me. But I took no other notice of the advice he offered on that occasion, than merely to say, he would see by what had taken place, that I did not think the state of our affairs justified the stratagem he had recommended. I laid particular emphasis on the word stratagem as I pronounced it, for I was human enough to think he deserved a sting, and I showed, as I took my leave, that I could not recollect him with any cordial feelings.

To him and to Dr. Leach, the two men to

whom all the world believed me to be the most indebted—I certainly acted at that time more meanly than I would do now; for although they had hurried me into circumstances that were far from being congenial to my nature, they were both honest men, and animated with the best intentions to serve me.

In the fervour of youth we do not discriminate so accurately as in after-life. What is felt below thirty, as treatment that should be resented; above forty, claims indulgence, and is remembered at most with but a pale cast of thought. The grey-headed angel of Forgiveness applies his sponge to the record of early offences.

As, however, I am in this instance on my confession, something more may be said—something that smacks of the infirmity to which human nature will occasionally yield. I bade Mr. Pullicate farewell, with a feeling I can only describe as an ugly aversion, for all in his character was undoubtedly respectable. His manners still remained vulgar, the spirit of the workshop controversies still clung to him, and a carefulness of self, that I can find no other name for

than democratic egoism, eclipsed his good qualities. In my heart, to use a familiar term, I cut him; but the nature of our commercial intercourse obliged me to treat him outwardly as a friend. I have sometimes thought in doing so, I acted less in consequence of the prompting of an hypocrisy within myself, than from a reflex effect of his own sinister character.

In another instance, I freely confess that I condemn myself for a poor littleness. Possy and his loquacious wife had not slept in their endeavours to represent me as the cause of their misfortunes. I knew too well the truth, and despised these weak inventions; but I left Glasgow without bidding them farewell, expecting that such marked incivility would convince them that their malice was duly appreciated; but I afterwards heard that such was their industry in detraction, that this step of offended dignity was attributed to shame for the wrong I had caused them to suffer, and served to justify the accusation of imprudence in which others indulged against me.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

MY first intention on reaching London was to go directly to my own house, but I felt as I proceeded towards it, that I had not fortitude enough remaining. The direful event that had taken place there, was remembered with all its original anguish; I had the recollection also to think, that a great and speedy duty was demanded of me by the living, and that the flattery of fond affection could not soothe the dull cold ear of death.

I was in a hackney-coach with my portmanteau, and the time was the humid dawn of a grey October morning.

I pulled the check-string, the coach halted, and immediately after the driver opened the

door; he held it open, expecting me to alight, but a sudden absence of mind had fallen upon me, and I noticed not his movement until he had roused me by asking my pleasure. Almost unconscious, I bade him set me down at an hotel in the Adelphi. I am not sure of having ever since experienced so chill a pang of desolation as I did when I reached the house; but it was only momentary. Fatigue made the sleep of the morning sound, and I felt, when I awoke, as if I had undergone some transmutation by which my anxieties, griefs, and cares, were removed as dross and alloy, and my nature become of a purer substance.

I rose to breakfast more a man of the world than it seemed possible I should ever be, and as my clerks in Cannon-street were apprised of all that had happened, I resolved to make my first visit to Sir Neil Eccles, a visit to my counting-house being no longer so urgent as in other circumstances it might have been.

This resolution, entirely the effect of impulse, proved one of the most conclusive events of my life. It chanced when some inconceivable energy had taken possession of my spirit,—an

earlier day, and it would have come too soon, on the morrow it should have been too late—let me, however, restrain this rapidity. Strange! that the sudden accidents of that time should, after so many years, still fire, as it were, the wheels of thought with such vehemence!

It was late in the morning before I reached Harley-street, where Sir Neil Eccles resided; his footman told me, as I was admitted, that he had breakfasted some time, but that he believed he had no intention of going out for that forenoon.

“He is an altered man,” said the lad, “since——”

He paused, and I guessed at once to what event he alluded; my wife had been always a cherished favourite with his master, a circumstance which all the servants well knew. I took, however, no notice of his embarrassment, but walked with my usual freedom into the library, where, from his habitual custom, I knew Sir Neil would then be. Nor was I mistaken, for there he sat, seated by the table opposite the fire, with the newspaper of the morning lying upon his knee, as if he had been engaged in

reading it. It was evident, however, that it was only spread to dry.

As I entered the apartment his eyes turned towards me, sparkled for a moment, but in the same instant I observed them turned aside, and when he looked at me again they were dull, abstracted, and altered.

In his usual manner he requested me to take a seat, and when I had placed myself in a chair near him, he said, and, I thought, not exactly with the cordiality I had expected,

“ Well, Mr. Bogle Corbet, your trial is over, I am sorry to hear the result. It is, however, honourable to your own character that you had not raised the loan: you have done well in bringing your affairs to a conclusion. By all accounts your partner Mr. Possy was not at first judiciously chosen; old heads, however, do not grow on young shoulders. What do you propose to do now?”

So many topics were touched in this brief speech, and the question was asked in a tone so different from his former manner towards me, that I replied,

“ Really, Sir Neil, I have thought as yet

nothing of the future. My whole intent at present is to wind up the affairs of Corbet and Possy ; when that is done, perhaps I may then be able to speak of the future."

Much as I had been previously accustomed to the dry yet disinterested manner of Sir Neil Eccles, it struck me that on this occasion he was more than usually so, and without being able to account for the feeling, I would gladly have avoided any farther conversation at that time relative to my own concerns ; but he replied,

"The difficulties of business multiply. You will find it a harder matter hereafter to get into business than you did at first, your means diminished, perhaps gone, and with the taint of failure upon you."

"I am not certain," said I a little proudly, "that I ought to be greatly anxious on that subject. No man can complain that he has been in any degree whatsoever led astray by Corbet and Possy ; and although I may have suffered something in opinion, yet surely it cannot be alleged that I have forfeited any friendship."

“No doubt,” replied Sir Neil, looking at the newspaper on his knee, and not lifting his eyelids, “your remark is just; but events alter circumstances, and your good sense must have prepared you for a change in your own.”

“I am not certain how that should be,” was my answer, wondering to what he specifically alluded. “I never counted on any thing but the prospect in my prosperity—” and I added, not well knowing what to say, “at the time of my marriage. A dreadful event has blasted all that was happy and encouraging there—but it is now of no use either to refer to it, or to the motives by which in it I was actuated.”

“Did you then, in your marriage—excuse the plainness of my question—count on acquiring some claim on me?”

“None,” said I, perhaps with a sentiment verging towards indignation: “my affection for my wife was sincere: what claim could I have on you? So entire was my esteem for her, that to this hour I remain as ignorant of her family, as when you first made me known to herself. But let us talk no farther at present

on this subject; my wound is still green, and a slight touch offends it painfully."

"Am I to understand, by what you have said, that you know nothing of your late wife's relations?"

"I have said it," was my reply, seriously angry; and I added, with an intenser accent, "Excuse me, Sir Neil, I am not aware, though she was a favourite of yours, that the questions you have been pleased to put to me, are precisely those that you have any privilege to ask."

He reddened as I said this, and rising from his seat, threw the newspaper as it were with an emphasis on the table, and walked to the window. This air and gesture surprised me, but without rising I waited his answer.

"Now I think of it," said he, "you never had many acquaintances with my Indian friends."

"I never had any," was my self-collected answer; "occasionally I have dined in this house with your friends, but the beat of their business lay in a different direction from mine."

“ I thought you had known more of them.”

“ Had there been any cause for me to cultivate their intimacy, no doubt I should have done it.”

“ I wish you had,” said he; “ it might have saved us both from an unpleasant explanation.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed I; “ indeed ! why should there be any explanation at all between us ? I seek none—I wish for none.”

“ Do you not regard me as your particular friend ?”

I paused before answering :—his manner was estranged towards me—his dialogue had not been particularly marked by courtesy—I was in an inferior condition to that in which I had parted from him, and not unlikely to be thought to have come to him for assistance—all this flew flickeringly across my mind. But the fortitude with which I felt myself animated in the morning came to my immediate assistance, and I replied with great coolness and serenity—there may have even been some tinge of sedate sarcasm in my manner, for I was by this time really fervent—

“ Upon my word, Sir Neil Eccles, you amaze

me. I was pleased with the civilities you paid me—delighted with the attentions shown to my wife—and I *did* think that you were no common friend ; but, if I may judge by the freedom you have thought yourself justified in using towards me this morning, I frankly confess that I have discovered my error.”

“ Who was your wife ? ” was his reply, in a low troubled voice.

I made no answer, but stood in expectation of hearing more. After waiting a minute or two, during which he was much agitated, he added,—

“ We have been both mistaken, Mr. Corbet : I thought you had known all, from the confidence you seemed to repose in me ; nor was I displeased in thinking so ; nor, had she lived, would you have had cause to repent that confidence. Your wife was my daughter.”

“ Yours ! ” cried I, in astonishment.

“ Yes, mine ; and had she lived, her offspring should have inherited my fortune. That hope has expired ; we are now as strangers, but still I shall be always happy to consider you as a friend.”

For some minutes I was unable to speak ; an unaccountable resentment took possession of my bosom. Why should it have done so, for my wife had been the most beautiful and amiable of her sex ? But my nature was overborne by a feeling of the moment, and I abruptly left the room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

REFLECTIONS.

OFTEN and often have I said to myself since the last interview with Sir Neil Eccles, for it was the final one,—what had there been in our intercourse that should have made me so easily offended? and why did I separate from him under a feeling of indignant resentment, as if he had been a party to some deception against me? The reader, perhaps, can solve this mystery more to his own satisfaction than I can; but the sentiment mingled with my mourning, and I could not divest myself of thinking that there had been something sordid in the love which he undoubtedly cherished for his undivulged daughter. However, though the disclosure

was a most painful occurrence—there was even a degree of mortification in it—it happened at a fortunate period, and I went straight to the duties of my business, that they might be finished with celerity.

The precise effect of the explanation which had taken place with Sir Neil I took no pains to ascertain. In the evening my own servant brought me an invitation to dinner for two or three days afterwards, but I declined it, and added to the apology for so doing, with the decision which I then experienced, that I thought we should not meet. “My feelings,” said I, “are lacerated by unhappy events, and their anguish easily exasperated.” He never afterwards invited me to his house.

During my absence from England he died, and, as I understood on my return, left all his fortune to endow a distant relation, to whom he procured a continuation of his title, with the exception of the small annuity which had been settled on the firm, patient, and gentle old Leezy Eglesham.

She did not, however, survive him many years, but sank into the grave, an affecting in-

stance of faithful love, and a proud, but a tender heart.

Nothing in her life bore outwardly the slightest indication of a romantic spirit; but, in what bosom could exist a purer and a lovelier mind? Sometimes, as I have thought of her solitary fate, it has seemed to me that she ought not to have asked for the little pittance; but in moments of higher enthusiasm, I condemned myself for conceiving that an affection so holy as her's could have had any other origin than a wish not to expose to the profane world, which had forgotten their pledged troth, the necessity of remarking that she had fallen to want, and that he had forgotten his faith. It was a sad, though a beautiful tale of passion, and can never be thought of without sympathy and sorrow.

But in adverting to that little story, which so well illustrates the poet's pathetic remark, that

“The course of true love never did run smooth,”

I forget my own history. Did I write for the applause of critics, and to the judgment of the world, I should, perhaps, have avoided it alto-

gether ; but, as I am more anxious to record what I have seen, as well as what I have experienced, than to please, I could not pass it in silence. Sometimes, indeed, it has occurred to me, when I have seen the meek aspect of patient maidenhood, pale in the solitude of fading years, that the case of poor Leezy has not been singular, and that the success of many a gorgeous adventurer is an index to where in secret may be found the endearing faithfulness of similar unrequited love—

However, to resume my narrative.

My rupture with Sir Neil Eccles, after the first inexplicable irritation had subsided, not only became comparatively of little moment, but was remembered almost as a release from an uneasy tie. Affairs of business for some time engaged my attention, and prevented me from falling into that lassitude of mind, which perhaps, in other circumstances, would have increased the oppression of 'misfortune ; when these were arranged, I was ready to proceed to Jamaica.

I will not say that the prospect of my departure from England was pleasant, but un-

doubtedly it was far from painful. I felt as if I had weighed the anchor of my spirit, and was afloat on uncertainty, like the swimmer when he first spurns the ground with his elastic foot: my thoughts were, however fluttered, and my imagination on the wing without aim or goal. One moment the idea of being disentangled from trade was enjoyed with the buoyancy ascribed to liberty; at another, I sank with a leaden burden of anxieties concerning my future prospects, my fortune being in all probability lost, and so many of my best days gone. I must not, however, attempt to describe my state of mind at that period. It was a chaos of recollections and fancies, in which there was but little of hope, and much of disquietude and fear.

I was glad to escape the affected condolence of those who seem, when we are in misfortune, to haunt the thoroughfares of society, led as it were by an invidious instinct to afflict us with their sympathy; and this sentiment was heightened by a vague feeling, that I was only returning home. For, although not a creole born, and I had been sent back to Scotland in that

condition of infancy when existence is but sensation, still I looked towards Jamaica as my native land. And yet I had nothing there of that which makes home dear to the heart. Many years had passed since the decease of my parents, and except the name of Plantagenet estate, where they had resided, I retained scarcely any memorial that they had ever been. Of the country itself I had no distinct idea. Of sugar-canes and negroes, snakes and the yellow fever, I might, perhaps, have possessed knowledge enough to qualify me to understand what was said when they were spoken of; but in all respects beyond the mere terms, I say not too strongly of myself, that I was utterly ignorant. I looked forward in consequence to the packet in which I was to sail from Falmouth, as the shade of an antient to the boat of Charon. It was to convey me to a new world, of which I could only conjecture that it might in some things be like the old.

Such was the vagueness, the fluctuation, and the comfortless state in which I bade adieu to London, or rather, such are the terms by which it can only be fitly described, for all I now

remember of the event, is a mingled hurry and confusion—many images in agitation, and no one clearly impressed. Disgusted, dejected, my being, as it were, shattered,—would, as the retrospect now affects me, be phrases too impassioned. I doubt, however, if at the time they would have been strong enough. But the advantage of advanced life consists in enabling us to derive an indemnification from past suffering; and doubtless the same inscrutable cause to which we owe that enjoyment, has mitigated my recollection of the disquiet, the passion, and the pain of those unhappy days.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AN ADVENTURE.

I LEFT London by one of the early Exeter coaches, and the first free taste of the untainted air, with the contentment which gladdens on the aspect of the country in a fine morning, had soon a sympathetic influence on my spirits. My imagination was filled with pleasing anticipations, in which the anxieties of trade had no place; and all day I enjoyed an inward calm, almost as delightful as the pleasures of earnest activity. In descending, however, a hill in the twilight, this serenity was abruptly disturbed, by the coach coming in contact with a ponderous waggon, which was slowly groaning upward, and disastrously upset—I emphatically say disastrously; for, although no injury was

sustained by any of the other passengers, my forehead was so cut by the glass of one of the windows, that I was obliged to be left behind ; and this accident coloured the tissue of my subsequent life.

The place at which the accident happened was near a respectable house, something in appearance like those of the better order of farms, but not altogether of that character, for the offices betokened a small establishment ; no ricks were in the yard, and the little plot of ground between the door and the highway, was rather more trimly dressed and planted than the farmers are in the habit of doing to the environs of their premises.

It was genteel but not manorial, and too new and bare of trees, unless a row in front of those greyhounds of the grove, Lombardy poplars, merit the name, and it was too remote from any church to be a parsonage. Not having a sign, it was also plainly neither inn nor academy, but in all respects a wealthy tradesman's comfortable box—one who had set himself down near the road-side, where stages often

pass, to enjoy rural prospects and his retired leisure, with as little inconvenience as a distance from the market-town would admit.

In this conception I was not far wrong ; for the house had originally been intended for such a character, but at that time it was re-occupied by a very different inhabitant.

Mr. Ascomy was a philosophical invalid : he had been educated for the bar, but infirm health prevented him from following out his profession, though not from marrying, nor from indulging an eccentric imagination in abstruse pursuits. It will, however, be perhaps better to reserve the description of his character, until I shall have occasion to speak of him in closer connexion with my own circumstances ; all, therefore, that need be said at present is, that he then lived a widower at Green-down, as the place was called, with two grown-up daughters, who were not distinguished for any particular grace in their persons and accomplishments ; plain, respectable-looking, young women, household in their appearance and manners, evidently seeking no distinction by any extraordinary

taste or lady-like discernment in the proprieties of dress, and yet in harmony with their apparent condition.

The whole family, on seeing the accident which had happened to the coach, came to the gate, and Mr. Ascomy himself warmly invited me to stop with them for the night, as my wound bled so profusely that I ought not, as he said, to proceed until it was dressed. I gladly availed myself of his hospitality, and taking my trunk from the coach, allowed it to proceed without me.

Miss Urseline, one of the young ladies, with the help of linen rags and some domestic balsam, soon appeased the bleeding, and made me in a condition to partake of their tea. The old gentleman did not, however, join us, but after a few sentences of congratulation that my wound, which might have been "cadaverous," was only a "stimulation," he resumed his easy-chair, and replacing his nightcap, closed his eyes, and seemed to fall asleep, saying, however, as he composed himself into the posture,

"Take no note of me; I was ruminating

when the vehicle lost its equilibrium, and must endeavour to overtake the association."

His language surprised me, for when he invited me into the house it was simple and gentlemanly, and the general cast of his manners polite and worldly; but the paleness of his complexion, and the augury of the night-cap, with a huge pile of ancient folios and various books at his side, seemed to bespeak respect for research and eccentricity. My attention was, however, almost immediately drawn from him to the ladies and the tea-table, and I imagine he fell asleep, for he never once spoke until the evening was far advanced, and the servant brought in the supper-tray; but the interval was not idle time with me. Uninformed of Mr. Ascomy's humour and history, I speculated concerning both, and could not avoid noticing how much the equipage of the tea-table, and the style of his daughters, as well as himself, were at variance with the furniture of the apartment, which was neat, new, and had evidently been sent in by one more accustomed to the usages of society.

The young ladies, as I have already observed, were not distinguished by their dress. It was perhaps well enough, considering their country residence; but it was not exactly in the fashion, and consisted of too many strong colours, not well assorted to produce the most pleasing effect, a circumstance that never fails to indicate a lack of delicacy; and certainly in the course of the evening they tended to confirm that notion; not, however, in any eminent degree, for they were sensible, and perhaps, on the whole, better informed than most young women, without being interesting. They were indeed otherwise; and I could perceive a latent dogmatism about them more contributory to controversy than conversation.

Though the reader smile at the remark on the tea-equipage—and had I been very solicitous to be esteemed a personage eminent for wisdom and decorum, I ought not to have made it,—yet it serves to elucidate that peculiarity of character which has led me so often to important conclusions from trifling things, and may help him to understand me better

hereafter. It was a curious heterogeneous assemblage of odd articles. No two cups were of one size or pattern: the ewer was broken in the spout; the sugar-basin was silver, and the tea-pot of red, unvarnished japan-china, ornamented with green, blue, and yellow branches and flowers, but the lid had been broken, and was mended with clasps. A positive demonstration to me, that the young ladies were negligent of those little attentions in manners, on which, with many, so much of domestic happiness depends. To their style of dress, it was an additional proof that they mingled little with the world, learned little from example, either by precept or sympathy, and consulted themselves with too high an opinion of their own understanding, than is consistent with that mutual forbearance and reciprocity which constitute the object and essence of the minor morals.

I am the more particular in saying so much, for the reader will hear with some astonishment that Miss Urseline, several years after, was selected for my second wife. It is only, however, necessary, here to apprise him of the fact, for,

although I do now very vividly recall all the circumstances of my first acquaintance with the family, many things happened to lessen their impression afterwards, and my voyage to Jamaica, with all its adventures, intervened.

When Mr. Ascomy awoke from his sleep, or reverie at supper-time, he appeared at first much in the same pedantic humour in which he had composed himself to hunt his association; but gradually he became more natural, and was even a cheerful companion.

He had been evidently an extensive reader, but loose and desultory in his reflections on every subject of which I had any knowledge; he could speak amusingly, for, without regard to the utility of what he had learned, he had picked out some fact or anecdote which profounder students would have overlooked, but to which he curiously ascribed an infinitude of consequence, illustrating his opinion with arguments possessed of every ingredient of erudition and ingenuity but common sense. In this respect he was equally singular and interesting, and the deference which he received or exacted from his daughters, confirmed him in the

notion he had formed of himself—a philosopher of no ordinary calibre. For the present, however, I need say no more; chance made me known to the family, but at that time my visit was necessarily limited, for I only remained with them until the mail passed in the morning.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LESSON.

THE accident which brought me acquainted with Mr. Ascomy's family, was the only influential event that befell me before my embarkation at Falmouth. But during two days that I was obliged to wait there for a fair wind, another interesting incident occurred.

Every body who has ever been at Falmouth, knows that it is a long, lane-like, one-streeted town, irregularly built on the western side of a fine natural harbour; and that between it and the promontory, crowned with the Castle of Pen Dennis, which protects the communication with the ocean, there is a pleasant open walk, but which, except on Sunday evening,

when the weather happens to be fine, is little frequented by the inhabitants.

I was there on a Sunday, and walking by myself, in that sort of lethargy of mind which most people waiting for a fair wind to bear them to a foreign land experience, when I met a private of the garrison, who suddenly halted, and after eying me steadily, drew his hand across his eyes, and hastily passed.

Had my mind at the time been more engaged, I should probably not have observed his action, but having nothing particular to think of, it struck me as singular, and turning abruptly round, I requested him to come back, he however only halted.

He was a stout man, of a weather-tanned complexion, erect, and of a veteran aspect. His air betokened considerable energy of character, tempered with a sedate and respectful demeanour.

“Why,” said I, “did you look so earnestly at me, and pass so hastily, and appear so agitated?”

“Because you did not mind me, Sir, but I

did you at once ;” was his reply, with a strong Scottish accent.

This was one Hugh Cairns, who had been a weaver with Mr. Aird, and was a member of the democratic club, from which, according to Mr. Macindoe, I had been snatched as a brand from the burning. He had enlisted early in the preceding war, when the first shock of the declaration so dislocated the manufacturing connections, and had from that period seen much service, but, save with the army in Egypt, never met, as he said himself, with “ a kent face.” The sudden sight of me had so affected him with the remembrance of days past, that, albeit, unused to the melting mood, seeing that I did not recollect him, he could not command his feelings, nor, indeed, could I discover in him after he had given me this explanation, the same Hugh Cairns whom I had formerly known.

In those days of looms and liberty, the recollection of which had so unexpectedly returned upon the poor fellow, he was a gaunt rawboned lad, lank in the features and lathy as a Yankee, with a familiarity not many degrees

below insolence, and was one of the most jacobinical democrats in the club. But the army had wrought a great change upon him; his figure was grown manly, his air firm and self-collected; his meagre limbs filled up, and without being handsome, strikingly athletic; the emaciated wanness of his visage, the effect of his sedentary employment, and which had looked so like malady, was become of a camp bronze—so much, indeed, was he in every exterior point altered, that his original lineaments could not be easily discovered.

But I was still more struck by the change which had taken place in his modes of thinking. I reminded him of our old deliberations, at which he shook his head, saying,

“Every man must be a fool some time or another.”

“Then you think, Cairns, that we were all fools then?”

“Surely,” he replied, “we could be no better. The world’s like a regiment, we cannot be all officers.”

“Then you are content with being a soldier?”

“Sometimes not,” said he; “at times I

would again be at the weaving, especially when on a cold post by night, and the wind wet and easterly."

"I wonder you have not been promoted."

"Sometimes, too, I wonder myself; but I fancy I'm not fit, or that it is not my lot"

"Is there any thing I can do to serve you?" but at the moment recollecting the state of my own affairs, I added, "there is, however, nothing in my power."

"I want nothing," said he; "had I been fit to be promoted, I would have been so long before, for I have always been lucky in my officers."

"You make me wonder at hearing you speak so contentedly; is that feeling common in the army?"

"Not among young soldiers; they are all for a time lower than their merits; but the old ones have a home in their regiments, and after a few years of service, they think of little else but their duty."

He then inquired for some of his old acquaintances, and among others, for Eric Pullicate, at whose success he appeared pleased.

“ But he could not miss,” said he ; “ he had always three eyes, two for to-day, and one for to-morrow. He'll have no regard for me now ?”

“ Why so ?” was my answer, surprised at his observation.

“ The chap was ever looking to number one. He was not a right democrat after all, but was only vexed because he had superiors.”

Not, however, to encroach too far on the reader's time, I have only to say, that this conversation greatly interested me, for it gave me the first clear idea of a professional character, and what habitude discipline is calculated to effect. To my own self-consequence it was humiliating ; for, up to that day, I had considered myself as trammelled with a natural inaptitude for trade, and even partly ascribed the disastrous result of my co-partnery with Mr. Possy to that innate cause, never having once reflected how much the habits of business would in time have been ingrained.

It is thus that casualties generally teach the best lessons of self-knowledge. Prior to this little accidental incident, I had felt no very

painful regret at being released from my commercial pursuits. Like most young men under similar clouds, I had an irksome feeling of mortification when I reflected on what had happened, and sometimes I mistook the feeling for the grief of misfortune. But in parting from Cairns, a more correct sense of the injury I was suffering awakened within me, and for the first time, I became truly alive to the blight I had sustained. I saw that the world was become a desert around me—that the path which might again lead me to its active scenes was obliterated—and that with only a scanty experience, deteriorated in the reception by an education not judiciously conducted, I was to seek my guideless way across the waste.

What blind things we are! and how common it is among the young, to imagine themselves better qualified for other pursuits than those in which they are engaged, until this discontent with friends or with destiny is corrected by habit, in which all entirely consists, that the wise regard as practical wisdom! Youth is but the raw material, of which habit makes the man

But I am falling into one of my moralising fits, when I ought to be proceeding with the details of the voyage. The indulgent reader will, however, pardon the digression. The necessary recollection of my departure from England brings back the feelings associated with the circumstances in which it took place, and it is the nature of my imagination to make me live over again even the most trivial occurrences, as often as the keys of memory, by chance or effort, happen to be touched. At this moment I am, as it were, standing on the sea shore between Falmouth and Pen Dennis; I see the signal for sailing hoisted in the packet, and all the rush of troubled thought ever connected with that time and place, comes again upon me with undiminished violence.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PASSAGE.

HITHERTO accustomed to an inland life, I had no previous correct notion of a voyage on the sea. Before my departure from Falmouth, I might truly say that the only idea possessed by me on the subject, consisted of waves and breakers, a hurly-burly of thunder, the noise of many waters, dismal skies, drenched mariners, and a constant sense of danger. I had, it is true, an imperfect remembrance of a wide water, and of fair faces looking over the waves; a mingled and hazy reminiscence, something between a drowsy dream and a waking fancy. But when the packet weighed anchor, I felt myself immersed, as it were, in a soft and solemn harmony, and we passed into the ocean

soothingly wafted by an almost insensible tide and breeze; the sky was without a cloud, and all the stars as brightly sparkling as if their wicks had been newly trimmed. The beautiful moon shone as a lamp at the gate of heaven.

The other passengers had retired, and the captain had his own affairs to mind. I was thus left to my own meditations, and before break of day—for I remained in calm contemplation all night on deck, I saw the gems of the Lizard light-house beaming in the horizon like stars, and brightening as they neared. In the dim dawning of the morning, they seemed as the eyes of a friend looking out at his window to bid us farewell and good morrow.

The liveliest enjoyment of liberty is certainly felt when you feel yourself free at sea; you cast off, as a cumbrous garment, all dry-land anxieties, and with a mind that has composed itself to have no anticipations, you find a sympathetic companionship in the gambols of the waves, and the fickle playfulness of the winds. I am well aware that the sailors but little like that flickering of the breeze, which was to me so delightful, but no matter; the most intense revel

of the spirit I ever partook of was during that sunny summer passage. Throughout the whole, no chance came to pass that did not minister to the inhaling of an innocent satisfaction. It was altogether a mild and serene reverie—a dream which left few incidents on the memory, but impressed the heart with a wide and deep sensation, as if Happiness herself had put her warm and genial hand into the bosom.

The entire voyage was different from all my preconceived notions; the felicity of the weather; an exceedingly gentle but fair wind, and a succession of marine duties, in which amusement was predominant, all united to sweeten the time, even when the sunny air gladdened into a breeze, it was like the effervescence of some delicious wine: the captain smiled when he saw me unbutton my vest to its blandishments.

I have now but an imperfect recollection of the little amusements which varied the even tenour of those leisure days, like the dew sparkling on the grass in a May morning. But I watched by day the passing of the purple nautilus, which the sailors call the “Portugee man-of-war;” and at night, the shooting meteors

which suggested the pleasing poesy of angel visits, and were emblems of those bright characters who gloriously shine in their career, and shortly pass away.

One evening, when the sun had sunk in a bank of fog, and the captain apprehended we might before morning have a change of wind, and perhaps a storm, I perfectly still enjoy the wonder with which I studied a pale phosphoric gleam on every mast-head, and a lambient flame that wandered like a dim fire-fly amidst the rigging; and of others that sat bright, and bodiless, like cherubs, on the yards; but the day, however, dawned, the clouds made themselves thin air, and the omens proved as harmless as the apprehensions that sometimes unaccountably sadden the purest breast.

That day, however, was not without its own phenomena; we passed a dead whale, over which a number of sea birds, though far at sea, were collected, fluttering like legatces from a distance at a funeral. And during the afternoon, another came close to the ship, and ogled her with the wantonness of a widower. It is with no fancy, I aver, that I could discern a good-na-

tured playfulness in its target-like eyes as it dived and spouted, and played the lover in the crystalline waves. The sailors prepared to shoot it with one of the cannon, but at my intercession they desisted, and I am sure they had ten times more pleasure in looking at its knowing, leering glances and gallantry, than fifty butts of oil could have procured.

Although I had never been at sea before, I happily escaped the malady, but the other passengers were not so fortunate, and it was not until we had passed the longitude of forty, that the last of them was able to come on deck. She was an old lady returning to Kingston, where she had long been settled; she had been to England to see her friends, perhaps with the intention of spending the remainder of her days there, but few she found alive, and every thing so changed, that, as she said herself, "It was no longer her native land—Jamaica was more homely."

She had several cages of singing birds, to which, notwithstanding her sickness, she was every morning attentive; and as she believed she never could survive the sickness to look

after them, she constantly lamented them as if dead, hoping, however, if it was so ordered that she and they were to die, it would take place before we reached Jamaica, for there the cruel sharks would then have them all; generally concluding her elegies with an imprecation on the black steward, whom she denounced a Nigger of the seed of Cain, that detested race which had skulked into Noah's Ark among the unclean beasts. However, as we sailed along in the pleasant trade-wind, she gradually recovered, and with the birds, reached her destination in safety.

Our other two passengers were gentlemen, but of no particular character. One of them was bound for the Main of Spanish America; but who he was, and why he was going there, was never discovered. The other was a Major going to join his regiment, a well-bred man, with not a little of the *haut goût* of the mess-room about him. Neither of the two, however, interested me on board the ship, and I parted from them with as much indifference as if we had been all outsiders on a Greenwich stage. But I should describe the remainder of our passage.

Having despatches from Government on board, we touched at Barbadoes to land them. It was not deemed necessary that the packet should come to anchor, but while the boat was sent on shore with the captain and the letter-bag, she tacked in Carlisle Bay. I, however, was allowed to go with the boat, and received an ample indemnification, in the novelty of the scene, for the five-and-twenty days and nights of a monotonous passage, if any epithet insinuating dullness can be applied to one of the finest voyages ever made across the Atlantic.

We reached Carlisle Bay during the night, but as soon as

“The bright morning star, day’s harbinger,”

appeared, I was roused to go on shore. The dark contour of the land—or if I may be allowed to use an appropriate but odd expression—the negro visage of the island, as it then lay in the starlight of a brilliant tropical night, did not so much interest me by the beauty of any particular feature, as by that inexpressible sensation which the first sight of land gives to

those who have become weary of the ocean. But before we reached the mole, the dawn had brightened over all the east with that rapidity which glows in the torrid climate with the suddenness of a maiden's blush, and the sun looked over the horizon just as we reached the landing-place.

It was at that moment I felt myself in a strange land; and a scene around me, not, however, greatly different from what I expected, though far other than England—a fleet in the bay, men-of-war and merchant-men, boats glancing to and fro, were all British; but the liveliness of the town, the shops and houses without windows, and the feathery green palms, which fringed the shore in many places, with the extraordinary transparency of the air, were vivid with beauty. My attention was, however, chiefly excited by the multitude of negroes who had gathered on the strand, smiling towards us with that blitheness which the ebony countenance can alone express. In the crowd I saw a few white men, with nankeen jackets and broad straw-hats; their appearance reminded me of the argument for the emanci-

pation of the slaves, then raging in England ; and when I compared the few Europeans with the throng of Africans, I could not help saying to myself, “ If there were not some other tie that binds them mutually together, would the Negroes look so pleased, or submit to be so treated, as they are said to be treated by the philanthropists of England ? ”

CHAPTER XXXV.

CARRIBBEAN SEA.

AS we had only to deliver the letter-bag, our stay on shore did not occupy many minutes: before we had breakfasted, Barbadoes was far behind and sinking in the horizon, and the heat of the day was excessive; not a flake of cloud stained the azure of the skies, and the universal ocean, like molten sapphire, as it brilliantly sparkled before the favouring breeze, appeared as if sprinkled with strings of the purest pearls. I had no idea that there could have been such a difference in beauty between the West-Indian waters and the sunniest of our British seas.

Towards noon the breeze, which had increased from the morning, began to slacken, much to the surprise of the captain, and different

from the regularity which we had experienced from the day we entered the current of the trade-wind. I should not, perhaps, have remarked this phenomenon, which is not common, but my attention was drawn to it, and to another circumstance still rarer. The atmosphere, which had all the morning been surprisingly clear, lending additional brightness to the intolerable splendour of the sun, gradually became less transparent, as if a white smoke were insensibly diffused throughout. At last the breeze died away, the sea grew as still as silver, and the air so dim that the bowsprit was hardly visible from the quarter-deck.

The sailors were evidently disturbed, and often spoke superstitiously to each other, as they eyed the loose and empty sails hanging idly from the yards. Among them, I noticed a boy, about twelve or fourteen years of age, who stood aloof by himself, with a dejected countenance, and that pale vacuity which generally indicates disease. I inquired if he was ill, and offered him an orange, which I had brought from Bridgetown; but he declined it, and folding his arms, walked away.

Some little time after, I observed him seated on the windlass, with his arms still folded, steadily eyeing the deck. I pointed him out to the captain, expressing my fear that he was unwell; but when the captain went to inquire, he still refused to acknowledge that any thing was the matter with him, and again shifted his place.

There was no sullenness in his manner but rather sadness, the more remarkable, as he seemed in the previous voyage of a cheerful temperament, and fond of pranks and practical jokes on his companions, which the felicity of the weather and the easy fair wind often allowed. It was only after leaving Carlisle Bay that he became so unsocial, and seemed so pensive and depressed.

The dullness of the day continued to deepen, until a universal gloom seemed to pervade and overspread every object, and yet the form of no cloud could be seen in the obscurity which filled the welkin. The sun, however, was still visible, but like a globe of red fire: no shadow fell from me as I stood in his ineffectual beams:—such was the aspect around us when we went

down to dinner at the usual hour, about three o'clock. The captain spoke to the major, who had made several voyages, as if the phenomenon was ominous of wind; but it was not the hurricane season, the sails were, however, ordered to be taken in, and every preparation made for some dreadful change.

We sat a shorter time at table than common; we spoke less, and the old lady remarked that her birds were shivering and sitting with their heads under their wings, and yet they were not sleeping, for their eyes were open. We were all impressed with an apprehension of something extraordinary coming to pass: the gentleman bound for the Spanish Main had a Bible, with which he silently retired to a corner of the cabin to read.

When I went on deck the poor boy had again changed his seat, and was standing at the gunwale looking over at the sea, while the ship stood, as Coleridge says in "The Antient Mariner,"

"As steady as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

I asked kindly how he felt, for his face

by this time had assumed an expression almost cadaverous, and he was evidently very unwell; he returned me no answer, but burst into tears and went to another place, and looked at the sea, as if he saw something in it which suddenly roused his attention.

“Take that poor fellow below,” cried one of the men, an old rough sailor. “The calenture has come upon him;” but before he could be touched he threw himself overboard; one of the crew instantly plunged after him, and rescued him from self-destruction. Whether the freshening influence of the cool water, or the violence of the shock with which his preserver snatched him as he sank, contributed most to recall him to a sense of himself I know not, but when brought again on deck, he wept with an uncommon profusion of tears, and at last became calm and soon after cheerful, even with something like derision at his infirmity. He told us that he had been all the day thinking of home, until he had persuaded himself that he saw his mother’s cottage in the wave, and the trees and green fields all glittering in the sunshine around it, and

could not resist the desire to leap to them again.

I had often heard of this curious marine malady, and how it sometimes mounts to a melancholy delirium, and with my habitual curiosity, endeavoured to sift the patient, to get some clue to the cause ; the fit, however, had passed, and before sunset he was himself ; but the old boatswain, who had noticed the passion working, told me that while it is on, there is always a slight fever, and the boy himself acknowledged that he did not that morning relish his breakfast.

This was the only effect of that singular day, if to its influence it could be ascribed ; for soon after the sun disappeared, the atmosphere began to thin, the stars looked out, and the light of the rising moon glanced along the rippling surface of the ocean, while a gentle breeze again distended all the loosened sails, and softly urged us forward.

But the remainder of the voyage to Jamaica from Barbadoes was, I understand, longer than common, with the single exception of that

heart-sickening day—it was to me full of satisfaction. We had not, however, any proper view of the other islands as we passed; those to the left and southward were more like dark blue clouds resting in the horizon, and a faint dim outline, discovered on our right one evening, was pointed out to us as Porto Rico. I took, however, no interest in things so distant; they seemed to me like names in chronology, associated with no image in the mind. Jamaica became gradually uppermost in my thoughts; the cares of business, which had slept all the passage, began to rouse and waken, and with them the painful assurance, that when I had fulfilled all the duties which my creditors expected from me, I had again to begin life.

In that frame of mind, as I was sitting on a hencoop one afternoon looking westward to the sun, which had nearly fulfilled his daily best, my attention was suddenly excited by a faint outline of land under his lower limb. “It is Jamaica,” said the captain, in the same moment pointing to it; and the effect on me was electrical.

Why it should have been so, or wherefore, I

should have been agitated more than with the prospect of any other land, is still inconceivable. Had it been the first after the passage from England, I can imagine that it might have so affected me; but Barbadoes had softened my curiosity in some degree, and the sight of the other islands ought to have made me less susceptible of emotion from it. But, perhaps, I only experienced a modification of a constitutional disposition, with which I have been from my earliest recollection ever beset. I never went from home without being obliged to make an effort to drive away the most absurd fears and fancies; and after a short absence, never returned but they forced themselves back upon me like boding birds croaking unutterable things. In despite of all my endeavours to encourage more pleasant ideas, I approached the island with a feeling somewhat allied to that reluctance with which the trembling, fascinated bird drops into the serpent's mouth.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PRUDENCE.

I SHALL neither attempt to describe what I felt nor what I imagined as we approached Kingston from Port Royal: my whole mind was bent on getting away from the place as soon as possible. I had no reason for this impatience, but it belonged to the condition of my feelings, and the courteous reader may, perhaps, guess at the impulses that moved me.

An accident as we entered the harbour had nearly been fatal to the packet. It was night, and the breeze blew strong off the land, in a direction by which she was obliged to go so close to the shore that she grounded for a few minutes. Our anxiety occasioned by this ac-

cident did not, however, last long, though at the time it was alarming. But I was less interested in the consequences than by the appearance of the land around.

I had somehow supposed that the country was widely and richly cultivated. I expected no gentlemanly residences nor pleasant villas, but lively rural scenery filled my imagination. Judge then of my disappointment, when, instead of an open and gay country, I beheld only patches of cultivation, distant mountains, and a rankness of vegetable production every where. I had prepared myself for a luxuriant profusion, and counted on green and tufty trees and shrubs thickly clothed with foliage, but I was not in expectation of seeing that, around the capital, cultivation bore a small proportion to the wild affluence and native vesture of the soil. I do not exaggerate my feelings when I say the disappointment was painful, and when instead of the rich and beautiful land I had been taught to expect, I saw only a savage woody country, and in the habitations of man only the expedients of a temporary possession.

The general aspect of the island afforded me no pleasure; still it was picturesque. The far Blue Mountains rose in magnificent pyramids, not, however, so detached from each other as to give the impression of those everlasting buildings; and the luxuriance of the forest scenery displayed a power of vegetation rapidly working every where, of which it was impossible I could have formed any adequate notion.

From the instant I beheld Kingston from the boat in which I went on shore with the captain, I saw that I had been deceived, either by a misconception of the accounts given to me, or by some phantasy of my own mind; perhaps both were involved in the deception; but deceived I was, and the aspect of the country, which I had believed to present only opulence, splendour, and luxury, was mean in the extreme, and bore in all its features the marks of servitude and inferiority.

I am speaking only of the island—the hospitality of the inhabitants was of the most generous description. Nothing that their means could afford was wanting to conciliate

the stranger to a region where primeval nature still asserted supreme dominion; and though my experience had for several years taught me the enjoyment of more elegance than was to be found amidst the hasty opulence of Kingston, I could not deny that the will to contribute generously to make up for defects in the detail was certainly not wanting at their tables. But I should prevaricate with truth if I did not acknowledge, that with all the attention with which I was treated, and of which I must ever entertain a grateful remembrance, a coarser tact in manners was obvious than prevailed in England, and society in a lower and less intellectual state.

If however this was indisputable, I received a happier impression from another cause; I witnessed nothing of that restless humour of which I had heard so much as characteristic of the planters, nor of that degradation which I was taught to expect in the condition of the slaves. But this is rather a general recollection of the country than of the particular inhabitants of Kingston, for in that city the white community may be described as commercial, and

the negroes as domestic servants and mercantile labourers; moreover, my residence there was but of short duration.

I soon perceived that my voyage was migratory, and that our correspondents, the highly respectable firm of Crooks, Bullion, and Co., were in every respect, both in means and integrity, capable of doing ample justice to the interests of our creditors. This discovery, if I may use the term, was soon made, and from that moment I determined not to interfere with them, but to return to England and apply myself to some new pursuit; previously, however, to so doing, I was led by natural curiosity to examine how far the European world had formed erroneous conceptions of West Indian society; for that all we fancy on this side of the Atlantic respecting it is conceived in error, I had, from the hour I placed my foot on Barbadoes, been thoroughly convinced. Accordingly, I availed myself of the opportunity to correct my own notions, and resolved, in consequence, to visit the principal parts of the island, and particularly the North side, on which Plantagenet estate is situated;

for, although that estate was not my home, still it was endeared to me as the residence of my parents, and upon it my little fortune had been originally mortgaged. My father and mother had died there; my affectionate and joyous Baba had belonged to it, and it was the property of a relation; it had, therefore, many claims on my attention and best sensibilities; nor am I sure that there was any desire mingled with the intention to visit it which the world can condemn; but if there were, I felt it not.

Of my parents I knew nothing, but they were always spoken of with respect; of Baba, my nurse, I had long heard she was dead, but still a craving to see the spot that was so enriched to my affections merited the pilgrimage. I had not, however, fortitude enough to disclose the true motive of the journey to my friends in Kingston. It seemed sentimental—and I have ever been averse to let it be imagined of me that I was at all disposed to indulge in the foibles of the heart—but after the vessel had sailed in which I ought properly to have gone back to England, I promulgated my intention of proceeding to see my relations on the

North side, and, with more address than belongs to my character, resolved to set off on the journey before the next ship could be ready. I have since often reflected on the ingenuity made use of on that occasion, and I begin to think, though it is now late in life, that in the art to which I then had recourse, I acted a wise and discreet part; my acquaintance at least thought I did wisely; and we have no better criterion to measure the imprudence or discretion of our conduct by, than the opinion of those around, when they approve or condemn what we do.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A JOURNEY.

INSTEAD of adopting the advice of my friends in Kingston, particularly that of Mr. Bullion, whom I oftenest consulted, an accident induced me to prefer crossing the island by a road which had been trodden out by the Maroons, instead of the more frequented tract.

The Maroons originally were fugitive slaves, —a bold and savage race, who, except in their occasional insurrections against their masters, lived in the fastnesses of the mountains in indolent tranquillity, satisfied with the fruits of the forest, and the wild prey that chance or artifice occasionally bestowed. In their way of life, and in the paroxysms of passion to which they sometimes abandoned themselves, they

afforded afflicting exhibitions to civilized man of the state that awaits the Negroes when the control of their proprietors shall have been withdrawn. To see something of what yet survived of these self-emancipated slaves, was one of the motives which led me by the mountain-road. I was, however, disappointed ; for, save a grandmother with three little ebony imps with white eyes, sitting in the shadow of a rock, as I passed with the black boy, who was lent to me as a groom, none of them happened to appear in our path. The old woman was, however, a sight worthy of all the journey ; for, had not the children who were playing round her been there, I should have hesitated to believe she was really human.

Old age had bent her actually into a hoop, and but for a brief petticoat formed of two handkerchiefs, she was entirely naked, displaying how severely Time can inflict his meagre touch even on the hue of the Negro's skin ; for, instead of being black and sleek, she was rather of a dark dingy bronze colour, withered like a mummy. Round her neck, which resembled a dried alligator's limb, hung several rows of red beads, made of

the crabs-eye peas, and all the bust of womanhood beneath was as shrivelled and shrunk as beggar's purses ; her visage was something horrible, between a toad's and a baboon's—her eyes bleared and far sunk, her forehead supernaturally flat, and her lips, which odiously protruded, revealed a ghastly grin of four or five long unequal yellow teeth ; a deformity even in age, seldom seen among the better sheltered slaves. Her hair was white, and reminded me of a black-faced sheep's head ; and yet this hideous Sycorax was not void of human kindness, for she was amusing the three black marble Cupids that lay laughing on the ground beside her, and could mouth and gibber some wild mockery of language, which, after a few sentences, I discovered, to my inexpressible amusement, was Negro Scotch, learned about three-score years before, when she had been Dulcinea to a Scottish overseer, whom she had assisted an African lover one night to murder and burn with his house. From that time she had lived with the Maroons, but in the last hostilities with them, her " guda man," as she called him, was worried by one of the blood-

hounds imported from Cuba to extirpate the race.

This was the only adventure we met with in that journey, but some of the landscapes which opened from time to time, as our path wended through the passes of the mountains, and amidst the most romantic scenery, far surpassed the power of description. Here enormous rocks, plied in toppling cairns by ancient earthquakes, and basketed together by the roots of beautiful trees growing out from among them, fantastically overhung our path—and there streams of the purest water, leaping from the precipices, and glittering in the sunshine as they came rushing from the hills, were heard dashing, as it were, with a musical freshness around.

We rode forty odd miles with unexpected facility the first day, and reached before sundown the residence of an aged Lieutenant of the navy, to whom I brought a bundle of old newspapers, with a letter from a friend in Kingston. He had retired from the service, and with the propensities of another Robinson Crusoe, had constructed a cottage for himself on one of the most picturesque points of the cen-

tral ridge of mountains, where the road from the interior comes out on the lower range of hills that front the north, commanding an extensive view of the island, and a boundless prospect of the ocean. Mr. Cutwater, for that was his name, received me not only with joyful heartiness, but with something like the exultation of one who has found again a precious valuable that he had lost. I staid with him during the night, and as I had but a ride of fifteen miles to the house of another gentleman to whom I had a letter likewise, I agreed not to leave him till the afternoon of next day, and had thus an opportunity of inspecting his improvements, which, considering that every thing was the work of his own hands, were admirable proofs of what the industry of an individual may accomplish.

The spot he had chosen was, as he said, with respect to its temperature, in the same latitude as Leghorn, and he had cultivated with success many plants and shrubs, similar to those which grow in the south of Europe. He had two antelopes which he had brought from Malta, but, unfortunately, they were both males; one of

their gazelles had died on the voyage, and the other was killed by a sailor with a stave, who, as it was standing on the beach at the village of Green Island, where it had been landed, thought it a wild animal of Jamaica.

The evening in the Main-top, as he called the place, was so cool, as almost to be chilly ; and as we sat together in his little viranda, contemplating the magnificent scene which the rising full-moon disclosed, I may safely say, both as to the altitude and the delight enjoyed, I had never been so near Heaven before.

I parted from him with regret, and promised to visit him again ; but it was never in my power, nor would it have been wise to have done so, according to those philosophers who are of opinion, that when a man meets with exquisite excellence, he should never seek from it a repetition of the ecstacy, but cherish the memory and beatitude of the first enjoyment.

Early next morning, I reached Prospect Coffee Pen, the residence of Mr. Beans, a pleasant rural grange, with more of an air of permanency than is commonly seen in the houses of

the Jamaica planters. He was a cheerful old man, with an only daughter, who had recently returned from England, where she had been for her education, accompanied by another young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring Planter. My reception was with the off-handed hospitality of the island, and they were pleased to regard my visit as fortunate, especially as Mr. Canes, the gentleman whose daughter was the companion of Miss Beans, intended in a few nights to give a ball and supper, in honour of her return, and it was not often that they had it in their power to treat a stranger with so gay a doing as it promised to be.

“ I cannot, however,” said Miss Beans, addressing herself to her father, “ imagine what has come of the spirits of Louisa, since we arrived. They have quite fled, and she looks as if she wished she had not come back to Jamaica.”

“ It is natural,” replied the old gentleman, “ that she should be sad. Her mother died soon after she was sent to London, and some of the changes in her father’s house cannot be

what she, perhaps, expected. Bessy, the Quadroon, whom he has taken to live with him, is said to be a capricious and foolish slut."

My European ideas were a little disturbed at the freedom with which Mr. Beans spoke of this arrangement to his daughter, and I could observe a blush overspread her countenance; but it was evident that he was not aware of any deficiency of delicacy in what he said, perhaps owing to the commonness of such domestic connections. His own house was in every respect regulated with scrupulous decorum; it was the only house that I met with where the females wore the bosom covered; and though the servants were all negroes, they were orderly, and really, in manners, not without a competency of good breeding. It was the likest establishment to that of a plain English gentleman of any I saw in the island; indeed, I have always since thought that the coffee plantations are the only good specimens of rural life which the country affords. The works on the sugar estates are too much like factories, and have a character of trade about them inconsistent, as it seemed to me, with the incomes

derived from them, many of which were then lordly. But the more I saw of Jamaica, it appeared only a scene of temporary possession. There was an activity, so like haste, in all affairs, which seemed unconsciously to betray apprehension for the possession. The buildings had an appearance of fragility, as if every thing were prepared for a sudden abandonment: grain was not cultivated. Verily, not only the villages, but Kingston itself, showed how much the proprietors calculated, insensibly, perhaps, to themselves, that in Jamaica they had no continual city.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A DIALOGUE.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Beans, in the habits of his conversation, partook of the coarse morality of the country, he yet possessed both talent and intelligence. He had read a great deal, and having an inclination to the antiquarian literature and manners of the middle ages, would in any society have been regarded as imbued with literary taste. He had been in Jamaica from the declaration of the American independence, but he preserved, by importing new books and most of the periodical publications, an intimate acquaintance with the eventful transactions of France and Europe. On the changes in the state of society, his reflections were often ingenious, and if not always profound, were undoubtedly curious. The feudal system was,

however, his principal theme, and although sensible that its institutions were no longer suitable to the variety of modern employments, it was with him a constant topic of admiration.

During the few days I remained at his house, we had several interesting discussions on the tendency to change in the state of property arising from the growth of commerce and manufactures, and in the evening which I first spent with him, he was particularly eloquent, not only with reference to his favourite subject, but with respect to the effect which the abolition of the Slave Trade would have on West India property.

“The earth,” said he, “is divided into so many nations, often at war with each other, that in those barbarous ages, when the feudal system originated, and domestic feuds were household thrift, it became necessary for communities to provide political means of defence, and to be always ready for war. But although no man can more freely admit than I do that the hereditary restraints in the descent of property have now become obsolete, they were yet requisite in those rude times to preserve together the

masses of property which the security of kingdoms rendered necessary among each other; nor would it have been easy to devise a more effectual plan for having always ready the soldiery and officers requisite to constitute an army, the sole end and object of the feudal distribution of property. The whole system was so perfect for its purposes, that it could not have been the invention of human genius, but must have resulted from the natural exigencies of warlike society; a provision of the same Providence which gives strength and courage to the beasts of the field, and wings and talons to the birds of the air."

I could offer no opinion in answer to this, but observed, that mankind were now acquiring clearer ideas of their natural rights.

"Natural rights!" he exclaimed, "where are they? When society was formed, were not they cancelled, and social privileges substituted? From the earliest concentration of society, man has been continually laying aside his inheritance from Nature, and investing himself with the dispositions induced by the wants created by living in community. The more refined and

intelligent man becomes, the farther he recedes from a state of nature ; but in opposition to this truth, it would seem as if the progress of knowledge should lead us round a circle back to that state ; and yet, what are all natural rights but the ramifications of one right ? An equal claim to an equal portion of the productions of the earth.”

“ The economists say no more,” replied I.

“ True ! they say no more ; but, forgetting that there is a community of nations as well as of men, they claim more, and see not, that in society, privilege has superseded right. Individuals are endowed with different powers, capacities, and predilections, and the equality of their natural right is modified by the laws of society to protect these inalienable endowments. The weak has the same right to food as the strong, but the strong has the power to wrest his share from him ; hence the origin of that institute in which all the other members of society concur, and which says to the strong, if you oppress the weak, we shall punish you. Thus it is, that the sole object of the social state is mutual protection ; and to protect

individuals in the exercise of their respective endowments, is the end of all government."

"I do not exactly perceive the tendency of your observation," said I, diffidently, for I had but an imperfect conception of the subject.

"No!" replied he; "do you not see that all property rests upon that principle? The natural endowments of individuals, constitute the means by which they are enabled to acquire property. In all respects, but in those which are injurious to the welfare of others, society permits the individual to enjoy the exercise of his faculties, and whatever results to him from that exercise, it acknowledges to be his own; to deprive him of it in any way, is a violation of the social compact."

"Then you are opposed to the Moravian system of living in community—the co-operative system?"

"I am," was his calm, but brief answer—"it is incompatible with human nature, for we have all our several endowments, different alike in degree and quality. The individual, who in a state of nature exercises his strength or his cunning to gratify his own desires, has a right

in himself to do so, but society requires that he shall abdicate that right before he can receive its protection. In a word, to protect the individual members of society in the several properties which they acquire by the exercise of their respective natural powers, cannot be denied by minds capable of understanding principles. It is consecrated to them by all the most revered expedients that legislative wisdom can invent. Men are armed against their fellows for its security; police and constabulary are instituted for its safety; governments, judges, and magistrates are invested with prerogatives that it may be held sacred; and all dogmas, opinions, and actions, which imply that man can be deprived without compensation of his acknowledged property, cannot, however holily, be urged by other means than those of the nature of crime."

"Upon my honour," said I, smiling at his vehemence, "I did not expect to hear such philosophy in Jamaica."

"I believe you," he alertly replied: "we don't here think much of these things, and yet our very existence depends on a right understanding of them: for our property consists

of slaves; and if there be one thing more than another which can be described as a natural right, it is surely liberty; and yet nothing is more certain than that it is the very first thing of which society strips man when he becomes a social being. The moment that property is recognised, in the same instant the claim of man over man is acknowledged. In a general view, the labourer for his necessaries confesses his submission to masterdom; but in a stricter sense, what security can the man who has no property give the other from whom he buys it, but a right over his person—all law assents to this—and the man in debt is a slave.”

I found myself no match for Mr. Beans; but his opinions have ever remained with me.

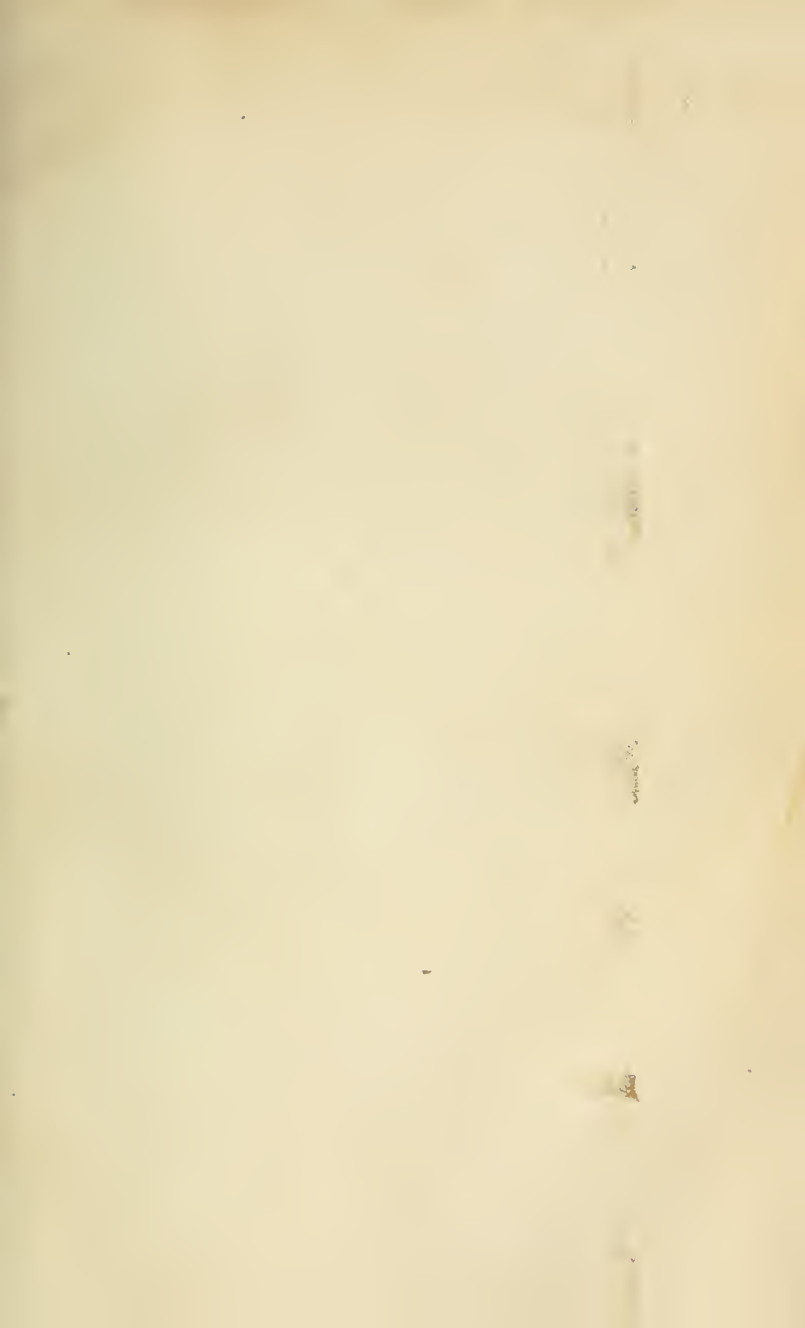
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